



Canadian Food
Inspection Agency

Agence canadienne
d'inspection des aliments

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES TOOLKIT



Human Resources Branch

Employee's Guide to Delivering Services in Both Official Languages (2010)

Prepared By:

*The Official Languages Team
Canadian Food Inspection Agency*

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Canada

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Roles and Responsibilities of Employees Required to Provide Service in Both Official Languages

Employees must:

- Greet members of the public in both official languages (active offer), on the telephone and in person, in such a way that they are aware that they can communicate with and be served in the official language of their choice;
- Have bilingual messages on their answering machines; and
- Provide services of comparable quality in either official language.

The delivery of services of equal quality in English and in French is basically a question of attitude and personal commitment on the part of the Agency and its employees who serve the Canadian public.

For this fundamental reason, all your efforts must be aimed at making sure your clients never hear this sentence: "Sorry... I don't speak French."

How annoying this is for the clients and how embarrassing for you, the employee, in addition to the costs of dealing with complaints. One simple sentence, spoken in a friendly tone of voice, would have shown the client that the right to communicate in the language of his or her choice had been respected: "*Un moment, s'il vous plaît, quelqu'un s'occupe de vous tout de suite.*"

Questions and Answers - Employees

Q1. What is an “active offer of service” in English and French?

A1. Actively offering services means clearly indicating to your clients that they can communicate with you and receive services of comparable quality in the official language of their choice, whether English or French. In other words, it means greeting your clients in both official languages so that they can, without asking, freely choose the official language that they wish to be served in.

Q2. Where should we actively offer our services in English and French?

A2. At all offices and service points that are required to provide bilingual service to the public in compliance with the *Official Languages (Communications with and Services to the Public) Regulations*. Canadian Food Inspection Agency offices and service points that provide bilingual service are listed at the Burolis Web site: <http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/ollo/appollo/burolis/search-recherche/search-recherche-eng.aspx>

Q3. How can we actively offer service in English and French?

A3. - By greeting clients in both official languages in person and on the telephone;
- By recording bilingual telephone messages;
- By using bilingual signage;
- By posting the official languages symbol;
- By displaying forms and publications written in both official languages;
- By indicating clearly, in telephone directories, where service is offered in English, in French, and in both official languages; and
- By indicating on the homepage of your Web site that your site is accessible in English and French.

Q4. Why should we make an active offer in English and in French?

A4. - To promote the equal status of English and French in compliance with the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the *Official Languages Act*;
- To invite your clients to interact with you in the official language of their choice; and
- To show your commitment to providing clients with high-quality, timely and equivalent service in the official language of their choice.

Q5. Why must I verbally greet clients in English and French when the signage indicates that service is available in both official languages?

A5. Occasionally, clients are not sure if service is available in the official language of their choice. A verbal greeting in both official languages dispels this doubt. As well, clients may hesitate to speak French when other people are speaking English, and vice versa. A bilingual verbal greeting invites clients to speak in the official language of their choice.

Q6. Must I verbally greet clients in English and French even if I am not bilingual?

A6. Yes, all employees working in bilingual offices or service points must greet clients in both official languages. All your efforts must be aimed at making sure your clients never hear this sentence: "Sorry...I don't speak French." The tools *English - French Glossary* and *Usual Expressions* will provide you with some basic expressions to enable you to respond to clients and refer them to a bilingual person.

Q7. Which language should I use first?

A7. Use the official language of the majority of the province first, followed by the minority language.

Q8. As a unilingual Anglophone employee, what should I do if a client answers me in French once I have made a bilingual greeting?

A8. A unilingual Anglophone employee is not expected to carry on a conversation in French with a client. You should simply say "*Un moment, s'il vous plaît, quelqu'un s'occupe de vous tout de suite*" and immediately ask a bilingual co-worker to serve the client. Inform the co-worker of the official language chosen by the client. Never use sentences like "I don't speak French" or "Our French-speaking employee is not here at the moment." A bilingual employee must always be available, and there should be no delay in the delivery of service.

Q9. As a unilingual employee, how can I prepare to greet clients in both official languages?

A9. You can prepare to greet clients in both official languages by taking the following steps:

- Learn the bilingual greeting expression used in your workplace;
- Ensure that you are familiar with your office's procedures for redirecting clients to bilingual co-workers;
- Have a list of bilingual employees and their telephone numbers on hand; and
- Inform bilingual employees in your section that you will call on their services if necessary.

**Tool for Employees
On the Telephone - English - French Glossary**

Area code	<i>Indicatif régional</i>
Call transfer	<i>Transfert d'appel</i>
Hold the line	<i>Ne quittez pas</i>
Information	<i>Renseignements</i>
Local, extension number	<i>Poste</i>
Long distance	<i>Interurbain</i>
Switchboard	<i>Standard</i>
Switchboard operator	<i>Standardiste</i>
Telephone directory, book	<i>Annuaire</i>
The line is busy	<i>La ligne est occupée</i>
The line is noisy	<i>La communication est mauvaise</i>
There is trouble on the line	<i>La ligne est en dérangement</i>
To cancel a call	<i>Annuler un appel</i>
To connect	<i>Donner la communication</i>
To dial 9	<i>Faire le 9</i>
To dial a number	<i>Composer un numéro</i>
To hang up	<i>Raccrocher</i>
To make a call	<i>Faire un appel</i>
To receive a call	<i>Recevoir un appel</i>
To transfer a call	<i>Passer la communication</i>
Weekdays	<i>En semaine</i>
Who is speaking, please?	<i>De la part de qui, S.V.P.?</i>
You are welcome	<i>De rien. Il n'y a pas de quoi</i>

Tool for Employees - Usual Expressions

Do you wish to leave a message please?	<i>Désirez-vous laisser un message?</i>
Do you wish to make an appointment?	<i>Désirez-vous prendre un rendez-vous?</i>
... He (she) is away from the office at the moment (today).	<i>... Il (elle) n'est pas à son bureau en ce moment (aujourd'hui).</i>
... He (she) is unable to accept your call at the moment.	<i>... Il (elle) est occupé(e) présentement.</i>
He (she) is expected to return tomorrow (in ten minutes/one hour/two days/three weeks).	<i>Il (elle) sera de retour demain (dans dix minutes, une heure, deux jours, trois semaines).</i>
I'm sorry ...	<i>Je regrette ...</i>
I will transfer your call to Mrs. X (Mr. Y).	<i>Je vous passe madame X (monsieur Y).</i>
May I have him/her return your call?	<i>Puis-je lui demander de vous rappeler?</i>
May I help you?	<i>Puis-je vous aider?</i>
May I take your name and telephone number please?	<i>Puis-je avoir votre nom et votre numéro de téléphone S.V.P.?</i>
Mrs. X (Mr.Y) does not work here anymore.	<i>Madame X (monsieur Y) ne travaille plus ici.</i>
One moment please.	<i>Un instant S.V.P.</i>
Thank you.	<i>Merci.</i>
Would you care to speak to someone else?	<i>Aimeriez-vous parler à quelqu'un d'autre?</i>
Would you mind repeating your message please?	<i>Pourriez-vous répéter S.V.P.?</i>
You are welcome. Goodbye.	<i>De rien, monsieur, madame, au revoir.</i>
... You have the wrong number.	<i>... Vous vous trompez de numéro.</i>

Reminder

Active Offer of Services in Both Official Languages

Your public is entitled to receive services in both official languages. You have the obligation to actively offer your services. Your professionalism in this area will be appreciated by your clientele and the benefits will be yours to reap.

On the Telephone

Greeting

- Always answer in both official languages.
- Depending on the province, use the official language of the majority first and that of the official language minority second.
- Continue the conversation in the official language chosen by your client and use the corresponding documentation.

Transfer of Calls

- Keep a list of bilingual employees close at hand.
- Inform your client that you are referring him/her to someone else.
- Give the client the name and the phone number of this person and tell the client this person is bilingual.
- Inform your colleague of the language used by your client.

Feedback

- At the end of a prolonged exchange, summarize the points discussed.
- Ask for comments on the quality of service.
- Leave the door open to other questions.

Write below the form of greeting used in your office:

In person

Greeting – Verbal Aspect

- Always greet your client in both official languages.
- Depending on the province, use the official language of the majority first and that of the official language minority second.
- Continue the conversation in the official language chosen by your client and use the corresponding documentation.

Greeting - Visual Aspect

- Make sure the official languages symbol is clearly visible to the public and that it properly directs them to where they can be served in both official languages.
- Make sure documentation, newspapers, magazines, etc. are displayed in both English and French.
- Ask your clients from time to time if the signs and posters in your office properly reflects its bilingual nature.
- Inform your supervisor of your clients' views and tell him/her what is lacking or what could be improved in the visual aspect of your office to make both language groups feel more welcome.

Referral to Another Employee

- Keep a list of bilingual employees close at hand.
- Inform your client that you are going to ask someone else to see him/her.
- Give your client the name of this person and, if necessary, the phone number.
- Tell the client this person is bilingual.
- Inform your colleague of the language of the client.

Feedback

- Assess the meeting.
- Make sure all questions have been dealt with to the satisfaction of the client.
- Ask for comments on the quality of service.