

Important Upcoming Changes to French Language Requirements for Public Signage

What will change?

Starting on June 1, 2025, any **non-French trademark** used in **public signage visible from outside business premises** located in Quebec will need to be accompanied by **French text** that is **“markedly predominant”** and in the **“same visual field.”**

This will apply to all types of businesses, not just retail outlets.

“Markedly predominant”

The French text has a **much greater visual impact** than the non-French trademark:

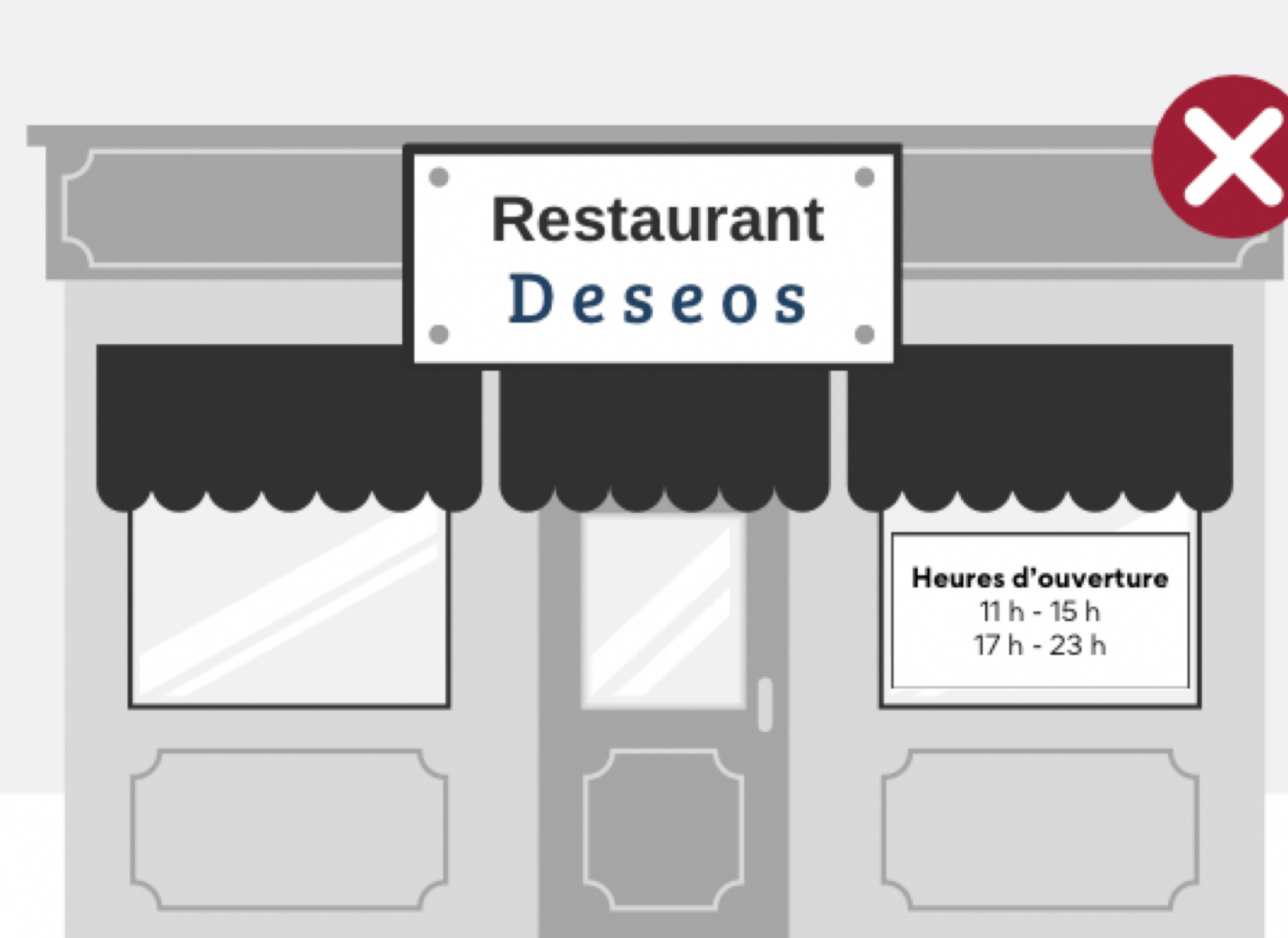
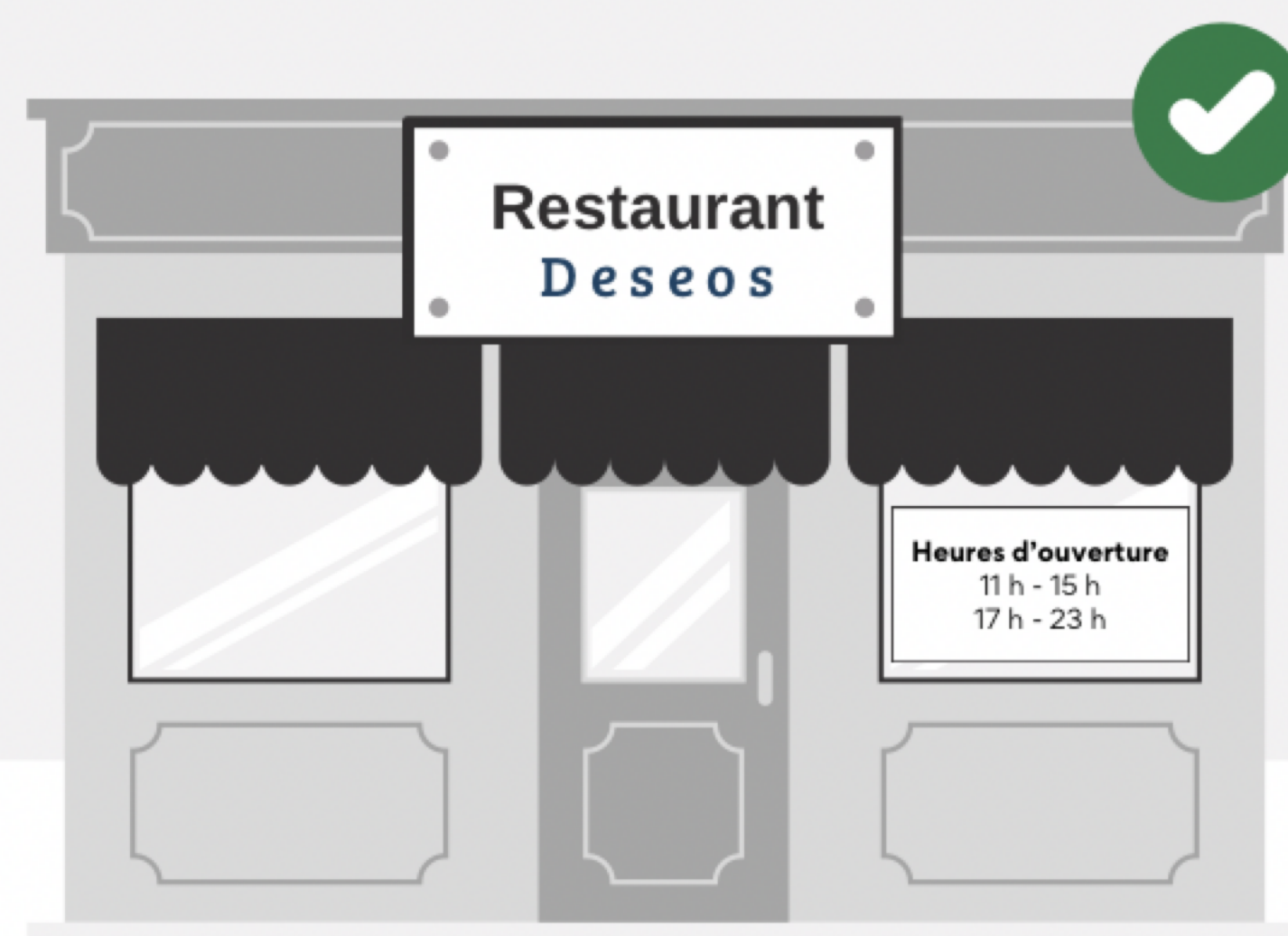
- Space allotted is **twice as large**.
- Is **just as legible** and **permanently visible**.
- Appears **within the same visual field**.

Some elements such as business hours are not counted in the “much greater visual impact” of French.

“Public signage visible from outside premises”

- Exterior signage on or near buildings (including pylon-type signs).
- Interior signage visible from outside premises.
- Signage visible from public spaces in office buildings and shopping malls.

Exceptions may apply including for certain invented trademarks and family names.



What Happens if You Do Not Comply



Customer complaint



Inspection



Order from the OQLF



Injunction



OQLF's "Blacklist"



Bad press

Public signage and commercial advertising accounted for **20%** of all complaints to the OQLF in 2023-2024

Failure to comply with an order from the OQLF is a **prosecutable offence**.

The order may be challenged before the administrative tribunal **within 30 days**.

- ✓ The OQLF can defer a matter for prosecution, which can lead to fines from \$3,000 to \$30,000 for organizations and \$1,400 to \$14,000 for directors or officers.
- ✓ Amounts are doubled or tripled for subsequent offences.
- ✓ Each day is a separate offence.

What We Can Do For You

We offer tailored solutions that will help you navigate compliance in view of the June 1, 2025, deadline.

- ✓ **Advising on compliance** of existing or proposed public signage under new rules.
- ✓ **Representing** you with the OQLF before, during and after compliance process:
 - Make **written observations** to the OQLF
 - **Help manage** OQLF investigations
 - **Contest** an OQLF order before the administrative tribunal
 - **Represent you in legal proceedings** initiated under the Charter (civil and penal proceedings, injunction, class action)

Our Team



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