

# Standards of Communications and Services in Inuktut

Inuktut is an integral part of Inuit culture and identity, and was an important element that led a generation of Inuit leaders to create Nunavut.

Today, private sector organizations can also play a positive lead role promoting and modeling the use of Inuktut in our communities.

With the coming into force of section 3 of the *Inuit Language Protection Act*, the following standards or best practices can help your organization achieve this goal.

## Plan your services in Inuktitut

Your organization must work gradually towards complying with the *Inuit Language Protection Act*. To facilitate this, your organization may prepare an Inuit Language Plan. The Office of the Languages Commissioner has prepared guidelines and template to assist you. The Plan will help to assess your organization's capacity to provide services in Inuktitut to the public, and identify measures and timelines to improve compliance over time.

## Inform your clients or customers

It is a good practice to inform your clients or customers what services they may receive in Inuktitut from your organization. You may include this information on your regular promotional materials, website, social media or other means. Consider to actively offer your Inuktitut services to your clients or customers, either in person or over the telephone.

The Government of Nunavut has also developed the *Inuktuuqta! Let's Speak Inuktitut!* Campaign to assist your organization. This includes a visual aid you can display prominently on the premises of your organization, ideally at the first point of contact with your clients or customers.

## Dialects and writing systems

Inuktitut has several dialects in Nunavut. The main regional variants are Inuinnaqtun in the Western part of the Territory and Inuktitut in the Eastern part. Inuinnaqtun is written in the roman script, while Inuktitut is done using either the syllabic or roman script, or both, although syllabic is often preferred.

As a general rule of thumb, if your communications are intended to all Nunavummiut, include both Inuinnaqtun and Inuktitut. However, if you operate only locally in Kugluktuk or Cambridge Bay, ensure to use Inuinnaqtun in the roman script, and Inuktitut in all other communities, using either the syllabic or roman script, or both together.

## CORPORATE IDENTITY

If your corporate identity is in another language than Inuktitut, you may use a generic term to describe the purpose of your organization. Consider these examples: Siniktarvik Northway Inn Hotel; Niqitaarvik Healthy Food Store; Kiinaujakkuvik Nunavut Bank; Naasaijiit Lloyd Accounting.

If you register a society, business or corporation in Nunavut, consider adopting an appropriate Inuktitut name. Consult with members of your community as part of your market analysis. There are plenty of terms to choose from. Keep it short and simple. Consider that an Inuktitut term will distinguish your organization from your competitors.

If you need assistance with terminology, including reviewing the quality and accuracy of terms and expressions in Inuktitut, you consult with the Inuit Uqausinginnik Taiguusiliuqtiit (Inuit Language Authority).

**Important:** Transliterating English names into the syllabic script is not recommended. Results are often unintelligible to Inuktitut speakers, particularly Elders.

## Equal Quality and Prominence

When you put up a public sign, poster or commercial advertisement, the Inuit Language text must be displayed at least with equal prominence than other languages used, if any. This should take into account the text size, position, font, colour, etc. As a general rule, the text should be displayed so that Inuktitut is likely to be read first. The language used should also be accurate in terms of meaning and expression, and without spelling errors.



EXAMPLE

## Public Signs, including emergency and exit signs

**The Act requires all public signs, including emergency and exit signs, to be displayed in Inuktitut.** The use of pictograms is acceptable. Public signs may include signs on buildings, on vehicles, directional signs, hours of operations, signs identifying groups of products or services, parking signs, etc. Always ensure the Inuktitut text is displayed at least with equal prominence than other languages used, if any, and that it is accurate and of top quality.

## Posters and Commercial advertising

**The Act requires posters and commercial advertising to be displayed or issued in Inuktitut.**

This includes your organization's posters displayed on premises or around town, flyers or brochures, promotional materials, newspaper, radio or television ads, including social media advertising. Always ensure the Inuktitut text is displayed at least with equal prominence than other languages used, if any, and that it is accurate and of top quality.

## Reception and Client or Customer Services

An effective way to welcome your clients and customers, and show your appreciation for their business, is by greeting them in person or by telephone in Inuktitut. Consider actively offering your services in Inuktitut with a simple *"Ullukkut, welcome to Northway Inn Hotel"* or *"Tunngasugit Siniktarvimmut, welcome to Northway Inn."* You may also consider displaying prominently, at the first point of contact with your clients or customers, the *Inuktuuqta! Let's Speak Inuktitut!* visual aid.

Voice messaging services should also be recorded in Inuktitut, including telephone directory *(Inuktuurumaguvit "1" naqillugu, for English press "2")*.

Reception services should be made available in Inuktitut, and any person who requests reception services in Inuktitut should be treated equally as well as a person who requests reception services in English and/or French. Consider hiring someone with Inuktitut abilities, or take advantage of language training for members of your organization, or teaching them basic greeting words to reception staff.

If face-to-face reception services are not available in Inuktitut, you should ensure that reception services are available over a phone in your reception area by way of a referral system or internal protocol to refer clients or customers to someone who speaks Inuktitut.

It is a common practice now for organizations in Canada and around the world to record the language preference of their clients or customers. Consider doing the same for Inuktitut, so you can save time by using pre-translated generic templates for your written communications and services in Inuktitut. This will also ensure someone from your organization can follow-up with the client or customer in the language of their choice, either in person or over the telephone.

## Particular Services

If you offer the following particular services, there are additional requirements. Particular services include emergency, medical, pharmaceutical services, housing or lodging services, basic household services, including fuel, water supplies and telecommunications, and hospitality services, such as restaurants and hotels.

You must ensure to include Inuktitut when delivering written or oral notices, warnings or instructions to users or consumers of your services in Inuktitut, as well as on monthly bills or invoices.

For instance, if a warning or notice is in relation to the health, safety or security of the public, Inuktitut must be included. As for monthly invoices, this would include water, fuel and telecommunication invoices. On receipts, please consider including basic greetings and contact information of your organization.

Instructions to users or consumers of your services would include, without limitation, drug use instructions from retail pharmacists, restaurant menus and services, hotel room instructions (how to use the phone, television, in-room services, etc.)

## Is there help to Improve compliance?

The Government of Nunavut will invest **1 million dollars** over the next **5 years** to help private sector organizations with a small grant program **(\$5,000)** to improve their compliance. Eligible costs include updating signs, translations, and language training fees. For more information, please contact the Department of Culture and Heritage.

The Office of the Languages Commissioner can provide your organization with guidance in planning your Inuit language communications and services to the public.

The Inuit Uqausinginnik Taiguusiliuqtiit is mandated to oversee the development, use and standardization of Inuktitut in Nunavut. It can provide your organization with expertise and recommendations on the correct use of Inuktitut and terminology on your signs or other documents.

Please contact the Department of Culture and Heritage if there are any best practices you would like to see added to this document.



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