

# Tips for Working with Interpreters in The Courtroom

1. **DO** speak in the 1st person.  
(**DO NOT** say “Ask the witness if...” or “Tell him that...”)
2. **DO** try to simplify legal language.  
(**DO NOT** use complicated terms.)
3. **DO** speak and ensure that others speak at a volume and rate that can be accommodated by the interpreter.  
(**DO NOT** speak at your normal rate, especially for dates and numbers.)
4. **DO** make certain that the interpreter can easily hear and see the proceedings.  
(**DO NOT** put them in the corner or out of the way.)
5. **DO** your best to assure only one person speaks at a time.  
(**DO NOT** speak when others are speaking.)
6. **DO** allow the interpreter to take notes and use a dictionary during a hearing.  
(**DO NOT** require interpreters to work unaided.)
7. **DO** allow breaks for the interpreter between or during cases.  
(**DO NOT** have uninterrupted sessions of more than 30 minutes without breaks.)
8. **DO** use interpreter teams (2 or more interpreters) for trials and other hearings lasting more than 30 minutes.  
(**DO NOT** require interpreters to work unassisted over prolonged periods.)
9. **DO** ensure that the interpreter can effectively communicate with the LEP party.  
(**DO NOT** assume that everyone from the same country speaks the same language, or that everyone who speaks the same language can understand each other well; think about the difference among English speaking persons from England, Australia, and the northeast or southern United States.)
10. **DO** provide interpreters with copies of pleadings and other case information to view ahead of time.  
(**DO NOT** assume that unprepared sight translation is easy; **DO NOT** presume that the interpreter will be prepared for case-specific technical vocabulary.)
11. **DO** confirm that interpreter has no conflicts of interest.  
(**DO NOT** allow an interpreter to continue working if potential conflicts of interest exist.)
12. **DO** confirm that the interpreter is familiar with and will abide by the Arizona Court Interpreter Code of Conduct.  
(**DO NOT** permit an interpreter unfamiliar with the Code of Conduct to continue working.)
13. **DO** check into the qualifications of the interpreter. Credentialed interpreters have a certificate from the Supreme Court with their unique Arizona identification number as proof of their credentialed status. Courts can verify this in the [Arizona Court Interpreter Registry](#).  
(**DO NOT** assume that the interpreter is credentialed.)
14. **DO** note any concerns about the quality of interpreting on the record.  
(**DO NOT** address these concerns only outside of the proceeding.)
15. **DO** contact the person responsible for the scheduling the court interpreter about any interpreter concerns.  
(**DO NOT** fail to disclose information about interpreter performance or misconduct.)