

TIPS FOR COURT INTERPRETERS

IMPORTANT NOTE: This document provides tips for court interpreters on remote interpreting in virtual courtrooms. Be sure to also read the “[General Tips](#)” and specific tips for [Judges](#) and [Hosts/Moderators](#).

1. For court proceedings that require remote interpreting services, coordination with the Vicinage Coordinator of Interpreting Services (VCIS) and/or staff Interpreters prior to the court event is needed to determine the best possible remote interpreting service. **See item #16 below.**
2. Have a headset and dedicated microphone which can be used on a computer or a cell phone.
3. Be connected via ethernet cable to the Internet router or, if using WiFi, work near the router.
4. If using a cell phone, always use headphones (never speakerphone), and be situated in a quiet place with no background noise and a strong cellular signal.
5. Make sure any devices being used for the virtual meeting are fully charged and/or plugged in.
6. Access the virtual court event with the invitation link, meeting ID/password, or conference call number + access codes.
7. Adjust audio settings on the computer. If available, enable background noise suppression options.
8. If you have access to video, select “gallery view” as this will allow you to follow the flow and know who is speaking.
 - a. You can click or tap on the image of the person/s you are interpreting for.
9. Follow host instructions in testing audio/video.
10. If using two devices simultaneously, be aware of which microphones or volume settings require adjustment to avoid causing echo inside the virtual meeting room. Remember to UN-mute your microphone when necessary.
11. Before going on the record, if needed, coordinate with host as to appropriate interpretation mode(s) that will be used (i.e. consecutive or simultaneous).
12. Handling long utterances or questions while working in consecutive mode:
 - a. Gesture to the speaker (if you are on video) to give you a moment to start interpreting.
 - If the speaker does not stop, appropriately state on the record that the interpreter needs a moment to interpret.

TIPS FOR COURT INTERPRETERS

- b. If you are not on video, appropriately state on the record that the interpreter needs a moment to interpret.
13. If there is a rapid sequence of short questions and/or answers by attendees, interpret these by identifying the speakers.
 - a. Example:
 - Original
 - Judge: Is everybody in agreement with the proposed order?
 - Plaintiff's attorney: Yes
 - Defendant's Attorney: Yes, except for visitation.
 - Interpretation
 - *Judge asked: Is everybody in agreement with the proposed order?*
 - *Plaintiff's attorney replied: Yes*
 - *Defendant's Attorney replied: Yes, except for visitation.*
14. If anything happens which interferes with the interpreter's ability to interpret everything being said accurately and faithfully:
 - a. Get the judge's attention.
 - b. State the problem on the record.
 - For example: Your Honor, the parties are speaking at the same time and the interpreter is unable to hear or interpret, or there is background noise from another attendee.
 - c. When appropriate, offer a suggestion on how the problem may be solved.
 - d. Note: *Remove personal photos, distinguishable information, and any other personal items from your video background that could give the appearance of bias or impropriety, or that you do not wish to be visible.*
15. When assigned to work with a partner:
 - a. If the VCIS has not put you in contact with your partner, ask the VCIS to please do so.
 - b. Discuss how you will communicate during the event to switch and share information; for example, via text message on Whats App or similar platform.
 - For example:
 - After signaling your partner that you are ready to switch, wait for a natural pause to announce on the record:
 - *"Your Honor, the interpreters will be switching."*
 - At this point the Support Interpreter announces on the record:
 - *"Your Honor, this is interpreter [STATE NAME]. Ready to proceed."*

TIPS FOR COURT INTERPRETERS

- c. All discussions regarding language or ethical concerns must be handled privately initially (not on the record), as if you were on-site in a courtroom. If you discuss while the event is happening, everything will become part of the record.
- d. The support interpreter must keep microphone(s) muted.

16. If it is determined that simultaneous interpreting is possible, either via the Zoom Simultaneous feature or the Alternate Method, use the appropriate interpreter checklist below to ensure proper set up. Interpreter(s) must be connected via two devices for each method.

INTERPRETER SET UP CHECKLIST – ZOOM SIMULTANEOUS INTERPRETATION (PHONE-TO-ZOOM)

- ✓ Connect to Zoom via the app (not via browser) on an internet device (e.g. computer, tablet, smartphone)
- ✓ Plug a headset to a secondary device (e.g. cell phone, landline, VOIP)
- ✓ Accept phone call from host/moderator or dial into to Zoom meeting to connect with the secondary device (e.g. cell phone, landline, VOIP)
- ✓ Lower internet device volume completely but keep the microphone enabled
- ✓ **Unmute phone (secondary device) for consecutive mode***
- ✓ **Mute phone (secondary device) for simultaneous***
- * **Always unmute for consecutive: Q&A** (Keep the phone (secondary device) unmuted for long segments involving consecutive)

INTERPRETER SET UP CHECKLIST – ALTERNATE METHOD (PHONE-TO-LEP)

- ✓ Connect via an internet device (e.g. computer/tablet/smartphone) to virtual courtroom platform (MS Teams, Scopia, Zoom, Conference Now, etc.)
- ✓ Connect to the LEP using a secondary device (e.g. cell phone, landline, VOIP)
 - The secondary device connection can be made by the interpreter or the LEP.
 - Conference line may be enabled for this purpose to include a support interpreter or additional LEPs.
- ✓ Ask LEP to MUTE their phone microphone
- ✓ Plug headset to the internet device if only one pair of headsets is available
 - If you have 2 headsets, then plug one to each device
- ✓ **Unmute internet device for consecutive mode***
- ✓ **Mute internet device for simultaneous***
- * **Always unmute for consecutive: Q&A** (Keep the phone (secondary device) unmuted for long segments involving consecutive)