
Code of Ethics

of The Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc.

Introduction

The Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc., refers to individuals who may perform one or more of the following services:

- Interpret spoken English to American Sign Language and American Sign Language to spoken English;
- Transliterate spoken English to manually coded English/pidgin signed English, manually coded English/pidgin signed English to spoken English, and spoken English to paraphrased non-audible spoken English;
- Gesticulate/mime to and from spoken English

The Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc., has set forth the following principles of ethical behavior to protect and guide interpreters and transliterators and hearing and Deaf consumers. Underlying these principles is the desire to insure for all the right to communicate.

This Code of Ethics applies to all members of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc., and to all certified non-members.

Code of Ethics

1. Interpreters/translitterators shall keep all assignment-related information strictly confidential.

Guidelines: Interpreters/translitterators shall not reveal information about any assignment, including the fact that the service is being performed.

Even seemingly unimportant information could be damaging in the wrong hands. Therefore, to avoid this possibility, interpreters/translitterators must not say anything about any assignment. In cases where meetings or information become a matter of public record, the interpreter/translitterator should first discuss it with the person involved. If no solution can be reached, then both should agree on a third person who could advise them.

When training new trainees by the method of sharing actual experiences, the trainers shall not reveal any of the following information:

- name, sex, age, etc., of the consumer;
- day of the week, time of the day, time of the year the situation took place;
- location, including city, state or agency;

- other people involved;
- unnecessary specifics about the situation;
- It takes only a minimum amount of information to identify the parties involved.

2. Interpreters/translitterators shall render the message faithfully, always conveying the content and spirit of the speaker using language most readily understood by the person(s) whom they serve.

Guidelines: Interpreters/translitterators are not editors and must transmit everything that is said in exactly the same way it was intended. This is especially difficult when the interpreter disagrees with what is being said or feels uncomfortable when profanity is being used. Interpreters/translitterators must remember that they are not at all responsible for what is said, only for conveying it accurately. If the interpreter's/translitterator's own feelings interfere with rendering the message accurately, he/she shall withdraw from the situation.

While working from spoken English to sign or non-audible spoken English, the interpreter/translitterator should communicate in the manner most easily understood

or preferred by the deaf or hard-of-hearing person(s), be it American Sign Language, manually coded English, fingerspelling, paraphrasing in non-audible spoken English, gesturing, drawing, or writing. It is important for the interpreter/transliterators and deaf or hard-of-hearing person(s) to spend some time adjusting to each other's way of communicating prior to the actual assignment. When working from sign or non-audible spoken English, the interpreter/transliterators shall speak the language used by the hearing person in spoken form, be it English, Spanish, French, etc.

3. Interpreters/transliterators shall not counsel, advise or interject personal opinions.

Guidelines: Just as interpreters/transliterators may not omit anything that is said, they may not add anything that is said, they may not add anything to the situation, even when they are asked to do so by other parties involved.

An interpreter/transliterators is only present in a given situation because two or more people have difficulty communicating, and thus the interpreter's/transliterators' only function is to facilitate communication. He/she shall not become personally involved because in so doing, he/she accepts some responsibility for the outcome, which does not rightly belong to the interpreter/transliterators.

4. Interpreters/transliterators shall accept assignments using discretion with regard to skill, setting, and the consumers involved.

Guidelines: Interpreters/transliterators shall only accept assignments for which they are qualified. However, when an interpreter/transliterators shortage exists and the only available interpreter/transliterators does not possess the necessary skill for a particular assignment, this situation should be explained to the consumer. If the consumer agrees that services are needed regardless of skill level, then the available interpreter/transliterators will have to use his/her best judgment about accepting or rejecting the assignment.

Certain situations, due to content, consumer involvement, the setting or other reasons, may prove so uncomfortable for some interpreters/transliterators and/or consumers that the facilitating task is adversely affected. An interpreter/transliterators shall not accept assignments which he/she knows will be adversely affected.

Interpreters/transliterators shall generally refrain from providing services in situations where family members or close personal or professional relationships may affect impartiality, since it is difficult to mask inner feelings. Under these circumstances, especially in legal settings, the ability to prove oneself unbiased when challenged is lessened. In emergency situations, it is realized that the interpreter/transliterators may have to provide services for family members, friends, or close business associates.

However, all parties should be informed that the interpreter/transliterators may not become personally involved in the proceedings.

5. Interpreters/transliterators shall request compensation for services in a professional and judicious manner.

Guidelines: Interpreters/transliterators shall be knowledgeable about fees that are appropriate to the profession, and be informed about the current suggested fee schedule of the national organization. A sliding scale of hourly and daily rates has been established for interpreters/transliterators in many areas. To determine the appropriate fee, interpreters/transliterators should know their own level of skill, level of certification, length of experience, nature of the assignment, and local cost of living index.

There are circumstances when it is appropriate for interpreters/transliterators to provide services without charge. This should be done with discretion, taking care to preserve the self-respect of the consumers. Consumers should not feel that they are recipients of charity. When providing gratis services, care should be taken so that the livelihood of other interpreters/transliterators will be protected. A freelance interpreter/transliterators may depend on this work for a living and therefore must charge for services rendered, while persons with other full-time work may perform the service as a favor without feeling a loss of income.

6. Interpreters/transliterators shall function in a manner appropriate to the situation.

Guidelines: Interpreters/transliterators shall conduct themselves in such a manner that brings respect to themselves, the consumers, and the national organization. The term "appropriate manner," refers to: (a) dressing in a manner that is appropriate for the skin tone and is not distracting, and (b) conducting oneself in all phases of an assignment in a manner befitting a professional.

7. Interpreters/transliterators shall strive to further knowledge and skills through participation in workshops, professional meetings, interaction with professional colleagues, and reading of current literature in the field.

8. Interpreters/transliterators, by virtue of membership in or certification by the RID, Inc., shall strive to maintain high professional standards in compliance with the code of ethics.