



## **Court Interpreter Tips for Working with Interpreters in the Courtroom**

Copyright © 2010 by the State of Minnesota, State Court Administrator's Office, All Rights Reserved.

<b>Do</b>	<b>Don't</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Establish the court interpreter's qualification on the record.</li><li>• If an interpreter is not certified, ascertain whether the interpreter can interpret simultaneously. If not, the interpretation will need to proceed with consecutive interpretation.</li><li>• Address the interpreter as Mr./Mrs. Interpreter to identify the person you are speaking to as the interpreter and not the person requiring an interpreter.</li><li>• Speak directly in the first person to the person requiring an interpreter.</li><li>• Speak clearly and project your voice.</li><li>• Slow down your rate of speech.</li><li>• Speak in segments that can be reasonably interpreted by pausing at the end of thoughts and/or sentences.</li><li>• Use the most simple, legal language as possible.</li><li>• Wait until the interpreter is finished interpreting before you begin to speak. In fact, allow a pause before you speak so the interpreter has a chance to take a breath.</li><li>• Be patient with interpreters. Even experienced interpreters may need to request that words/statements be repeated.</li><li>• Use different words or phrases if an interpreter asks for a repetition because he/she did not understand a word or phrase.</li><li>• Verify the interpreter has no conflict of interest.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Do not ask the interpreter to "Ask the party/witness if . . . ."</li><li>• Do not refer to the person in need of interpreting services as the interpreter's "client".</li><li>• Do not ask an interpreter to "stop" interpreting for any part of a proceeding that a hearing or English-speaking person is able to hear. (Interpreters are bound by a Code of Professional Responsibility which requires their interpretation be complete as well as accurate.)</li><li>• Avoid asking compound questions.</li><li>• Do not speak when others are speaking. The interpreter cannot interpret if more than one person speaks at a time.</li><li>• Avoid interrupting the interpreter when he/she is in the process of interpreting.</li><li>• Avoid legalese and legal jargon.</li><li>• Avoid acronyms by fully stating the name for which the acronym stands.</li><li>• Do not wait to bring up concerns about the interpreter. Express any concerns about the quality of the interpretation as soon as they arise.</li><li>• Do not wait for the interpreter to request a break. Give the interpreter a break every 30 minutes to avoid fatigue.</li></ul>