



SCOTTISH COURT SERVICE

Code of Conduct for Interpreters and Translators

This Code of Conduct sets out the standards which are expected of you when accepting assignments from the Scottish Court Service.

1. Competence – You are expected to:

- Have a written and spoken command of both languages, including any specialist terminology, current idioms and dialect;
- Be familiar with any cultural backgrounds relevant to the assignment;
- Understand police station and court procedures.

2. Procedure – You will:

- Convey the exact meaning of what has been said without adding, omitting or changing anything; making explanation only where a cultural misunderstanding may be occurring, or where there is no direct equivalent for a particular term. Only in exceptional circumstances should a summary be given (if this is consented to by all parties) provided the meaning of what is being summarised is not distorted.
- Declare any difficulties you have with dialect or technical terms and if these cannot be satisfactorily remedied, withdraw from the assignment.
- Not give advice, legal or otherwise, to the accused, nor enter into discussion with them (other than to confirm language/dialect match).
- Not delegate work, nor accept delegated work (or work for another party in the proceedings), without the prior consent of the party engaging your/the other interpreter's services.
- Be reliable and punctual at all times.
- Declare immediately any previous involvement in the assignment and any involvement or relationship with the accused or any witness in the case.
- Interrupt the proceedings only:
 - To ask for clarification;
 - To point out that a party may not have understood something;
 - To alert the parties to a missed cultural reference;
 - To advise the court that there is no equivalent term in the language concerned, to the term being used;
 - To advise the court that you require a break, due to the potential for lapses in concentration to occur during lengthy periods of simultaneous or consecutive interpreting.

3. Ethical and Professional Issues – You will:

- Respect confidentiality at all times and not seek to take advantage of any information disclosed during your work.
- Act in an impartial and professional manner.

- Not discriminate between parties (to their advantage or disadvantage) either directly or indirectly, on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic origin, age, nationality, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Disclose any information, including any criminal record, which may make you unsuitable for any particular assignment.
- Disclose immediately if the person for whom you are interpreting, or their immediate family is known or related to you.
- Declare any business, financial, family or other interests which you might have in the matter being handled.
- Not accept any form of reward (whether in cash or otherwise) for interpreting work, other than payment by the Scottish Court Service.

4. Confidentiality

Any information you obtain in the course of your assignment is confidential and is not to be given by you to anyone who is not a party to the case, whether during the assignment or after it has been finished, unless we give you written permission to do so. You must also comply with the current Data Protection Act legislation.

You will not use any information you obtain in the course of your assignment for any purpose other than as authorised by us. The right to all such information rests with us and permission to access and use this information can only be given by a Scottish Court Service representative. If you feel that you may require to disclose information obtained in the assignment due to a need for additional support or guidance you should write to the Clerk of Court for permission to disclose such information.

You must keep safe any document provided to you in the course of an assignment; you must make sure they are not copied, in whole or in part, and you must return them to us, at the end of the assignment.

5. Insurance

You are advised to have your own professional indemnity insurance cover as the Scottish Court Service will not be responsible for any claims made against it, or against you, on the grounds (for example) of incompetent interpreting or unprofessional conduct.

I have read and understood the terms and conditions set out above, and I accept this assignment. I understand that if I breach any of these terms and conditions, particularly those relating to confidentiality, criminal or civil proceedings may result.

Signed.....

Name.....

Date.....