
**Interpreting — Guidelines for
community interpreting**

Interprétation — Lignes directrices pour l'interprétation en milieu social

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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see www.iso.org/patents).

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For an explanation on the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the WTO principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) see the following URL: [Foreword - Supplementary information](#).

The committee responsible for this document is ISO/TC 37 *Terminology and other language and content resources*, Subcommittee SC 5, *Translation, interpreting and related technology*.

Introduction

This International Standard was developed in response to a worldwide need to accommodate linguistic, cultural, and ethnic diversity of people who interact via oral and signed communication. In every nation of the world, there are groups of people who do not speak the language of the majority, regardless of whether they live in their country of citizenship or birth. These linguistic minorities access services through community interpreters, also called public service interpreters (See [Annex A](#) for further details). Community interpreting is essential for members of linguistic minorities who wish to exercise their right to communicate and access services. Community interpreting puts the minority language speaker, who seeks access to a community service, on the same footing as a native speaker of the societal language. The growing cultural and ethnic diversity adds specific challenges to the requirement of delivering services to consumers who do not share the societal language(s). In both urban and rural areas, speakers of the societal language and linguistic minorities communicate effectively, deliver, and access services through community interpreters.

Given the diversity of our world, encounters in which participants do not share a language are becoming more and more common. Community interpreting is a means by which service providers can ensure that the same access to quality of services is offered to all linguistic communities, regardless of their culture or language.

Community interpreting has become established as a professional type of interpreting. There are various codes and standards for specific settings (e.g. healthcare interpreting), but there are currently no universally agreed rules or standards for community interpreters, who are called to work in many different types of community settings.

It is important to stress that interpreting differs from translation as it deals mainly with oral or signed communication rather than written communication. Community interpreting occurs in a wide variety of dissimilar settings and should not be confused with other types of interpreting.

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Interpreting — Guidelines for community interpreting

1 Scope

This International Standard establishes criteria and recommendations for community interpreting during oral and signed communication that enables access to services for people who have limited proficiency in the language of such services. Community interpreting occurs in a wide variety of private and public settings and supports equal access to community and/or public services.

This International Standard addresses community interpreting as a profession, not as an informal practice such as interpreting performed by friends, family members, children, or other persons who do not have the competences and qualifications specified in this International Standard or who do not follow a relevant Code of Ethics.

This International Standard is a guidance document. It establishes and provides the basic principles and practices necessary to ensure quality community interpreting services for all language communities, for end users, as well as for requesters, and service providers. Furthermore, it provides general guidelines that are common to all forms of community interpreting. This International Standard is applicable to settings wherever speakers of non-societal languages need to communicate to access services. The settings vary and can include, among others, the following:

- public institutions (schools, universities, community centres, etc.);
- human and social services (refugee boards, self-help centres, etc.);
- healthcare institutions (hospitals, nursing homes, etc.);
- business and industry (real estate, insurance, etc.);
- faith-based organizations (rituals, ceremonies, etc.);
- emergency situations (natural disasters, epidemics, etc.).

Interpreting that enables access to services may include services provided in legal settings (police stations, courts, prisons, etc.) that facilitate equal access to justice. In some countries, legal interpreting, a broad field that includes court interpreting, is not considered part of community interpreting. This International Standard does not supersede national standards or legislation which addresses any sector of interpreting, including court or legal interpreting (See [Annex A](#) for further details).

This International Standard also provides guidance for the provision of community interpreting services. As a result, this International Standard addresses and refers to all parties involved in facilitating any communicative event that enables access to community services, such as members of linguistic minorities, community interpreters, community-interpreting service providers, public institutions, and other stakeholders who provide services to diverse linguistic communities.

2 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

2.1 Concepts related to interpreting activities

2.1.1

interpreting, verb

rendering a spoken or signed *source language* (2.4.5) message into a spoken or signed *target language* (2.4.6) in real time

2.1.2

community interpreting public service interpreting

bidirectional interpreting that takes place in *communicative settings* (2.2.3) among speakers of different languages for the purpose of accessing community services

Note 1 to entry: Community interpreting may involve both private and public services provided by private or public *interpreting service providers* (2.3.1). Community interpreting is not limited to accessing social services and includes, for example, services to tourists and disaster victims.

2.1.3

consecutive interpreting mode

interpreting where the rendering of speech is performed into the other language at appropriate pauses or intervals during the interaction

Note 1 to entry: Consecutive interpreting mode is best suited to community interpreting and it is considered the default or most common mode.

Note 2 to entry: The intervals can be arranged beforehand between speakers and the *community interpreter* (2.3.3).

Note 3 to entry: The ability for *note-taking* (2.1.7) is recommended for consecutive interpreting mode.

Note 4 to entry: More time is recommended for interpreted *communicative events* (2.2.2) using consecutive interpreting mode.

Note 5 to entry: Community interpreters are allowed and sometimes even encouraged to request clarification when it is apparent that an end user has difficulty understanding a particular concept during the interpreted session.

2.1.4

simultaneous interpreting mode

interpreting where the rendering of a speech into another language is done at the same time as the speaker/signer is delivering the speech

2.1.5

chuchotage

simultaneous interpreting mode (2.1.4) where the rendering is whispered

Note 1 to entry: Chuchotage is sometimes used when sound equipment is not available or when the audience is too small to justify the use of sound equipment.

2.1.6

healthcare interpreting medical interpreting

community interpreting (2.1.2) that occurs when individuals are accessing services that deal with medicine and/or healthcare and where *community interpreters* (2.3.3) facilitate communication between patients and their families, healthcare providers, and healthcare administrators

Note 1 to entry: The *communicative setting* (2.2.3) can be a doctor's office, a house call, a hospital, a health clinic, or other medical or healthcare institution.

2.1.7

note-taking

interpreting (2.1.1) technique used to aid the *community interpreter's* (2.3.3) memory and attention by noting important terms, links, and data

Note 1 to entry: The important information for noting can include items such as dates and figures.

2.1.8**sight translation**

process of rendering written content in the *source language* (2.4.5) into the *target language* (2.4.6) in oral or signed form in real time

Note 1 to entry: Sight translation occurs frequently in *community interpreting* (2.1.2) (e.g. sight translating of medical test results, administrative forms in government institutions, etc.).

2.1.9**remote interpreting**

interpreting (2.1.1) using specialized equipment to communicate between the parties

2.1.10**telephone interpreting**

remote interpreting (2.1.9) using specialized telephone systems

2.1.11**video interpreting**

remote interpreting (2.1.9) using specialized television screens/monitors

2.1.12**relay interpreting**

interpreting (2.1.1) that occurs when an interpreter's source input comes from another interpreter's rendition rather than directly from the speaker

Note 1 to entry: When there are several target languages in a meeting and the interpreters of those languages do not all understand the language of the speaker (e.g. Urdu), a source language interpreter renders the text to a language common to all interpreters in the meeting (e.g. from Urdu to English) who then interpret into their respective target language (e.g. from English to French, German, Italian, Nahuatl, Spanish, Welsh, etc.).

2.2 Concepts related to interpreted communicative events**2.2.1****communicative event**

event during which information is transmitted between two or more parties

Note 1 to entry: Intention, form, gist, gesture, pauses, silences, and tone used in a communicative event can affect the transmitted information

2.2.2**interpreted communicative event**

communicative event (2.2.1) where *interpreting* (2.1.1) facilitates communication of at least three participants

EXAMPLE 1 A doctor-patient interview in which the doctor speaks the societal language and the patient is a speaker of a minority language.

EXAMPLE 2 A parent-teacher meeting where the teacher and the parents do not share the same language.

Note 1 to entry: The language used in an interpreted communicative event can be signed or spoken.

Note 2 to entry: For details on the three parties, see 3.1

2.2.3**communicative setting**

physical or virtual area where an *interpreted communicative event* (2.2.2) takes place

Note 1 to entry: Sometimes *community interpreters* (2.3.3) work face-to-face and sometimes remotely using technology such as video or teleconferencing

EXAMPLE A village meeting or school teacher-parent conference.

2.3 Concepts related to people or organizations involved in interpreting

2.3.1

interpreting service provider

ISP

person or organization supplying *interpreting* (2.1.1) services

Note 1 to entry: An ISP may be a single independent *community interpreter* (2.3.3), an agency, a private or public company, an institution, or a department within an institution such as an *interpreting* (2.1.1) department within a hospital.

2.3.2

interpreter

language professional who conveys a message produced in a *source language* (2.4.5), be it spoken or signed, into a *target language* (2.4.6), spoken or signed, in real time, and whose task is to convey every element of the message

Note 1 to entry: Elements of a message can include content, intention, form, gist, gesture, pauses, silences, tone, etc.

Note 2 to entry: A professional interpreter will always observe the relevant code of ethics of the profession as well as the standards of practice.

2.3.3

community interpreter

interpreter (2.3.2) who facilitates communication, in any *communicative setting* (2.2.3), be it private or public, between two or more speakers who do not share a common language, for the sole purpose of accessing community or public services

Note 1 to entry: A community interpreter should hold a degree in interpreting or in a field related to his/her work, or should have specific qualifications and exhibit *interpreting* (2.1.1) skills, demonstrating experience, observing the relevant code of ethics of the profession and earning income from *interpreting* (2.1.1).

2.3.4

client

person or organization requesting a language service from a language service provider

Note 1 to entry: The client is usually the person or organization that asks for *community interpreting* (2.1.2) or *translation* (2.5.3) on behalf of the *end-users* (2.3.5). The client and *end user* (2.3.5) can be the same person or organization in some situations.

Note 2 to entry: Whether a contract is entered into between the client and an *ISP* (2.3.1), or the *end user* (2.3.5) and an *ISP* (2.3.1), will depend on the circumstances of each *communicative event* (2.2.1).

EXAMPLE A community interpreting service.

2.3.5

end user

person or group of persons who ultimately need and use the language service requested

Note 1 to entry: The end user is often not the same as the *client* (2.3.4).

2.3.6

linguistic minority

group of people who might not read, write, speak, or understand the language(s) of the society where they reside well enough to obtain meaningful access to community or public services

2.4 Concepts related to language, language content, and language competences

2.4.1

societal language

language that is spoken or signed by the majority of the people in the society in which they live

2.4.2**non-societal language**

language that is not spoken or signed by society at large, or is not the language of a territory or region

Note 1 to entry: Non-societal language can have less status than the societal language ([2.4.1](#)).

2.4.3**A language**

working language that the *interpreter* ([2.3.3](#)) or *translator* ([2.5.2](#)) has declared as the strongest or most dominant/active language in his/her language combination

2.4.4**B language**

working language in which the *interpreter* ([2.3.3](#)) or *translator* ([2.5.2](#)) is highly fluent and which s/he has declared as the second strongest active language in his/her language combination

2.4.5**source language**

language of the source from which content is rendered into the *target language* ([2.4.6](#))

2.4.6**target language**

language into which *source language content* ([2.4.7](#)) is rendered

2.4.7**source language content**

anything representing information or knowledge in the *source language* ([2.4.5](#))

2.5 Concepts related to translation as differentiated from interpreting**2.5.1****translate, verb**

render written source language content into target language content in written form

2.5.2**translator**

language professional who *translates* ([2.5.1](#))

[SOURCE: ISO 17100:—¹, 2.4.3, modified]

2.5.3**translation**

process of rendering source language content into target language content in written form

[SOURCE: ISO 17100:—¹, 2.1.2]

3 Basic principles of community interpreting**3.1 Nature of community interpreting**

Community interpreting facilitates communication between users and providers of public, private, and other community services who do not share the same language (either spoken or signed) for the purpose of accessing services offered in the community. It occurs mainly in institutional (governmental and non-governmental) settings such as hospitals, doctors' and solicitors' offices, community agencies, social welfare, faith-based organizations, housing or employment agencies, schools, and police stations.

Community interpreting involves the transfer of signed, verbal, and non-verbal messages in real time. The language of one user group (the provider) is usually the societal language(s) of the country. The

1) To be published.

language of the end user, (i.e. the person/s seeking access to services is the non-societal language) is the language of a specific language and/or ethnic group. Community interpreting serves the latter user group to ensure their ability to communicate in order to access services. In some settings or countries, it is often the case that users of a non-societal language are vulnerable groups, and in some cases, it is not. In all cases, community interpreting ensures every person a right to communicate using his/her own language.

An interpreted communicative event takes place in an encounter of at least three participants:

- a) one or more speakers of a non-societal language. For example, a refugee or a patient (whether a local or a tourist) seeking healthcare, or a parent who needs to communicate with school authorities;
- b) one or more speakers of the societal language, generally the service provider. For example, a government agent, an office employee, a physician, a marriage counsellor, a social worker, or a teacher;
- c) a community interpreter who facilitates the communication in either consecutive interpreting mode or simultaneous interpreting mode.

These three parties should interact for the encounter to be considered an interpreted communicative event.

3.2 The work of community interpreters

Community interpreters engage in interactive types of bidirectional communication. Such individuals are proficient in two or more languages (spoken or signed) and so are able to facilitate interpreted communicative events in those languages. In these events, community interpreters usually work in a consecutive interpreting mode (except for those using sign language) but they can also interpret in simultaneous interpreting mode, with sound equipment or doing *chuchotage* (2.1.5) (for smaller groups). Sometimes they work face-to-face and sometimes remotely using technology such as video or teleconferencing. They operate in an asymmetrical relationship between professionals and users who are in a position of need.

3.3 End users of community interpreting services

End users of community interpreting services belong to two distinct groups. One group is formed by speakers of the societal language who are offering services (e.g. education, healthcare, insurance). In addition to the knowledge of the societal language, this group has knowledge of the subject matter (e.g. education, healthcare, insurance). The other group is generally formed by linguistic minorities, people who are not sufficiently proficient in the societal language, and who need to communicate with speakers of the societal language in order to access services.

3.4 Interpreting service providers (ISPs)

ISPs can be

- natural persons, i.e. community interpreters themselves providing the service, or
- legal entities, i.e. organizations, interpreting agencies.

Whether ISPs are natural persons or entities, they should only assign professionally qualified community interpreters. In all cases, ISPs should demand proof of competences required for the job at hand, as well as references. Proof of qualifications should be verified.

3.5 Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice

Community interpreters should be trained by the relevant authority using their services (or the examiner body) to adhere to the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice relevant to their sector and geographical area. Community interpreters should make every possible effort to become informed about the code of ethics and standards applicable, and of the entity to which ethical violations can be reported.

4 Community interpreter's competences and qualifications

4.1 General

Community interpreters should have the competence to understand and convey a message from the source to the target language (spoken or signed) in a manner that puts the non-native speaker who seeks access to a community service on the same footing as a native speaker of the societal language.

4.2 Competences

4.2.1 Competences related to interpreting

Community interpreters should have the ability to convey a message from the source to the target language (be it spoken or signed) in the appropriate interpreting mode. Accurate interpreting requires the ability to assess and comprehend the original message and render it in the target language in a way that preserves the meaning and supports the same communicative function as the original message. Community interpreting ability also requires the knowledge, awareness, and understanding of the community interpreter's own role in the interpreted communicative event, including the ability to limit that role as required, to intervene when necessary, and to support direct communication between people who do not share a common language.

A professional community interpreter should be able to do the following:

- interpret in consecutive interpreting mode and simultaneous interpreting mode, as appropriate;
- sight-translate materials written in both working languages (when applicable);
- take notes during the interpreted assignment, if necessary (e.g. consecutive interpreting mode);
- monitor his/her own performance;
- apply active listening skills;
- provide effective delivery skills;
- rely on strong memory skills;
- identify and convey the appropriate language registers (i.e. formal or informal variety of language used in a particular situation or when communicating with a particular group of people);
- anticipate when to intervene during the interaction;
- develop effective problem-solving strategies;
- develop and practise effective intervention skills, including transparency;
- respect/manage professional good practice and role boundaries of all participants in the interpreted communicative events;
- improve performance through self-training, attendance of further training courses (which should be documented), and life-long learning;
- observe applicable standards of practice and code of ethics in his/her work;
- support client autonomy (e.g. refrain from giving advice);
- use chuchotage.

4.2.2 Linguistic ability

Community interpreters should demonstrate linguistic ability in their working languages based on accepted standards of language proficiency. This means the community interpreter should be able to understand and produce technical and non-technical language for a variety of speakers and listeners who vary in age, gender, race, ethnicity, and socio-economic status. The community interpreter should exhibit an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the linguistic varieties of his/her working languages (e.g. dialects, regional varieties, idiomatic expressions) and the required range of language registers. In addition, the community interpreter should have knowledge of subject areas and relevant terminology in both languages and display the same ways of speaking/signing in the subject areas in which he/she is working.

4.2.3 Technical skills

Community interpreters should demonstrate the ability to use the equipment (such as tele- and video-conferencing technology) that can be necessary for on-site or remote interpreting, including microphone etiquette (e.g. pressing the mute button when coughing).

4.3 Research skills

Community interpreters should demonstrate the ability to efficiently acquire the additional linguistic, terminological, and specialized knowledge necessary to interpret in specialized cases. Research skills also include expertise and experience in the use of research tools (e.g. software), and the ability to develop suitable strategies for the efficient use of the information sources available (e.g. terminology databases, parallel texts).

4.4 Interpersonal skills

The community interpreter should:

- be polite, respectful, and tactful;
- be able to relate well with people;
- exhibit strong communication skills;
- display cross-cultural competence;
- use effective interjection skills when appropriate;
- manage and keep up the flow of communication;
- exhibit self-control and impartial behaviour in all situations.

4.5 Evidence of qualifications

The ISP should verify and be able to provide verification of the interpreter's competence to provide a service conforming to this International Standard by seeking documented evidence of successful completion of a language proficiency test, or other evidence of language proficiency, in the community interpreter's working languages at a level recognized as adequate for interpreting.

In addition, the ISP should verify and be able to provide verification, by seeking documented evidence, that the community interpreter can meet at least one of the following criteria:

- a) a recognized degree (e.g. BA., MA. or Ph.D.) in interpreting from an institution of higher education, or a recognized educational certificate in community interpreting;
- b) a recognized degree in any other field from an institution of higher education plus two years of continuous experience in community interpreting or a relevant certificate from a recognized institution;

- c) an attestation of competence in interpreting (such as interpreter certification) awarded by an appropriate government body or government-accredited body or recognized professional organization for this field, and proof of other equivalent qualifications or experience in community interpreting;
- d) membership in an existing nationwide register of interpreters with clear qualification criteria meeting as a minimum the competences requirements of this International Standard.
- e) five years of continuous experience in community interpreting in cases where a) to c) cannot be reasonably met.
- f) a certificate of attendance to further vocational training modules upon request.

5 Recommendations for clients and end users

Organizations that contract community interpreters should have documented procedures in place for selecting community interpreters. Organizations should ensure that the competences required of the community interpreters are maintained and updated.

The client should:

- always inform the ISP (agency or community interpreter) of any known risks and provide any advice, protection, and safety measures generally available to participants in an interpreted communicative event. The community interpreter should never be required to enter a situation that poses a risk to his/her safety, health, or well-being;
- provide as much information as possible about the requested assignment such as background, terminological or other language-related information, brochures, documents to undertake sight translation, etc. The information will assist the community interpreter (or the ISP) in researching the field/domain. Any related documentation, previously translated files, or glossaries related to the case are strongly recommended for the successful completion of the assignment;
- book additional time for an appointment requiring interpreting to accommodate the consecutive interpreting mode.

During interpreted communicative event, the client or end user should do the following:

- a) speak clearly and at a moderate pace;
- b) speak directly to the party s/he wishes to address, rather than to the community interpreter. The community interpreter should be addressed only when necessary (e.g. when the community interpreter needs to be provided with special instructions);
- c) have the community interpreter sign a non-disclosure agreement, if appropriate;
- d) for long assignments, provide the community interpreter with a break after a maximum of 60 min if interpreting consecutively or 15 min to 30 min if interpreting simultaneously. Alternatively, allow for the commissioning of more than one community interpreter. Otherwise, fatigue can take a toll on accuracy and jeopardize quality;
- e) pause frequently (or as agreed) to allow the community interpreter to render all the information if consecutive interpreting mode is being used. A normal speech pace is recommended if simultaneous interpreting mode is being used;
- f) be aware of non-verbal elements of communication, such as body language;
- g) encourage the community interpreter to request clarification, if required;
- h) provide an appropriate working environment suitable for the situation, such as adequate seating arrangements;

- i) allow the community interpreter to access case documents (for documentation purposes);
- j) always attempt to ensure the most appropriate mode of interpreting is used (consecutive interpreting mode or simultaneous interpreting mode). A professional community interpreter will always be able to recommend the best technique to be used in a specific situation;
- k) avoid interrupting the community interpreter; allow the community interpreter to finish his/her statement;
- l) be aware of, and minimize possible noises, interferences, interruptions, etc. that could affect the work of the community interpreter.

6 Responsibilities of interpreting service providers (ISPs)

6.1 Role of ISPs

ISPs (interpreters or organizations providing interpreting) should coordinate the provision of community interpreting services with clients and community interpreters.

6.2 ISPs' responsibilities to the client

The ISP (interpreter or an organization providing interpreting) should:

- inform the client promptly if a community interpreter is not available in the requested language combination;
- ensure that all community interpreters hired or contracted are qualified professionals (see [4.4](#)) capable of performing the specified task;
- disclose the community interpreter's qualifications to the client especially if the only community interpreter available does not meet the requirements for the specific setting;
- inform client and end user of any conflict of interest that might arise;
- brief the client on how to work effectively with community interpreters. If applicable, provide written guidance materials on how to work with community interpreters, in order to facilitate communication;
- provide the client with a detailed client-ISP agreement specifying pricing, terms, policies, and procedures for community interpreting assignments;
- verify that community interpreters provided by the ISP are of legal status and free of any penal and/or criminal records (if verification of records is possible);
- not assign a community interpreter to legal settings in countries where there are separate standards and legislation for court and legal interpreting, as doing so would go against the local standards and code of ethics of that specific type of interpreting.

6.3 ISPs' responsibilities to community interpreters

When a community interpreter is engaged, the ISP (interpreter or organization providing interpreting) should do the following:

- a) provide the community interpreter with detailed information about the assignment. This includes
 - 1) obtaining context/materials/documentation from the client, as applicable,
 - 2) providing any glossaries or resources available,

- 3) providing administrative details such as complete address, contact information, etc.;
- b) ensure proper working conditions for the community interpreter. This includes
 - 1) promoting an adequate working environment,
 - 2) briefing the client about the community interpreter's needs and boundaries,
 - 3) providing the required number of community interpreters or team of community interpreters if applicable,
 - 4) checking, if possible, that the work environment is safe for the community interpreter to perform without risk to personal safety or life, especially in the case of assignments in prisons, mental health institutions, or military zones,
 - 5) giving the community interpreter the right to leave a dangerous assignment or situation where life or personal safety can be at stake without penalty,
 - 6) not accepting assignments in legal settings in countries where there are separate standards and legislation for court and legal interpreting, as doing so would go against the local standards and code of ethics of regulating that specific type of interpreting,
- c) clearly establish and document any contractual terms and conditions of the working relationship with community interpreters, clearly agreeing upon payment practices;
- d) pay within the timeframe prescribed by the law of the country. In absence of law, pay within a reasonable timeframe and/or according to established agreement between the parties. Payment to a community interpreter should not be subject to payment by the client.

7 Role and responsibilities of community interpreters

7.1 Role of the community interpreter

Community interpreters should do the following:

- adhere to local standards of practice and local code of ethics at all times;
- accept only those community interpreting assignments in which they are able to perform at the level of professionalism set by this International Standard;
- refuse to carry out duties for which they lack the appropriate education, training, qualifications, or credentials (e.g. replace a physician or a nurse by taking down a patient's history, instead of interpreting their questions);
- listen to both speakers respectfully, observe their body language, and convey the meaning of all messages from one language to the other, without unnecessary additions, deletions, or changes of meaning;
- manage the flow of communication between the parties (e.g. to ensure an appropriate pace and turn-taking when parties speak or sign too quickly or overlap);
- intervene (verbally or non-verbally) when speakers do not allow community interpreters to perform their job or when speakers speak too fast;
- understand and convey cultural nuances;
- request clarification of a term unfamiliar to the community interpreter. When permissible and necessary, the community interpreter can ask the party using unclear or unnecessarily complicated language to re-state their communication in plain language;

NOTE In certain settings such as mental health or police interrogations, such interventions by the community interpreter might not always be appropriate or permissible.