

GENERAL GUIDELINES ON COURTROOM PROTOCOL FOR INTERPRETERS

DO

- Always be on time/ be early.
- Have a short introduction w/your credentials ready for *voire dire*.
- Indicate on the record the beginning and end of your service.
- Introduce yourself to all parties.
- Try to obtain information on case prior to the hearing. Read documents available. Develop vocabulary.
- Ask counsel to, or tell counsel you will, explain your role to the LEP. Always in the presence of his/her attorney.
- Sit next to defendant at counsel table; stand next to witness during testimony on stand.
- Use first person direct speech only. Refer to yourself in the third person, as “the interpreter”.
- Address any concern or request directly to the Judge or Commissioner: “Your Honor, interpreter would...” or, “Your Honor, may [the] interpreter...”
- Notify the court of any mistakes made and correct the record.
- When in doubt, consult, ask and clarify. Always request permission and place a request on the record.
- Give an accurate and smooth interpretation; speak loudly and clearly.
- Be pleasant, cooperative, patient, and keep a sense of humor.
- Complete all interpreter paperwork correctly and invoice in a timely manner.
- If a hearing will require special accommodations, for example if it will be conducted remotely, contact the court a few days before the assignment to confirm case and meeting information.

DON'T

- Be late.
- Misrepresent your qualifications to the Court or Counsel.
- Accept an assignment for which you are not qualified.
- Have private conversations with the defendant prior to the proceeding, during testimony, or at counsel’s table, or have conversations with any other party/jury member during breaks.
- Walk into the well.
- Imitate gestures, movements (unless you are a sign language interpreter).
- Show emotions/bias.
- Substitute a uh-huh w/a yes or no.
- Substitute a sound with a word.
- Address anyone informally.
- Abuse the privilege to interrupt a proceeding. (Save interruptions for important requests such as correction of errors, clarifications, repetitions, etc.)
- Let anyone force you to give information on a case. You may end up being a witness in the proceedings.
- Offer an opinion about the witness for the court/counsel no matter how harmless it sounds to you.
- Interject your comments about anything in or out of the courtroom.
- Accept gifts, gratuities of any kind.
- Perform duties other than those within the scope of your profession.
- Be a referral service for attorneys or anyone else.
- Ever let them see you flustered.