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- **Language Laws and Doing Business in Quebec**
- **Language Used in the Workplace in Quebec**
- **Francization Rules for Employers**
- **and much more…**

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LANGUAGE IN THE WORKPLACE IN QUEBEC

Do your communications at work respect the *Charter of the French Language*?





Employers in Quebec must respect the rules on language in the workplace. This is the case for businesses, non-profits, and provincial government institutions, among others.

The *Office québécois de la langue française* has the power to inspect workplaces at any time to ensure compliance with the law.

Federal Institutions

This pamphlet doesn't apply to federal institutions who must instead follow the rules in the *Official Languages Act*.

Discrimation isn't allowed

In all cases, employers must ensure that the workplace is free from discrimination or harassment related to an employee's proficiency in a language other than French, or their preference to communicate in French.

Official workplace documents

The following official workplace documents must be available in French:

- Documents relating to conditions of employment (anti-harassment policy, employee handbook, etc.),
- Training documents produced for employees,
- Collective agreements and agreements with other groups that apply to all employees,
- Offers of employment, transfer or promotion,
- Job application forms.

It's possible to translate these documents in other languages as long as the French version of the text is of a similar quality and equally accessible.

Negotiated employment contracts can be in any language if both the employer and employee agree.

Written communications between employer and employees

As a general rule, **written communications between employers and their employees must be in French**.

Public communications that are meant for multiple employees must be in French. For example, a notice posted in the employee break room or an email sent to more than one employee would need to be in French, even if all the employees prefer English over French. It is possible to have translations of these communications in other languages.

In the case of **private communications** between the employer and one employee, communications must be in French unless the employee has requested that communications be in another language. If the employee has made such a request, whether verbally or in writing, the employer can use that language alone.

These rules apply to communications after employment as well.

These rules **do not apply** to communications with volunteers, freelancers, contractors or other individuals who are not employees. Communications with these people can therefore be in any language.



Small or large enterprise?

The rules that apply to communication between employees depend on the size of the enterprise.

Enterprises with fewer than 25 employees aren't subject to francization rules. Employees can communicate in any language, whether they communicate in writing or verbally.

Enterprises with 25 employees or more are subject to francization rules.

If the OQLF deems that the use of French is not generalized at all levels of the enterprise, a francization program must be implemented. The program can include rules to generalize the use of French in written and verbal communications between employees.



Serving the public

Enterprises in Quebec with at least 5 employees that sell or offer services and products to customers must be able to serve them in French. This means that a sufficient number of employees on shift must have adequate knowledge of French to communicate with customers.

However, employees can continue to serve customers in another language if the customer prefers.