

TIPS AND ADVICE

How to Work with a Telephone Interpreter

YOUR ROLE

Telephone interpreters may receive several calls a day—each one requiring special attention in a specific field. When working with an interpreter over the phone, there are a few things you should keep in mind to ensure your call is handled quickly and successfully.

- Always speak in first person, just as you would in normal conversation. For example, say, “Do you have a fever?” rather than “Ask her if she has a fever, please.”
- Immediately introduce yourself to the limited-English proficient (LEP) client and explain your reason for calling.
- Telephone interpretation is “consecutive” interpretation. That means you will experience pauses when the interpreter repeats each statement in the respective language.
- After you speak one-two sentences or finish a thought, pause to give the interpreter enough time to interpret.
- Be prepared to explain some things in more detail for the telephone interpreter. Some terminology and concepts may not have an equivalent in the target language.
- Control the conversation. The telephone interpreter is only there to interpret. You are responsible for making sure the LEP client receives the same service as an English-speaking client.
- Ask the interpreter and the LEP client questions to ensure they understand what you want to communicate.
- Avoid asking the interpreter for his/her opinion about the situation being interpreted.
- We can accommodate three-way telephone interpretation calls. Tell the call center agent the name and phone number of the third party, and they will arrange the call for you. The interpreter cannot facilitate this for you. You must ask the call center agent at the beginning of the call.
- Follow up by providing us with feedback about your interpretation services.

YOUR TELEPHONE INTERPRETER'S ROLE

We expect our interpreters to meet high standards and want to know when they are meeting our expectations. To that end, your feedback is critical

- Make sure your interpreter introduces himself/herself using a first name and ID number. They are not required to provide a last name.
- Your interpreter should not have a side conversation with you or the client. He or she must relay everything that is said back to you or your client. This includes any advice that the client may ask of the interpreter.
- Your interpreter should not discuss anything unrelated to the telephone interpretation assignment.

More questions about telephone interpretation? Contact us at 1-866-610-1338 or email info@ctslanguagelink.com.