



Recommendations for In-Person Court Interpreting

A Pandemic Resource from the Alaska Court System

Reference Guide for Interpreters and Court Personnel (June 2020)

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Alaska Court System (ACS) primarily uses telephonic and video remote technology to provide interpreting services for all case types. To protect the health and safety of interpreters, court personnel, court customers, and service providers when in-person interpreting resumes, interpreters are to observe the court's safety protocols, found under Alerts & Notices at: www.courts.alaska.gov/covid19/index.htm

If an in-person interpreter works for a vendor with COVID-19 protocols, the interpreter should notify the Interpreter Services Coordinator to determine if they are compatible. If the vendor's protocols are less rigorous, the interpreter will be required to follow ACS protocols. If court staff has questions about how the interpreter should follow the protocols, contact the Interpreter Services Coordinator.

Planning Ahead

Interpreters



Interpreters should bring a mask and a personal supply of hand sanitizing gel and/or disinfectant.



Interpreters must provide their own note pad, pen, resources, and other needed supplies. The court will not provide these.



If a face covering may become an impediment to interpreting, particularly for longer proceedings, the interpreter should discuss options with the Interpreter Services Coordinator before the hearing. Options may include a plastic face shield or a plexiglas barrier around the interpreting area.

Prior to coming to court, the interpreter should review the court system's COVID-19 Visitor Alert at the [URL listed above](#). If the interpreter has been exposed to COVID-19 or has any of the symptoms or restrictions listed on the alert, the interpreter must not come to court in person and should immediately notify the Interpreter Services Coordinator.

Court Staff



Court staff should disinfect the interpreter's area, the LEP's area, and the equipment the interpreter will use before and after any event when an in-person interpreter is to be present.



Court staff should provide Clorox wipes at the interpreter station so the interpreter can periodically disinfect the area and equipment during the courtroom event.

If during a courtroom event the judicial officer has concerns about an interpreter's fitness to serve, the judicial officer should dismiss the interpreter on-the-record. Court staff should then immediately contact the Interpreter Services Coordinator.

On the Day of

Face Covering



Interpreters must wear a protective face covering at all times in the courthouse. Interpreters are responsible for providing their own preferred face covering.

Physical Distancing



Interpreters need to maintain a 6-foot distance from courtroom participants, team interpreters, and LEP parties at all times in the courthouse.

The interpreter should not sit or stand near the LEP person and whisper in their ear.

Interpreting Equipment



Court staff should provide simultaneous interpreting equipment when available so the interpreters can stay 6 feet away from others.



Court staff should provide disinfectant wipes at the interpreter's station.

Court staff should sanitize the equipment and the interpreter work area before and after hearings. Interpreters are encouraged to sanitize the equipment at other times, including during recesses.



If interpreters perform team interpreting and the equipment is shared, each interpreter must sanitize the equipment before exchanging it. Courtroom participants should be prepared to pause to allow the interpreter to disinfect the equipment. The interpreter is to notify the court when they are ready to resume interpreting.



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