



Expectations for Interpreters

Interpreters are expected to:

- dress appropriately for assignments;
- take the first page of the contract to the assignment and ensure it is signed by the client;
- submit invoice within one week of the assignment;
- prepare any unfamiliar vocabulary or topics beforehand;
- speak in the first person in depositions, arbitrations, court hearings and trials;
- call project manager and/or client if late for an assignment.

Code of Ethics – State Justice Institute

The following code is taken from Court Interpretation: Model Guides for Policy and Practice in the State Courts, by William E. Hewitt and staff, State Justice Institute. Publication Number: R-167 ISBN: 0-89656-146-1. There are currently eight states, which have adopted these canons (or slight variations thereof). They are: Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, Maryland, Oregon, Washington, Utah and Virginia, Delaware. Additionally, California is currently discussing the possibility of modifying its code to include all ten of these canons. There is a commentary following each of the canons in the Model Guides book, which explains each of them more completely.

Canon 1: ACCURACY AND COMPLETENESS

Interpreters shall render a complete and accurate interpretation or sight translation, without altering, omitting, or adding anything to what is stated or written, and without explanation.

Canon 2: REPRESENTATION OF QUALIFICATIONS

Interpreters shall accurately and completely represent their certification, training, and pertinent experience.

Canon 3: IMPARTIALITY AND AVOIDANCE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Interpreters shall be impartial and shall refrain from conduct that may give an appearance of bias. Interpreters shall disclose any real or perceived conflict of interest.

Canon 4: PROFESSIONAL DEMEANOR

Interpreters shall conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the dignity of the court and shall be as unobtrusive as possible.

Canon 5: CONFIDENTIALITY

Interpreters shall protect the confidentiality of all privileged and other confidential information.

Canon 6: RESTRICTION OF PUBLIC COMMENT

Interpreters shall not publicly discuss, report, or offer an opinion concerning a matter in which they are or have been engaged, even when that information is not privileged or required by law to be confidential.

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Canon 7: SCOPE OF PRACTICE

Interpreters shall limit themselves to interpreting or translating, and shall not give legal advice, express personal opinions to individuals for whom they are interpreting, or engage in any other activities which may be construed to constitute a service other than interpreting or translating while serving as an interpreter.

Canon 8: ASSESSING AND REPORTING IMPEDIMENTS TO PERFORMANCE

Interpreters shall assess at all times their ability to deliver their services. When interpreters have any reservation about their ability to satisfy an assignment competently, they shall immediately convey that reservation to the appropriate judicial authority.

Canon 9: DUTY TO REPORT ETHICAL VIOLATIONS

Interpreters shall report to the proper judicial authority any effort to impede their compliance with any law, any provision of this code, or any other official policy governing court interpreting and legal translation.

Canon 10: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Interpreters shall continually improve their skills and knowledge and advance the profession through activities such as professional training and education, and interaction with colleagues and specialists in related fields.

CONSECUTIVE INTERPRETING RULES & Regulations

- Never paraphrase or change words
- Always speak in the first person
- Never initiate conversations with parties present unless otherwise permitted by a judge, interrogator or doctor
- Never render an opinion
- Never assist a person with his/her answer
- Never lie
- Never refuse to interpret because of language being used or nature of assignment
- Never assume the answer based on previous testimony
- Avoid praising the testimony given nor work being done (can occur during breaks)
- Report any inappropriate behavior to the lawyer, judge/officer of the court or person in charge
- Always conduct yourself with professionalism

Do

- Ask to spell out dates (i.e. 5.7.08 to May 7, 2008)
- Ask not to use hundreds when referring to thousands
- Ask for short phrases or to allow interpreter to interpret sentence by sentence

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- Take notes (important dates, names etc.)
- Ask for witness or interrogator to use only one language
- Ask for witness or interrogator to let you finish interpreting before they start with the next sentence/question
- Ask for a break if you are too tired to continue
- Always bring a dictionary
- Objections

Don't

- Do not get personal or develop a relationship with any party
- Do not offer to provide your services directly without Global Arena's involvement
- Do not cancel a job (call Global Arena if you are unable to attend)
- Do not show up late (call Global Arena if you are unable to arrive on time)
- Do not show up dressed unprofessionally
- Do not eat or drink (other than water) during assignments
- Do not discuss the case with anyone
- Do not say to the client that you are inexperienced or have never done this type of work before
- Do not discuss billing issues, rates or Global Arena's policies with any client, please refer all client inquiries to Global Arena Interpreting.

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