

Professional Code of Conduct and Courtroom Protocol

Professional Attire

All freelance interpreters are expected to maintain a professional image at all times while performing official duties at the court or in the community. It is, therefore, necessary for each interpreter to be well-groomed and appropriately dressed so as to engender the respect of co-workers and the public for that interpreter and for the District of Columbia Courts.

Proper Attire for Women

A business suit, pants suit, dress, or a skirt/slack ensemble with blouse or sweater top is considered proper attire. Sundresses and open-back, off-shoulder, or single-shoulder clothing styles are not regarded as appropriate attire. Athletic shoes or slippers are not appropriate in the work place.

Proper Attire for Men

A business suit, or dress slacks and sport jacket, with a dress shirt and necktie or dress slacks with a sweater or dress shirt and tie is considered appropriate. A man's attire also includes socks and dress footwear. Cloth top or athletic shoes, slippers and sandals are not appropriate in the work place.

Punctuality

All freelance interpreters are expected to report at the previously agreed upon time. As with any court assignment, freelance interpreters are encouraged to arrive 15 minutes prior to their scheduled time, to avoid delays in court proceedings.

Prompt Fulfillment of Assignments

Interpreters are expected to cover assignments as soon as practicable after being dispatched from the Interpreter's Office. Upon receiving an assignment, interpreters may not delay or attend to personal business without previously notifying and receiving consent from OCIS.

Courtroom Protocol

Interpreters will respect courtroom decorum at all times. Interpreters will only enter the well of the courtroom when their case is called. Interpreters will not fraternize with any parties. Interpreters will maintain a clear record by always using the third person while referring to themselves.

Oath

Prior to interpreting, the Court will place the interpreters under oath to faithfully and accurately interpret all statements and testimony before the court to the best of their ability.

Team Interpreting

Depending on the complexity of the matter, every attempt will be made to assign two interpreters to lengthy proceedings that last over one hour. In team interpreting, an active interpreter is that person who is actually providing interpreting services. The passive interpreter remains in the courtroom, seated/standing near the active interpreter, monitors and assists the active interpreter in whatever

manner necessary. The active and passive interpreters will alternate on as needed basis, mutually agreeable to both interpreters, while avoiding disrupting court proceedings.

Conclusion of Assignment

Once dismissed by the Court, the interpreter will report back to the OCIS to await further instruction.