

Booking an interpreter

1. Find out key background details about the client:

- full name
- language or dialect spoken
- ethnicity
- preferred gender of interpreter, if any

2. Choose an interpreter service provider:

- Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) or ATIS – 131 450 (phone interpreters only)
- ONCALL Interpreters – 9867 3788
- All-Graduates Interpreting and Translating – 1300 134 251 or 9605 3000
- VITS Language Link – 9280 1955

Notes:

- your service may have a preferred provider and you may also be able to book online
- VITS, All-Graduates and ONCALL also provide translating services

3. Request an interpreter with a background that meets the client's preferences.

4. Choose the most appropriate interpreter:

- avoid using family or friends of the client as interpreter
- ensure the client and interpreter do not know each other socially
- interpreter is professionally accredited
- NAATI accreditation standard of professional interpreter - formerly Level 3
- telephone or face-to-face
- address any conflict of interest issues

5. Record interpreter job/assignment number.

Before the meeting or phone conversation

1. Check an appropriate meeting room is booked if face to face.

2. Check interpreter's booking time frame and allow time for:

- briefing the interpreter
- meeting with client
- reviewing meeting with interpreter
- keep extra time if the lawyer has to communicate lengthy information from a document

Allow more time than you would usually allocate for a client interview or intake process.

3. If possible, provide separate waiting areas for client and interpreter.

- Arrange chairs so that the interpreter is next to the worker and opposite the client:
 - triangle for three people
 - horse shoe for group
 - circle for large group

4. Brief the interpreter about:

- the purpose of the meeting
- who will be present at the meeting
- the expectation that everything said in the room will be interpreted
- the mode of interpreting (simultaneous, dialogue, or consecutive interpreting)
- seeking clarification from you if they do not understand something
- possible safety issues
- meeting you in a nominated place for a review after the meeting

During the meeting

1. Introduce everyone and explain roles.
2. Speak directly to the client.
3. Ask people how they would like to be addressed (Mrs/Mr/Ms/Miss/first name).
4. Pronounce names correctly – write them down as you hear them.
5. Allow time for rapport to build between the client and interpreter.
6. Explain: "everything said between us today will be interpreted".
7. Explain interpreter's confidentiality obligations.
8. Use short sentences. Avoid jargon, sarcasm.
9. Allow the interpreter enough time to interpret.
10. Check the client understands what you are saying.
11. Keep in control of the meeting – stop meeting and re-establish roles if necessary.
12. Close the meeting appropriately.
13. Ask the client to speak directly to you, not the interpreter.

After the meeting

Review the meeting:

- give the interpreter feedback on the meeting and ask for feedback, including good experiences
- ask interpreter for any comments or concerns related to the interpreting
- check if interpreter has any questions related to the interpreting
- do not ask the interpreter to assess client issues