



Interpreter Communication Guidelines

Why This Matters

Interpreters must maintain strict role boundaries to protect neutrality, due process, court integrity, and interpreter liability. Even well-intended actions can create ethical and legal risk.

The Golden Rule

No officer or court staff present = No communication.

Interpreters may not independently contact or communicate with LEP individuals about probation or court matters.

What Interpreters MAY Do

- Interpret only when authorized
- Communicate only with officer or court staff present
- Limit communication to the exact purpose assigned

What Interpreters MAY NOT Do

- Initiate calls, texts, emails, or messages to LEP individuals
- Conduct reminder calls
- Clarify instructions independently
- Relay messages without officer participation
- Provide advice, explanations, or guidance
- Act as a go-between or advocate

If an LEP Individual Contacts You Directly

1. Politely explain: "I'm not able to communicate without your probation officer or court staff present."
2. Direct them to their probation officer, court clerk, or assigned attorney.
3. Notify probation or court staff of the attempted contact.

Correct Procedure for Communication

1. Receive authorization from probation officer, court staff, judicial officer, or attorney.
2. Conduct communication in person with officer present or by phone/video with officer included.
3. Interpret only — no additions, explanations, or advice.

Remember

Good intentions do not override ethical boundaries.

When in doubt: Pause. Ask. Clarify. Protect your role.

Acknowledgment of Receipt and Understanding

Interpreter Name (Print): _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____
