



SUMMARY

Audit of Service to the Public in Both Official Languages in seven Airports Having a Significant Demand AIRPORT AUTHORITIES

Introduction:

This audit was performed by the Official Languages Branch (OLB) of the Public Service Human Resources Management Agency of Canada (PSHRMAC)¹ as a follow up to an audit conducted in the year 2000 of the Vancouver International Airport (Vancouver), Calgary International Airport (Calgary), Winnipeg International Airport (Winnipeg), Toronto Pearson International Airport (Toronto), Montreal-Dorval International Airport (Montreal), Greater Moncton International Airport (Moncton) and Halifax International Airport (Halifax). The goal of this audit is to determine whether services at these airports allow the public to communicate and receive services in the official language of their choice in compliance with the *Official Languages Act* (OLA), the *Official Languages (Communications with and Services to the Public) Regulations* (*Regulations*) and Treasury Board (TB) official languages policy.

The Airport Authority (AA) of Montreal continues to be exemplary in fulfilling its responsibilities under the OLA, while AA Toronto, Moncton and Halifax continue to satisfactorily address many of their official language responsibilities. Although AA Vancouver and Calgary have made some progress with respect to compliance with OLA, many aspects continue to require improvement. Finally, AA Winnipeg has done very little to address the findings of the prior report which denoted that significant improvement was required.

Language Obligations:

Bilingual services were nearly always available at all airport information centres. However, AA Vancouver, Calgary and Winnipeg are not consistently providing bilingual documentation as well as bilingual active offer over the telephone, particularly outside business hours. In addition, the information concerning Health, Safety and Security and Services to the travelling public on the AA Calgary and Winnipeg web sites is not available in both official languages. Changes to the AA Vancouver and Halifax Web sites are not always made simultaneously in both official languages. All AAs except Montreal and Toronto did not have satisfactory controls nor monitoring mechanisms to assess client satisfaction and the level of bilingual services provided.

It is recommended that AA Vancouver, Calgary and Winnipeg ensure that bilingual publications are always available and that bilingual active offer is consistently provided over the telephone. AA Vancouver, Calgary, Montreal and Halifax may wish to remind and inform all AA staff that may have contact with the public (such as volunteers, duty managers, airport fee collection) of their official language obligations. It is also recommended that AA Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg and Halifax ensure that sections of their Web sites dealing with Health, Safety and Security and Services to travelling public are translated and that any changes to these sections are made simultaneously in both official languages.

Signage & Self Service Machines:

In general, all AAs are making concerted efforts to ensure that all signage at their respective airports are bilingual. In particular, AA Toronto, Montreal, Moncton and Halifax should be commended for the extent to which their interior and exterior signage is bilingual.

¹ The *Official Languages Branch*, which used to be part of the *Treasury Board Secretariat*, was transferred to the new *Public Service Human Resources Management Agency of Canada* on December 12, 2003.

However, we noted unilingual signs and signs with translation errors at all airports visited. For example, all airports visited had parking and car rental signs that were in English only or that contained translation errors, particularly at AA Vancouver, Calgary and Winnipeg.

It is recommended that all AAs implement or improve monitoring mechanisms to regularly monitor postings both inside and outside the airport, including all self-service equipment, paying special attention to the quality of the translations.

Contract Services:

AA Montreal and Moncton provide commendable services in both official languages through contractors, as was noted in the prior audit. In addition, foreign exchange services are being provided in both official languages by all AAs, a significant improvement from the prior audit. AA Toronto is encouraged to continue the regular monitoring of the application of the language clauses in contracts with third parties.

It was noted at AA Toronto and Halifax that some of the services provided by restaurants, duty free shops and car rental agencies were not bilingual. This represents an overall weakening of official language services by AA Halifax contractors as compared with the prior audit. In addition, duty free, restaurant, car rental and air transport contractors (excluding Air Canada) at AA Vancouver, Calgary and Winnipeg are providing few services in both official languages, as was noted in the prior audit.

All AAs except Montreal and Toronto did not adequately inform their contractors of their official language obligations, and did not have satisfactory controls nor monitoring mechanisms to assess the level of bilingual services of contractors. Furthermore, AA Calgary, Toronto, Moncton and Halifax had inadequate official language clauses in some of their contracts with tenants that provide services to the public.

It is recommended that all AAs (particularly Vancouver, Calgary and Winnipeg) establish, implement and enforce documented monitoring mechanisms and clear official language policies to ensure that contractors respect the OLA and the language clauses of their contracts. It is further recommended that AAs hold regular information sessions and meetings with all contractors that provide services to the public to remind them of the scope of their official language obligations and discuss the results of regular monitoring of bilingual services. Finally, it is recommended that all contracts be reviewed to ensure they have clear and explicit official language clauses, and that contracts be revised as necessary when they come up for renewal.

Hotels:

AA Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg and Toronto have not made sufficient efforts to ensure their airport hotels provide signage and services in both official languages, contrary to what was recommended in the prior audit. It is thus not surprising that hotels have not made any improvements to services or signage since the prior audit. In fact, hotel representatives generally had no idea of their obligations under the OLA.

It is recommended that AA Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg and Toronto improve their efforts to ensure that airport hotels respect their language obligations. For example, hotel contracts should be reviewed and revised to include appropriate language clauses to ensure that OLA language obligations are respected. In addition, all signage and documentation providing instructions to guests should be translated into both official languages with priority being given to safety and security material.

Health, Safety & Security:

Some of the health, safety and security related signs, standardized announcements, documentation and instructions of AA Vancouver, Montreal, Moncton and Halifax were noted to contain errors or were provided

in only one official language, an overall decline from the prior audit. In addition, health clinics at AA Vancouver and Toronto are providing services only in English.

As was noted in the prior audit, security services provided by AA Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto and Halifax, particularly those contracted with the Canadian Corps of Commissionaires, are not being provided in both official languages. In addition, police services provided by all AAs except Montreal and Moncton do not have regularly scheduled bilingual officers, but have satisfactory administrative arrangements in place.

It is recommended that AA Calgary, Winnipeg and Toronto review service contracts for those responsible for health, safety and security to ensure they include or clarify contract clauses regarding official language requirements for postings and the provision of services in both official languages. In addition, AA Vancouver, Montreal, Moncton and Halifax need to perform a comprehensive review of signs, standardized announcements, documentation and instructions to ensure they are all correctly and fully bilingual.

Conclusion:

It is recommended that an action plan (including a time-line) be prepared by all AAs, and forwarded to OLB describing how the denoted recommendations will be implemented. Action plans for airport hotels should be included by AA Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg and Toronto. Further details of the above findings and recommendations can be found in the detailed reports “Audit of Service to the Public in Both Official Languages in seven Airports Having a Significant Demand” dated February 2005 for the seven above mentioned airports.