

SPEECHWRITING AT DFO

ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND PROCESSES

(OCTOBER 2002)

Ministerial Speeches | House Speeches | Speeches for Senior Management

1. MINISTERIAL SPEECHES

This refers to Ministerial speeches before external audiences, to be given by the Minister or his representative. It can also refer to speeches for other federal ministers in areas of departmental responsibility. This includes events organized by outside associations or interest groups to which the Minister has been invited to speak, and events organized by DFO, such as departmental announcements or other special events.

Ministerial speaking notes or points for use at business or departmental meetings are normally prepared and approved within the relevant sectors.

Office of Primary Interest (OPI)

HQ Communications or Regional Communications

Source of Request

Requests for Ministerial speeches normally come to HQ Communications from the Deputy Minister's Office (DMO), which acts on requests from the Minister's Office (MO). Requests should also be cc'd to sectors involved.

Occasionally, HQ Communications may become aware of a speech requirement through departmental contacts, but it is essential to act only on requests from the Deputy Minister's Office, which have flowed from the Minister's Office. If the timeframe is tight, HQ Communications should seek confirmation from the Deputy Minister's Office as to whether to expect a request.

As a preliminary step, HQ Communications will determine, through consultation with the appropriate regional office, whether it is more feasible to produce the speech in the Region or at Headquarters. The extent of regional participation in the production of the speech will be determined at this time. This step will also clarify whether HQ Communications or the Region is the OPI.

As a rule, HQ Communications will be the OPI on any significant speech by the Minister to an external audience. Regional Communications offices will normally be the OPI for Ministerial speeches and talking points for regional announcements and special events.

Process

If HQ Communications is OPI:

Departmental Assistant arranges a speech-planning meeting involving HQ Communications, Minister's Office, Deputy Minister's Office, sectors and regions.

As OPI, HQ Communications gathers information, drafts the speech, and manages review, approval and translation.

HQ Communications provides final, approved copies in both official languages to the Minister's Office, as well as the bilingual podium copy for the Minister's use, formatted according to MO requirements.

If speeches are to be distributed publicly, HQ Communications co-ordinates with the Minister's Office to confirm requirements and make the necessary arrangements.

HQ Communications posts Minister's speeches on the departmental Internet at the request of the Minister's Office.

If Region is OPI:

When it is determined that the Region is the OPI for the speech, the approval process mirrors that which has been established for regional news releases — the Region will be responsible for producing and approving the speech.

Departmental Assistant organizes a brief speech meeting, involving relevant regional sectors, Minister's Office and HQ Communications, to confirm content of speech.

Region drafts speech and provides final, approved copies in both official languages to the Minister's Office, as well as the bilingual podium copy for the Minister's use, formatted according to MO requirements that will be provided to the Region.

If speeches are to be distributed publicly, Region co-ordinates with the Minister's Office to confirm requirements and make the necessary arrangements.

Region contacts HQ Communications to post Minister's speeches on the departmental Internet.

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2. HOUSE SPEECHES

This process refers to speeches to be read in the House of Commons.

The process for House speeches is intended to maximize the efficiency of developing speeches and speaking notes for use in the House. This is achieved through the assigning of responsibility for specific tasks to the most appropriate offices.

It recognizes an important distinction between Ministerial speeches to external audiences and speeches for the House, which tend to be more issue-focused and linked to the management of specific files.

That distinction explains why, across government departments, HQ Communications branches tend to be less involved in the preparation of House speeches than for those intended for stakeholders and the public.

OPI

For every issue, motion or legislative initiative introduced or debated in the House and Senate (or their committees) that relates to the mandate of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, there is a departmental OPI (a program/policy sector). **Please note that HQ Communications is never the OPI for a House speech.**

The OPI has responsibility for providing — either directly, or through co-ordination with other interested offices — all support materials needed by the Minister to manage issues in the House, including speeches and speaking notes.

Unlike public speeches for the Minister, there is not necessarily a requirement for HQ Communications involvement in preparing House speeches. In many cases, practicality dictates that the OPI should draft required speeches — and particularly, speaking notes — on their own. HQ Communications involvement is optional, and is triggered only by a specific request from the OPI.

Requests for HQ Communications assistance should be based on the importance of the speaking opportunity, and the determination that specialized help in writing and co-ordination is required.

Source of Request

Requests for House speeches go from the Minister's Office to the Deputy Minister's Office, which tasks the OPI, who may or may not call upon HQ Communications for assistance.

Process

When HQ Communications is asked for assistance with House speeches, the OPI arranges the speech meeting, which HQ Communications attends.

Based on information gathered at the speech planning meeting and by the OPI, HQ Communications drafts the speech, manages the review and approval processes, ensures translation, and provides final copies in both official languages to the Minister's Office and to the OPI.

HQ Communications provides bilingual podium copies as required in consultation with the OPI.

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3. SPEECHES FOR SENIOR MANAGEMENT

This refers to speeches for the Deputy Minister and Associate Deputy Minister.

Speeches and speaking notes for the Deputy Minister and Associate Deputy Minister are prepared by Communications, with input from the lead departmental sector for the event or initiative to which the speech relates.

HQ Communications usually takes the lead role in speechwriting and co-ordination, however, Regional Communications may take the lead if the speech will be focussed on regional-specific issues.

Note: Speeches and speaking notes for officials below the Deputy Minister and Associate Deputy Minister are prepared by the lead departmental sector or region for the event or initiative to which the speech relates. On request, the Communications Branch may assist with writing, but such assistance will be dependent on workload and availability of resources.

OPI

The OPI is HQ Communications or Regional Communications.

Source of Request

Requests normally come to HQ Communications from the Deputy Minister's or Associate Deputy Minister's office. If a request comes informally from within a sector, HQ Communications will seek confirmation from the appropriate office.

HQ Communications will determine, through consultation with the appropriate regional office, whether it is more appropriate to produce the speech in the Region or at Headquarters. The extent of regional participation in the production of the speech will be determined at this time.

Process

Communications arranges the speech meeting in close consultation with the Deputy Minister's Office or Associate Deputy Minister's Office. The person who is to deliver the speech should attend.

Communications drafts the speech, manages review, approval and translation, and provides final copies in both official languages to the client.

Communications will also provide a bilingual podium copy.