

Victoria International Airport

Official Languages Action Plan



Table of Contents

1	BACKGROUND	3
2	REGULATORY CONTEXT AND COMMITMENT	4
3	SERVICE IN THE TERMINAL	5
4	COMMUNICATING WITH OUR PASSENGERS.....	7
5	CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT	8
6	CONCLUSION	10

1 Background

Victoria International Airport (YYJ), the Canadian gateway to the Pacific, is operated by the Victoria Airport Authority (VAA), a not-for-profit organization without share capital, incorporated under the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act and designated under the Airport Transfer (Miscellaneous Matters) Act. Since 1997, we've proudly managed YYJ through a ground lease with the Government of Canada, connecting our vibrant community to domestic and international destinations.

Although we don't receive federal funding to meet our obligations under the Official Languages Act (OLA), we're committed to respecting Canada's linguistic duality. Our goal is straightforward: ensuring that passengers and visitors experience the welcoming, inclusive, and professional service that our region is known for, in both of Canada's official languages; English and French. As YYJ continues to grow and evolve, so does our commitment to bilingual service.

We take our responsibilities under the Official Languages Act seriously and are always looking for ways to enhance bilingual service at our airport. From clear bilingual signage and accessible communications, our goal is to ensure both English and French speakers feel equally welcome and supported. This action plan details our continuous commitment to fulfilling our obligations. By collaborating closely with our staff, partners, and community members, we strive to effectively meet the language preferences and needs of every traveller who passes through our doors.

This Official Languages Action Plan reflects our dedication to ongoing improvement, capturing our proactive approach to meeting both our legal responsibilities and community expectations, and it will remain an evolving document shaped by feedback, regular reviews, and continuous enhancements.

2 Regulatory Context and Commitment

The Official Languages Act (1985) sets the standard for language equality in Canada, ensuring both English and French have equal status across federally regulated institutions, including airports like ours.

Key aspects relevant to airports include:

- **Part IV – Communications with the Public:** We must ensure that airport services are available in both official languages.
- **Part VII – Advancement of English and French:** We have a responsibility to actively encourage the presence and growth of both languages throughout our airport operations and communications.

Beyond simply checking boxes, the Treasury Board Secretariat helps guide airports in meeting these responsibilities through standards for clear bilingual signage, accessible publications, and user-friendly digital content.

At Victoria International Airport, we embrace this responsibility not just as a regulatory requirement, but as part of who we are and what we stand for. Our goal is a welcoming, accessible airport experience for every passenger—whether they're comfortable in English or French.

Working closely with our airport partners, we've put in place practical policies, bilingual technology, and signage to ensure we don't just meet but exceed expectations at every step of the passenger journey.

Safety and security remain at the heart of everything we do, and clear, bilingual communication is essential to providing that environment for everyone who passes through our airport. Although this Official Languages Plan helps fulfill our legal obligations, for us, it's about more than compliance.

It's about genuinely supporting Canada's linguistic duality. We approach this as part of our broader commitment to inclusivity and exceptional passenger care.

We welcome feedback from our community, travellers, and partners. Your input is valuable in helping us continuously improve and shape our future approach to official languages.

3 Service in the Terminal

Each year, Victoria International Airport welcomes approximately two million passengers, offering a lasting impression of the Capital city, the Province of British Columbia and Canada. We know these moments count, so we make sure passengers experience a welcoming, accessible environment in both official languages. While at the airport, travellers engage with various services and businesses.

To support them:

- **Concessions, retail outlets, and restaurants** throughout the terminal strive to offer bilingual services. Signage, including promotional displays, product details, and menu boards, are available in both English and French, ensuring clarity and convenience.
- **Self-serve kiosks** located at key passenger points throughout the terminal are equipped for bilingual use.

- **Digital directories** are designed to support seamless navigation in English and French. Whether passengers need flight details, directions, or local information, these tools make finding their way effortless.
- **Wayfinding signage (static and digital)** throughout our terminal is provided in both official languages. From entry points to boarding gates, including our pay parking system, bilingual functionalities and signage helps passengers navigate comfortably and confidently.
- **Passenger information materials**, including terminal maps, customer service guides, and even family-friendly items like colouring books, are thoughtfully produced in both languages.
- We also provide **on-demand translation services** for passengers who need assistance communicating with airport staff. Our team can quickly access translation services in a wide variety of languages to effectively assist guests who may have limited proficiency in English or French.
- Audio, video, sign-language, and live translation support can be accessed anytime through our **Information Counters and Passenger Experience Officer**.
- **Our contracts with our key service providers** in the air terminal building, such as our Air Carriers, Concessions and Food and Beverage operators clearly outline their obligation to comply with our bilingual service requirements under the Official Languages Act, helping us maintain consistency and quality across all passenger interactions.

These measures collectively reinforce our commitment to a welcoming, inclusive, and genuinely bilingual airport experience for every passenger.

4 Communicating with our Passengers

Our Victoria International Airport website offers detailed bilingual content, highlighting our unique heritage stretching back to 1939, when we began as a military airbase known as Patricia Bay Air Station. Social media posts are also shared in English and French simultaneously to keep everyone informed.

Passengers can easily share their feedback about the airport or their customer experience in either official language directly through our website.

Within the terminal, pre-recorded announcements, covering boarding gate information, safety reminders, and security notices are provided in both English and French, and we're also ready to deliver spontaneous announcements in both languages whenever needed. Our volunteer programs, such as the Red Coats, similarly reflect this commitment, ensuring we provide robust, bilingual support at critical passenger interaction points.

Passengers looking to contact us have plenty of bilingual options: through our website feedback form, social media channels, or by calling our bilingual airport call centre. Additionally, event-related messaging and marketing materials within our terminal are consistently bilingual, ensuring clear communication for every traveller.

5 Continuous Improvement

At YYJ, we're proud of the steps we've already taken to support bilingualism within our airport operations. Still, we know there's always room to grow. Whether in our hiring processes, employee training, or service delivery, our goal is continuous improvement, consistently raising the bar in meeting the language needs of our diverse community.

Employee Recruitment

- When hiring new team members, especially for public-facing roles, we encourage bilingual skills as a desirable qualification. While not mandatory for every position, bilingualism is clearly identified in our recruitment materials as a valuable asset.
- For volunteers in our airport community, such as the Red Coats, we similarly encourage bilingual capabilities as an advantage. This aims to help ensure we're equipped to support travellers in both languages wherever possible.

Tools and Resources

- Our teams have access to practical tools—such as real-time translation support and clear reference materials—that help maintain consistent bilingual service.
- When full bilingual proficiency isn't feasible, these resources ensure we can still effectively meet travellers' needs in both languages.
- We also regularly use professional translation services to keep written communications accurate and clear, reinforcing our commitment to consistent bilingual messaging.

Monitoring and Responding

- We actively seek out and listen to feedback regarding language services. This includes carefully monitoring online reviews, social media comments, and direct passenger feedback, so we can quickly address any language-related concerns and continually enhance our services.
- Regular checks and internal audits help us see how we're doing against our language-service goals, the quality of bilingual signage, and how effectively we're providing bilingual customer service interactions.
- Our leadership team regularly receives updates about our progress, helping them lead by example and support further improvements when needed.

Quarterly reports to our Board highlight what's working, identify areas for improvement, and outline next steps.

Risk Management and Future Steps

- By carefully reviewing feedback and audit outcomes, we're always working to identify and address gaps or recurring issues, using clear action plans to drive improvement.
- This Official Languages Action Plan is made publicly available, reflecting our commitment to transparency and ongoing accountability.
- As required, or whenever significant regulatory changes or new needs arise, we'll review and update this plan, keeping it relevant, practical, and effective.

As we continue to focus on strengthening bilingualism at YYJ, we remain open and realistic about our journey. We're dedicated to steady improvement, guided by our commitment to offering an accessible, inclusive environment for all passengers, employees, and community members who pass through Victoria International Airport.

6 Conclusion

At Victoria International Airport, our commitment to Canada's linguistic duality isn't just about meeting regulatory requirements it's woven into who we are, what we represent, and how we connect with our passengers who travels through our doors. As a non-profit airport authority entrusted with operating a critical gateway to the Pacific, we embrace our role in promoting an inclusive and accessible environment, reflecting the vibrant community we serve.

Each year, nearly two million passengers count on YYJ to deliver their first or final impressions of the capital city, the province of British Columbia, and Canada itself. Recognizing this responsibility drives us to continuously enhance our bilingual offerings, ensuring travellers feel genuinely welcomed and supported, whether in English or French.

Throughout our terminals, we have implemented meaningful bilingual measures, from clear, consistent signage and thoughtfully produced bilingual passenger information materials, and self-serve kiosks. We prioritize ease of use and accessibility, ensuring that navigating the airport feels natural and intuitive for everyone.

Recognizing that effective communication underpins safety and security, our public announcements, whether routine or spontaneous, are delivered clearly in both official languages, reinforcing our commitment to passenger care.

YYJ's digital platforms complement these efforts by providing comprehensive bilingual content. Our website vividly captures the airport's unique heritage, proudly telling the story of our origins as Patricia Bay Air Station in 1939, alongside essential passenger information, all available simultaneously in English and French.

Social media channels mirror this approach, providing timely, accurate updates to ensure all our passengers feel informed and included, regardless of language preference. We offer multiple accessible and bilingual communication channels from our website feedback forms to our bilingual airport call centre, reflecting our commitment to transparency, responsiveness, and passenger satisfaction.

Our dedication to bilingualism extends internally through hiring practices. While bilingual capabilities are not mandatory, we actively encourage and value them, clearly identifying bilingual proficiency as a desirable skill in recruitment materials.

We equip our teams with practical tools and real-time translation resources, bridging any language gaps quickly and effectively. We remain vigilant in monitoring our performance through regular feedback mechanisms, internal audits, and comprehensive quarterly reporting to our Board of Directors.

These proactive evaluations enable us to recognize areas for growth and make targeted improvements. We know our journey toward enhanced bilingual service is ongoing and that there are always opportunities to better serve our passengers and community.

Looking forward, our commitment includes continuous review and improvement of our bilingual practices, updating this action plan regularly to reflect new regulations, emerging passenger needs, and technological advancements. By openly publishing this document, we invite public engagement and welcome constructive feedback from passengers, employees, and our broader community.

Your insights play an essential role in shaping our future direction and reinforcing our dedication to meaningful linguistic inclusion.