

The Office québécois de la langue française,
a service-minded institution

The Office québécois de la langue française offers business firms a range of services to help them in the use of French in their Québec operations:

- information about language requirements
- advice on means and measures to facilitate the use of French
- linguistic assistance and terminology consultation by telephone or on the Internet

Telephone : 1 888 873-6202 or
1 (514) 873-6565

Internet : www.oqlf.gouv.qc.ca

*Doing business
in Québec*

and the Charter of the French language

Service des communications
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Québec is open for business and in this regard welcomes international companies that want to establish a head office, a research center or any other facility.

It is a known fact that Québec has adopted French as its official language and as the normal and everyday language of public communications under the Charter of the French Language (Law 101).

Two sections of the law directly concern business firms. One deals with the language of business and commerce within Québec and applies to all firms, the other section called « *francization of business firms* » concerns companies with 50 or more employees in Québec.

In order to facilitate the understanding of this legislation and the guidelines for « *francization* », as well as to provide assistance in determining the implementation process, the provincial government has set up the *Office québécois de la langue française*, the French language agency whose civil servants have an advisory role and the responsibility to oversee the application of the Act.

A company employing 50 or more people in Québec has six months, after establishing its Québec division, to register with the *Office*, then another six-months period to conduct an analysis of its language situation with the assistance of the *Office* and then, if necessary, submit a plan in order to ensure the use of French in communications and working documents. Once this step has been taken the company is normally given two to three years to achieve the francization program goals, and that period could be extended if there are particular constraints*.

If a major share of the company's activities extend outside Québec, a special program or agreement may be reached with the *Office*. Such an agreement can provide for the use of English in many communication tools and working documents as long as French is also used in some of them.

Furthermore, the *Office* will assist a company in confirming the eligibility of the said company for special programs or agreements based on the company's specific characteristics and requirements.

For a business firm under 50 employees in Québec, there are minimal requirements with regards to the use of French in public signs, general notices, documents relating to benefits and in communications with the public in Québec. Where such a firm requires a period of time to comply with these provisions, it may request assistance and a temporary exemption under a special agreement with the *Office québécois de la langue française*.

In summary, in contacting the *Office québécois de la langue française*, you will access a group of professionals dedicated to ensuring the smooth implementation of your operations in Québec while respecting your business requirements within the confines of the Charter of the French language.

The person to contact is:

Mr. Gérald Paquette

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** Francization does not apply to business done outside of the Québec division. It applies only to activities within the Québec establishments and within the province. While it does not exclude the use of English or another language in a business firm, it makes it an obligation to use French, together or not with other languages.*