

The duties, powers and functions of the Minister of Communications include all matters relating to telecommunications over which the Parliament of Canada has jurisdiction, not by law assigned to any other department, branch or agency of the Government of Canada. The general development and use of communication undertakings, facilities, systems and services for Canada also come under the minister's jurisdiction. The department is organized into four sectors: policy, space program, research and services.

The policy sector formulates and recommends international and national telecommunications policies and proposes legislation for the government's consideration. This sector coordinates federal-provincial relations and is the focal point for contacts with Teleglobe Canada and the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission. It also provides technological and socio-economic forecasts, identifies areas needing new research and development, and carries out strategic planning.

The department's field organization (Atlantic, Quebec, Ontario, Central and Pacific), is primarily concerned with management of the electromagnetic spectrum.

The space sector comprises all space-related activities. These responsibilities include Canada's Communications Technology Satellite (renamed Hermes); relations with Telesat Canada and other agencies concerned with space; development of new space systems and applications; and planning and international functions in this rapidly growing area of communications technology. The Communications Technology Satellite (Hermes) was launched January 17, 1976 from the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida, to begin a two-year program of experiments in communications.

The research sector carries out research and development in the complex field of communications, both in-house and through a system of university and industrial contracts. It performs research and development concerned with new communications and computer/communications systems and services, conducts extensive research in the use of the radio frequency spectrum and provides scientific advice to aid in formulating departmental policy and developing new programs. It also seeks to ensure that an adequate level of communications research and development capability is maintained in Canada. The department's principal research facility is the Communications Research Centre, just west of Ottawa. Responsibilities here are research policy and planning, radio and radar research, and technological and systems research and development.

Within the services sector, the Telecommunications Regulatory Service establishes technical standards for broadcasting facilities and equipment, issues technical certificates and radio operating licences and manages the radio frequency spectrum. Another branch, the Government Telecommunications Agency, provides consulting and centralized telecommunications services for the government.

The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission Act which was proclaimed for effect April 1, 1976 transferred the regulatory jurisdiction over certain telecommunications common carriers previously exercised by the Canadian Transport Commission to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission. Telephone and telegraph companies incorporated under federal legislation are now subject to the jurisdiction of the CRTC.

Radiocommunications in Canada, except for those matters covered by the Broadcasting Act, are regulated under the Radio Act and Regulations and the Canada Shipping Act and Ship Station Radio Regulations. The Radio Act and Regulations, in addition to providing for the licensing of radio stations performing terrestrial radio services, also provide for licensing earth and space stations engaged in space radiocommunication services. Radiocommunications in Canada are administered in accordance with the International Telecommunication Convention and Radio Regulations annexed thereto; the International Civil Aviation Convention; and the International Convention for the Safety of Life at