

18.103 COMMUNICATION WITH PEOPLE WHO ARE DEAF OR HEARING IMPAIRED AND USE OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS

Reference:

Procedure 18.104 – Civilian Volunteers
Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
Cincinnati Police Department Training Bulletin - #2006-03
Cincinnati Police Department Training Bulletin - #2010-10
Cincinnati Police Department Training Bulletin - #2015-01

Definitions:

Limited English Proficient (LEP) – Individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English.

Telecommunication Relay Service (TRS) – TRS is a free service that permits individuals with a hearing or speech impairment to use the telephone system via a text telephone (TTY) or by dialing 711, to call persons with or without such impairments. The person will automatically be connected to a TRS operator who will facilitate the communication between parties. The 711 code can also be utilized by persons without a hearing or speech impairment.

Volunteer Interpreter Program (VIP) – VIP is available to assist all Department members with interviews when an officer is unable to communicate with a **Spanish speaking victim or witness**.

Purpose:

To provide officers with the resources for effectively communicating with citizens who are deaf or hearing impaired, have speech impairments, or are LEP.

Policy:

Officers encountering individuals who are deaf or hearing impaired or in need of a foreign language interpreter will take all appropriate steps to ensure they communicate effectively with these individuals. The input of people who are deaf or hearing impaired or LEP is just as important to the law enforcement process as the input of others. Officers will not draw conclusions about incidents unless they fully understand, and are understood by, all those involved.

In situations when a non-disabled person would have access to a telephone, officers must provide a person who is deaf or hearing impaired the opportunity to place calls through the Telecommunication Relay Service (TRS) by dialing 711, or by providing the use of a telephone with volume control if that will be effective for the caller. Officers must also accept telephone calls placed by a person who is deaf or hearing impaired, including calls placed through TRS.

Officers will give primary consideration to the type of communication aid requested by the person who is deaf or hearing impaired unless there is an equally effective means of communication available.

Information:

Calls from the hearing impaired may come directly to the district/section/unit through the Telecommunication Relay Service (TRS). The TRS operator will facilitate the communication between parties. The TRS 711 code is not just for use by persons with impairments. Both voice and TRS users can initiate a call from any telephone in the United States without having to use a seven or ten-digit access number. When calls from LEP individuals come directly to the district/section/unit, officers should initiate a three-way call with G2Local, if necessary.

There are several ways of communicating effectively with people who are deaf or hearing impaired. In some instances, a qualified sign language or oral interpreter is required to assist with communication. In other circumstances, use of gestures or visual aids to supplement speech, an exchange of written notes, use of computer or a telephone with volume control, or use of the TRS will be effective. The type of aid required for effective communication will depend on the individual's usual method of communication, and the nature, importance, and duration of the communication at issue.

The Department utilizes the services of Global to Local Language Solutions (G2Local). G2Local can be reached locally at **(513) 526-5011**, or at **(877) 353-9129**, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, for in-person interpretations, sign language and services via the telephone. G2Local's role is to serve as a neutral third party, interpreting communication between parties.

The Department also utilizes the Volunteer Interpreter Program (VIP). VIP is available to assist all Department members with interviews when an officer is unable to communicate with a Spanish speaking victim or witness. This program should be an officer's first choice when requiring this type of service. VIP's are **not** to be used to interview or question suspects.

Additionally, the Department utilizes the Hearing Speech and Deaf Center of Greater Cincinnati for qualified sign language and oral interpreter services for people who are deaf or hearing impaired. The Center is an alternate service and will be utilized by ECC if G2Local is unable to provide interpreter services for a Cincinnati Police Department request.

Sign language and oral interpreters will be made available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. "Oral interpreters" are not foreign language interpreters; they usually facilitate communication with people who were deafened later in life and do not use sign language.

Procedure:

- A. Sign Language and Oral Interpreters for People who are Deaf or Hearing Impaired
1. If an officer has reason to believe that an individual with whom he is attempting to communicate has a hearing impairment, the officer will:
 - a. Determine whether the individual has a hearing impairment.
 - b. Notify the individual through the use of auxiliary aids (pen and paper) that a qualified sign language or oral interpreter will be provided at no charge, if desired.
 - 1) If the individual requests a qualified sign language interpreter, determine whether the individual uses American Sign Language (ASL) or Signed English (SE) to communicate and relay the information to ECC.
 - 2) Face the deaf or hearing impaired individual and do not turn away while speaking. The officer should not cover his or her mouth while talking to the individual. Only one person should speak at a time and it may be necessary to speak more slowly.
 - c. An officer will remove handcuffs from a non-violent arrestee who is deaf or hearing impaired, or will secure the arrestee in such a manner which permits communication, as safely as possible, after arrival at a secure facility. Officer safety and the safety of citizens must take precedence.
 - 1) The immediate priority in any emergency is for the officer to stabilize the situation. If the deaf or hearing impaired individual is in immediate danger, exhibiting violent behavior, or if the officer has probable cause to make an arrest, the officer can request an interpreter respond to the location to which the subject is being transported.
 - 2) Officers should refrain from using family members or friends of the deaf or hearing impaired individual, unless it is urgent to communicate immediately and that is the only option. However, if the deaf or hearing impaired individual requests that arrangement, the other person agrees, and the circumstances suggest that the relationship is not coercive or otherwise inappropriate, the officer may proceed.
- B. Foreign and Sign Language Interpreters
1. When an officer comes in contact with an individual who is deaf or hearing impaired, LEP, or in need of a foreign language interpreter, and the officer is unable to effectively communicate with the individual, the officer should either notify ECC of the need for an interpreter or contact Global to Local Language Solutions (G2Local) at **(513) 526-5011 or 1-877-353-9129**. G2Local provides service for over 150 foreign languages including sign language, and is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The officer will:
 - a. Advise the G2Local agent what language needs to be interpreted.

- b. Provide the CPD four-digit access code (**4087**), the officer's name, and the district/unit of assignment.
 - c. Be connected to the appropriate language interpreter for assistance.
 - d. In the event that G2Local is unable to provide the required **sign language** interpreter, the officer will notify ECC who will contact the Hearing Speech and Deaf Center of Greater Cincinnati to assist with the request.
2. If an officer needs to arrange in-person interpreter services or translation services of vital documents, a Form 630, Equipment/Supply/Service Order, must be completed and submitted through the chain of command for approval.
 - a. In the event the in-person interpreter service is needed immediately, a supervisor must be advised and the Form 630 may be submitted after the service is received.
 - b. A document will be considered vital if it contains information that is critical for obtaining federal services and/or benefits, or is required by law (e.g. consent and complaint forms and notices of rights). For many larger documents, translation of vital information contained within the document will suffice and the documents need not be translated in their entirety.
 - c. ECC will attempt to locate an on-duty officer fluent in the necessary language before contacting a person not employed by the Department.
3. When calls from the hearing impaired come directly to the district/section/unit through the TRS, the TRS operator will facilitate the communication between parties.
 - a. In the event that a deaf or hearing impaired individual needs to be contacted by telephone, the officer will initiate a TRS call by dialing 711 to communicate effectively with the party.
4. When calls from LEP individuals come directly to the district/section/unit and the officer is unable to effectively communicate with the individual, the officer will:
 - a. Initiate a three-way call with G2Local. To place a three-way call the officer will:
 - 1) Advise the caller to stay on the line. Press the conference button (do **not** put caller on hold).
 - 2) Call G2Local and follow Section B.1.
 - 3) Press the conference button again to be connected to all parties simultaneously.
5. When an officer is unable to communicate with a Spanish speaking victim or witness, the officer will first request ECC to contact the Volunteer Interpreter Program (VIP).
 - a. If a Volunteer Interpreter (VIP) is not available or when an interpreter is needed for interviewing suspects, G2Local will be utilized.