



Fact Sheet

Role of the Commissioner of Nunavut

The Commissioner of Nunavut is a federally-appointed position that has similar responsibilities to that of a provincial Lieutenant Governor. The three northern territories (Nunavut, the Northwest Territories and the Yukon) each have a Commissioner.

The Commissioner's role is formally outlined in sections 5-10 of the federal *Nunavut Act*. The Commissioner is also expected to act in accordance with the Letter of Instruction that he or she receives from the federal Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs upon appointment. These instructions are required by law to be tabled in the Legislative Assembly.

The Commissioner is formally designated in law as the Chief Executive for Nunavut and a part of the legislature (in the sense that the Commissioner's Assent is required before a Bill becomes law). However, the position has evolved over time.

Today, the Commissioner's powers are largely symbolic. In matters requiring his or her action, the Commissioner is expected to follow the advice of the Cabinet or Legislative Assembly, as the case may be.

The Commissioner's formal duties and powers include:

- Delivering the Opening Address (also referred to as the "Speech from the Throne" or "Throne Speech") on the first sitting day of a new Session. This Address outlines the Government's priorities and legislative agenda for the upcoming Session;
- Assenting to Bills after Third Reading in the Legislative Assembly;
- Proroguing Sessions of the Legislative Assembly;

- Dissolving, on the advice of Cabinet, the Legislative Assembly and issuing instructions for the holding of general elections;
- Administering the Oaths of Allegiance and Office to MLAs;
- Appointing, on the recommendation of the Legislative Assembly, the:
 - Premier;
 - Ministers;
 - Clerk of the Legislative Assembly;
 - Integrity Commissioner;
 - Languages Commissioner;
 - Information and Privacy Commissioner; and
 - Chief Electoral Officer
- Appointing, on the recommendation of Cabinet, members to certain boards, tribunals and other bodies;
- Appointing, on the recommendation of the Premier, Ministers to specific portfolios;
- Signing certain statutory instruments¹;
- Recognizing the achievements of individuals through the issuing of Commissioner's Awards; and
- Hosting ceremonial and protocol events.

The Deputy Commissioner executes the office and functions of the Commissioner during the Commissioner's absence or illness or other inability or when the office of Commissioner is vacant.

For further information please visit: <http://www.gov.nu.ca/en/commissioner.aspx>

and

<http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/nth/pubs/comm/comm-eng.asp>

¹ "Statutory instruments" include such items as rules, orders, regulations, directions, forms, tariffs of costs or fees, commissions, warrants, proclamations and resolutions.