04-09 American Sign Language and Language Interpreters

Status: Amended **Issued:** 2025.08.12 **Replaces**: 2024.08.27

Rationale

Toronto is one of the most diverse and multicultural cities. The Toronto Police Service (Service) is committed to providing policing services that are accessible to all persons, including persons with disabilities.

Service members are often in need of an interpreter to communicate with a citizen in sign language, or in a language other than English. The Service has contracted the Canadian Hearing Society (CHS) to provide around–the–clock access to American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters, 911 Interpreters to provide real-time around–the–clock telephone access to interpreting services and Multilingual Community Interpreter Services (MCIS) for face-to-face, telephone and written translation services.

Supervision

- Officer in Charge notification mandatory when
  - utilizing CHS for ASL interpreting services
  - obtaining authorization to use 911 Interpreters or MCIS for language interpreting services
  - requested to interpret for another unit

Procedure

American Sign Language Interpreter

The Service is committed to accommodating the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner. The Service has contracted the Canadian Hearing Society (CHS) to provide around–the–clock access to American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters at no cost to the individual. The Unit Commander – Equity, Inclusion & Human Rights oversees the process for ASL interpreter services provided by CHS.

➔ *Canadian Hearing Society interpreters shall be used for all situations, including intimate partner violence and sexual assault occurrences.*

Language Interpreter (other than English and American Sign Language)

911 Interpreters

911 Interpreters has been contracted by the Service to provide our members with around–the–clock telephone access to interpreting services in over 125 languages.

Members are encouraged to use 911 Interpreters any time there is an immediate need for a language interpreter.

Multilingual Community Interpreter Services (MCIS)

Multilingual Community Interpreter Services (MCIS) has been contracted by the Service to provide face-to-face interpretation services and written translation services when required.

In addition, MCIS provides free interpretation services to the Service during the investigation of all intimate partner violence, sexual assault and human trafficking occurrences, **irrespective of the age** of the victim or the suspect/accused. Multilingual Community Interpreter Services interpreters will provide their services to all involved parties; including the accused up until the time that a formal charge has been laid (an Information has been sworn before a Justice).

American Sign Language Interpreter

Member

1. Members shall contact the Officer in Charge to request the Canadian Hearing Society (CHS) whenever a person requests an ASL interpreter.

   ➔ *Canadian Hearing Society interpreters shall be used for all situations, including intimate partner violence and sexual assault occurrences.*

2. Upon the completion of an ASL interpreting assignment shall submit a TPS 649 to Equity, Inclusion & Human Rights and include the
   - original eReport number, or the name and date of birth of the person requesting the service
   - purpose of the request (at scene, investigation, etc.)
   - date and duration of the interpreting service.

Officer in Charge

3. Upon receiving a request for an ASL interpreter shall
   - contact CHS
   - ensure compliance with item 2

Language Interpreter (other than English and American Sign Language)

Member

4. Service members who are fluent in a language other than English may register their language skills on the Human Resources Management System (HRMS).

5. When unable to communicate with a person shall

- attempt to determine whether the person's inability to speak is due to a medical problem
- comply with Procedure 10–06 if the person requires medical attention

6. Upon determining that a person speaks a language other than English shall attempt to determine the language and/or dialect spoken.

7. When a language interpreter is required in an emergency situation shall
   - attempt to locate one at the scene
   - if unable to locate one, contact 911 Interpreters
   - notify the Officer in Charge as required for administrative purposes

8. When a language interpreter is required to obtain a statement from a victim, witness or accused person involved in an intimate partner violence, sexual assault, or human trafficking investigation shall contact MCIS.

9. When a Service member language interpreter is required shall request the station duty operator locate an on–duty member interpreter via the Language search feature of HRMS.

10. When unable to locate an on–duty Service member language interpreter shall obtain authorization from the Officer in Charge to locate an off–duty member interpreter, if required.

11. Upon receiving authorization for an off–duty Service member language interpreter shall request the station duty operator locate one via HRMS.

12. Upon receiving a request to interpret for another unit shall notify the Officer in Charge.

13. Upon identifying the need for
    - external interpreter or translation service which requires payment
    - a long–term interpreter

    shall
    - submit a TPS 649 to the Unit Commander detailing the circumstances of the request through the chain of command
    - upon approval, arrange the service

Station Duty Operator

14. Upon receiving a request to locate a Service member interpreter shall
    - perform a language search in HRMS
    - arrange for the attendance of the interpreter, if available
    - advise the requesting member of the results
    - advise the Officer in Charge if successful

Officer in Charge

15. When a unit member has been asked to interpret for another unit shall make all efforts to accommodate the request.

16. When a member of another unit has been asked to interpret shall ensure that appropriate transportation to and from the destination is arranged, if necessary.

17. Upon receiving a request for 911 Interpreters or MCIS shall authorize the use of the service if the request is appropriate.

18. When receiving a TPS 649 requesting an external interpreter, translation service, or long-term interpreter which requires payment shall
    - review the request
    - if appropriate, forward the request to the Unit Commander for approval

Unit Commander

19. Upon receipt of a TPS 649 requesting the services of an external language interpreter which requires payment shall
    - approve or deny the request
    - ensure the appropriate entry is made in the SAP financial system if the cost of the service is greater than $200

20. Upon receipt of a TPS 649 requesting a long–term language interpreter shall comply with Procedure 14–13.

Officer in Charge – Communication Services

21. Upon receiving a request for 911 Interpreters shall authorize the use of the service if the request is appropriate.

Supplementary Information

Governing Authorities

Federal:
- Constitution Act, Part I, Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Provincial:
- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act
- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (Ontario Regulations)
  - O. Reg. 429/07, Accessibility Standards for Customer Service
  - O. Reg. 191/11, Integrated Accessibly Standards
- Human Rights Code

Associated Governance

Toronto Police Service Board:
- Board Policy
  - Accessibility Standards for Customer Service

Toronto Police Service Procedures:
- 10–06 Medical Emergencies
- 13–20 Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities
- 14–13 Contract Persons and Consultants

Other:

- 1.9 Standards of Conduct – Fairness, Discrimination and Harassment

Forms: TPS 649 Internal Correspondence

Definitions

For the purposes of this Procedure, the following definitions will apply:

American Sign Language (ASL) means a visual language with its own grammar and syntax, distinct from English, used by Deaf people primarily in Canada and the USA. Meaning is conveyed thru signs composed of specific movements and shapes of the hands and arms, eyes, face, head and body posture.

Disability means:

a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co–ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;
b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
d) a mental disorder, or;
e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act*; (“handicap”).
[Source: *Ontario Human Rights Code*, *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*]

911 Interpreters means the company contracted by the Toronto Police Service to provide around–the–clock interpretation service over the telephone.

Member Interpreter means a Toronto Police Service member who is registered on the Human Resources Management System (HRMS) as an interpreter fluent in a language other than English.

Multilingual Community Interpreter Services (MCIS) means the not-for-profit social enterprise, contracted by the Toronto Police Service to provide face-to-face and telephone interpretation services as well as written translation Services.

MCIS also provides free interpretation services to non–English/French victims of intimate partner violence, sexual assault and human trafficking which is funded by the Provincial Government.