The treatment of Canadian prisoners of war and of enemy prisoners in Canada is subject to the conditions laid down in the convention relative to the treatment of prisoners of war concluded at Geneva, 27 July, 1929.

Eight separate departments of the Canadian government are actively engaged in looking after the interests and welfare of Canadian prisoners of war in enemy hands.

Official information concerning Canadian prisoners of war is transmitted from the official bureau of information in Berlin and Tokyo to the international committee of the Red Cross and the protecting power. It is sent by cable from the International Red Cross to the Department of External Affairs in Ottawa, and reports are later confirmed, in the case of Germany, by official lists from the protecting power through United Kingdom government channels.

Official visitors from the protecting power, the International Red Cross and the International Young Men's Christian Association are permitted to visit the German camps personally, talk freely with the prisoners' representatives and report their findings to the Canadian Department of External Affairs. Visits to Japanese-held camps are infrequently permitted, if at all.

The Department of External Affairs is thus the official channel of communication between Canada and the enemy. It is responsible for the interpretation and application of the Geneva convention relative to the treatment of prisoners of war and for the correlation of policy with other allied governments.

The Department of External Affairs distributes information to the other departments concerned. These include the three Departments of National Defence (for Navy, Army and Air) and the Department of Transport (for merchant seamen) who send official notifications to next-of-kin. The three defence departments arrange for pay, dependents' allowances and other matters concerning the prisoner in his capacity as a member of the armed forces. These matters are looked after for merchant seamen by the Department of Pensions and National Health.

The Department of Pensions and National Health is responsible for the rehabilitation of all war veterans and therefore has a particular interest in repatriated prisoners who are discharged from the forces. It is also responsible for handling disability pensions.

The Department of National War Services acts as co-ordinating body for all voluntary organizations rendering services to prisoners of war. It issues label permits for quarterly next-of-kin parcels, arranges substitutes for next-of-kin and handles inquiries as to regulations covering mail and parcels sent from Canada to prisoners abroad. Through the directorate of censorship it is responsible for the censoring of all mail being sent from Canada to prisoners of war and for seeing that mail regulations conform with agreements between the belligerent powers. It is also responsible for censoring all mail addressed to enemy prisoners of war in Canada.

The Post Office Department handles regulations covering the sending of mail and parcels to prisoners of war.

A number of private organizations have direct contact with prisoners of war. These include the Canadian Red Cross, which ships food parcels, assists with next-of-kin parcels and operates an enquiry bureau; the Canadian Legion Educational Services, which sends educational material to prisoners of war; the Canadian Prisoners of War Relatives Association, the Y.M.C.A. and others.