

LANGUAGE IN THE WORKPLACE IN QUEBEC

The *Charter of the French Language* and communications at work



Official workplace documents

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

Some 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 entered by other groups that apply to all employees,
- Offers of employment, transfer or promotion,
- Job application forms.

Versions of these documents in other languages are allowed as long as the French version of the text is of a similar quality and equally accessible.

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Written communications between employer and employees

*These rules **do not apply** to communications with volunteers, freelancers, etc.

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

Communications of a public nature that are meant for multiple employees must be in French. For example, a notice posted in the employee break room 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.

Communications of a private nature between the employer and one employee must be in French unless the employee has requested that communications be in another language. If that is the case, the employer can use that language alone.

These rules apply to communications after employment as well.

Written communications between employees

For smaller enterprises that are not subject to francization rules, employees can communicate in any language in writing.

Larger enterprises are subject to francization rules that vary depending on the francization program in place. The program can include rules to generalize the use of French in written communications between employees.



Francization rules currently apply to enterprises with 50 or more employees. As of June 1st, 2025, these rules will apply to enterprises with 25 or more employees.

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Verbal communications in the workplace

For smaller enterprises that are not subject to francization rules, verbal communications can be in any language. This is the case no matter the people involved in the discussion: employees, directors, volunteers...

Larger enterprises are subject to francization rules that vary depending on the francization program in place. The program can include rules to generalize the use of French in verbal communications in the workplace.

When 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.



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