

## 1.6. BUSINESS HOURS

Commercial offices open at 08:00 for an eight-hour day that includes a one or two hour lunch break. The work week is Monday to Friday, but some commercial establishments also operate on Saturday.

## 1.7. MEASURES

The metric system of weights and measures is used.

## 1.8. LANGUAGE

Venezuela's official language is Castilian Spanish but many businessmen speak or understand English. To a lesser degree, some french is used.

## 1.9. LEGAL SYSTEM

The legal system is based on Roman Law and the Napoleonic Code. The main tenets of the legal system are embodied in the Constitution (dated January 25, 1961), Congressional Laws, Executive Decrees, and legal norms of the Republic. The hierarchy of laws proceeds as follows: the Constitution, general laws, uniform (organic) laws, ordinary laws, regulations, decrees and resolutions.

The Supreme Court of Justice, the highest court, is the court of last resort. It is divided into three subject matter jurisdictions (politico-administrative, penal and civil), with five judges each.

## 1.10. POLITICAL SYSTEM

Venezuela is a federal republic of 22 states and a federal district. The current constitution established a democratic system of government based on the principle of separation of powers between the Executive, Legislative and Judiciary branches of government. The Executive Branch is made up of the President, whose term in office is five years, and the Council of Ministers. The Legislative Branch consists of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies. The Judiciary consists of the Supreme Court of Justice and lower courts of the general and special jurisdiction.

## 1.11. GOVERNMENT

There are popular elections every five years to fill positions in Congress, the presidency and state governorships. The President is elected