

THE OFFICIAL STATE GOVERNMENT INTERPRETING AND TRANSLATING AGENCY

Services Provided

- ✓ Face to Face Interpreting
- ✓ Telephone Interpreting
- ✓ Business Interpreting and Conference Interpreting
- ✓ Complimentary lectures on "How to Work with Interpreters"
- ✓ Translation from English or into English
- ✓ Translation of Business Cards
- ✓ Summary Translations and Checking of Translations
- ✓ Certified Translations
- ✓ Verification of correctness of work translated elsewhere
- ✓ Typesetting, Word Processing and Desk Top Publishing
- ✓ Voice Overs and Sub-Titling

In over 80 languages all hours telephone

8226 1990

Fax 8226 1992

email: itc@saugov.sa.gov.au

Visit us at: translate.sa.gov.au

WORKING WITH INTERPRETERS A short guide.

English is not the first language for many Australians. Some new arrivals and refugees have not yet mastered any English.

It is South Australian Government policy that language services — interpreting and translating — are provided to people of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in all South Australian government agencies. This is in accordance with the South Australian Government's "Access and Equity" principles and strategies.

It is your responsibility, as the service provider, to make sure that you can communicate effectively with your clients.

You cannot provide a good service if you do not understand your clients, or if they do not understand you.

Just because some clients of diverse background speak some English, it does not mean that you don't need an interpreter. Can they communicate effectively in a specialised area – such as a medical consultation, legal proceedings, or police interviews and enquiries?

In order to provide a good service, you need to take all appropriate steps to ensure that your clients understand you, and that you understand them.

If you do not use an interpreter when one is needed:

- ▶ You are not providing a good service
- ▶ You are denying a person a service to which he/she is entitled
- ▶ You are failing in your duty, and your "duty of care"
- ▶ You risk serious consequences for yourself
- ▶ You risk serious consequences for your client.

Use a trained, professional, accredited interpreter, who is impartial, bound by a strict code of ethics, and knows the terminology.

Do not rely on your clients' children, relatives, or friends, because;

- ▶ You will be in breach of privacy legislation
- ▶ They will not be impartial
- ▶ They might filter the information to "protect" their parent, relative or friend
- ▶ They might not be able to handle, or cope with things they will hear
- ▶ They might use information for private advantage or gain
- ▶ They cannot be expected to know the specialised terminology, and might make a serious or even fatal mistake.

Don't ask your clients to bring along relatives or friends to interpret. Even if they bring one, or offer to bring one, refuse the offer. Don't expose your clients, or yourself, to the traps and pitfalls that lie in wait.

Make the right decision — call a professional interpreter.

Here's how

- ▶ Find out the language and if there is one, the dialect your client or patient speaks. Dialects are crucial for communication in some languages.
- ▶ Call the Interpreting and Translating Centre (ITC) on 8226 1990, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- ▶ Give the operator:
 - The date, time location and duration of the assignment
 - The language (and dialect, if there is one)
 - The client's name and gender (when necessary request male interpreters for male clients and female interpreters for female clients)
 - Your organisation's name
 - Your full name
 - A relevant contact telephone number (ITC may need to contact you about the booking or assignment)
 - Order/Reference/File/Cost Centre/ UR Number
 - For 3-way telephone interpreter bookings, the client's telephone number.

At the time of making the booking, you may request a specific interpreter — and remember, it is important to match genders.

How to work with an Interpreter on the phone

- ▶ Introduce yourself to the interpreter.
- ▶ Brief the interpreter, describe the telephone equipment you are using (conference telephone, dual handset, single telephone) and where you are (counter, office, hospital ward).
- ▶ Introduce yourself and the interpreter to the client and describe the purpose of the interview.
- ▶ Limit your communication to short sentences or phrases at a time.
- ▶ Pause often to allow the interpreter to speak and expect the interpreter to interpret everything that you and your client say.
- ▶ Keep in mind that telephone interpreters rely entirely on words for communication. They have no visual cues (such as body language, gestures, or expressions) to assist in the interpreting.
- ▶ Clearly indicate the end of the session to the interpreter.

Telephone interpreting is not appropriate if:

- ▶ the person requiring assistance in English is under emotional, mental or physical stress
- ▶ the client is Deaf or hard of hearing
- ▶ the interview will be lengthy and/or complex
- ▶ visual aids are needed
- ▶ documents need to be referred to, or
- ▶ the situation does not lend itself to telephone interpreting — for example police, legal and medical circumstances.

How to work with an Interpreter on-site

- ▶ Plan your interview beforehand. Give general information to interpreters about the subject matter or nature of assignment to help them prepare.
- ▶ Organise an area where you can talk to the client in private, through the interpreter.
- ▶ Arrange optimum seating, that is in a triangle, circle, or as appropriate (such as the interpreter sitting offside and you facing the client).
- ▶ Allow extra time for the interview. As a general rule, double the time you normally allow for interviews without interpreters.
- ▶ When the interpreter arrives, let the interpreter introduce him/herself to you and the client. This is important — it removes barriers and helps build trust.
- ▶ Tell the client that what is discussed in the interview will remain confidential between you and the interpreter. This assurance is crucial.
- ▶ During the interview, speak directly to the client. Say "How can I help you?" **not** "Ask him/her how I can help him/her?"
- ▶ Speak clearly and slowly, and avoid jargon. If you have to use jargon, explain it.
- ▶ Let the interpreter control the length of each segment and arrange beforehand for him/her to signal you/the client when to stop. (Note: Spoken language interpreting is conducted in a consecutive fashion whereas Sign Language interpreting can be conducted simultaneously.)
- ▶ Always keep in mind that you are in control of the interview. Interpreters do not conduct the interview and do not do any written work, such as filling in forms or taking statements.
- ▶ Do not have private conversations with interpreters during the interview that exclude clients. Everything that is said during an interview must be interpreted.
- ▶ Do not request cultural information from the interpreter. Ask the client through the interpreter. Interpreters might assist of their own accord only when communication breaks down completely. (Note: You may request cultural information from the interpreter prior to or after the interview but not in the presence of the client.)
- ▶ Explain clearly when the interpreter seeks clarification.
- ▶ Debrief the interpreter if necessary, but only after the interview — not in the presence of your client.
- ▶ In a debriefing session, do not discuss case history. Only offer assistance if you consider the interpreter is affected by a particularly stressful situation.
- ▶ Generally, the client and interpreter leave at the same time.

Free Training

Learning how to work with interpreters is important, and it's not hard.

The Interpreting and Translating Centre (ITC) provides *free training* on "How To Work Effectively With Interpreters."

Use this opportunity to call ITC on 8226 1990 and book a free training session.

To book an interpreter telephone all hours
(08) 8226 1990

Fax: (08) 8226 1992

E-mail: itc@saugov.sa.gov.au



To arrange for a translation telephone office hours
(08) 8226 1980

Fax: (08) 8226 1992

E-mail: itc@saugov.sa.gov.au



To book an interpreter telephone all hours
(08) 8226 1990

Fax: (08) 8226 1992

E-mail: itc@saugov.sa.gov.au



To arrange for a translation telephone office hours
(08) 8226 1980

Fax: (08) 8226 1992

E-mail: itc@saugov.sa.gov.au



Visit us at: translate.sa.gov.au



Visit us at: translate.sa.gov.au