



SEATTLE POLICE
DEPARTMENT

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Resource Card

In Partnership with



The best way to communicate with me is:



FIELD COMMUNICATIONS PICTOGRAPH

The Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”) requires that public entities take appropriate steps to **ensure that communications with people with disabilities are as effective as communications with others**. This includes providing appropriate aids and services where necessary. The type of aid or service necessary to ensure effective communication may vary by the nature, length, and complexity of the communication. However, in all circumstances, the ADA requires that the expressed choice of the individual with the disability be given primary consideration in determining which communication aid to provide.

If you encounter someone who you believe is deaf or hard of hearing, use the pictograph on the cover of this pamphlet to ask what form of communication would be most effective.

OBTAINING AN INTERPRETER

- To request a Sign Language Interpreter, call the Chief Dispatcher via radio or at (206) 684-8639.
- Cancelling a request for an interpreter requires a field supervisor’s approval.
- **Do not** ask a family member or friend to interpret for an individual who is deaf unless there is an imminent

threat to the safety or welfare of the individual or the public and there is no interpreter available.

- If a person who is deaf requests that an adult family member or friend interpret and the other person agrees, however, you can proceed if doing so would be appropriate under the circumstances.

DEPARTMENT POLICIES

In addition to the choice of the individual with whom you are communicating, be aware that SPD policy and state law expressly require the use of a qualified sign language interpreter in certain circumstances. In particular, an interpreter is required (unless expressly declined by the individual) whenever --

- Interviewing a person who is deaf as a witness, victim, or suspect concerning any criminal investigation
- Conducting a criminal investigation that involves a minor child and the parent or guardian of that child is deaf
- Arresting, taking a statement, or making a Miranda Warning notification to a subject who is deaf, unless there is exigency.

Exigent Arrest Guidance: If, for safety reasons, a person must be arrested before an interpreter arrives, show them the Miranda Warnings listed on the next page.

MIRANDA WARNINGS

1. You have the right to remain silent.
2. Anything you say can be used against you in a court of law.
3. You have the right at this time to talk to a lawyer and have him/her present with you while you are being questioned.
4. If you cannot afford to hire a lawyer, one will be appointed to represent you before any questioning, if you wish.
5. You can decide at any time to exercise these rights and not answer any question or make any statements.
6. WA State Advisement: You have the right to counsel. If you are unable to pay for counsel, you are entitled to have one provided without charge.
7. SPD Advisement: SPD is obligated to offer you an interpreter without cost and will defer interrogation pending the appearance of that interpreter.

WAIVER

1. Do you understand each of these rights I have explained to you?
2. Having these rights in mind, do you wish to talk to us now?

Whenever possible, videotape all communication with arrestees who are deaf in order to be able to document the effectiveness of the communication.

HANDCUFFING A PERSON WHO IS DEAF

When arresting a person who is deaf consider the effect of handcuffing. Most people who are deaf use sign language and would be unable to communicate while being handcuffed behind their back. While keeping safety in mind, make reasonable accommodations (such as handcuffing in the front of the body) to enable a person who is deaf to communicate via sign language or in writing.

TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING WITH PEOPLE WHO ARE DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING

In general:

1. **Be aware that a person's communication needs may change over the course of an interaction.** For instance, a person may indicate that written notes are effective, but want an interpreter when they understand they are being investigated for a criminal matter. Evaluate communication needs throughout the course of the interaction.
2. Find a suitable place to talk, well lit but with no bright light behind you, away from distractions, and with your face visible. Face the person directly.
3. Make sure you have the person's attention before you start speaking; use a tap on the shoulder or a wave of the hand.
4. A nod of the head may be an attempt to appear cooperative, rather than consent or a confession.
5. People who are deaf often rely heavily on body language and facial expressions; these may be misinterpreted.
6. People who are deaf may use larger and quicker movements with their hands and arms when communicating their upset.

For persons using lip reading:

1. Be aware of limitations: Not all people who are deaf lip-read and for those who do, only 33% of the English language is visible on the lips in the best conditions.
2. Use plain language, no jargon.
3. Avoid over-enunciation, yelling distorts the face and makes lip reading difficult.
4. Speak slowly and repeat yourself if needed.

For persons using an interpreter: Speak directly to the person who is deaf, not the interpreter.

A note on writing notes:

1. Use written notes only when the person has indicated it is the most effective way to communicate or if it is an emergency and an interpreter is not yet available.
2. Keep language simple. Sign language is not English and English is often not the person's first language.

TIPS FOR EXIGENT (PRE-INTERPRETER) COMMUNICATIONS

Common law enforcement signs and their meanings are included for reference at the end of this pamphlet.

SPD Training's website also offers an interactive "Deaf Dictionary Tool" with demonstrations of common law enforcement words in sign language. Visit the SPD home page and click on "Training" then on "Deaf Dictionary Tool".

For a complete on-line video dictionary demonstrating hundreds of American Sign Language hand signs, go to www.aslpro.com and select "Video dictionary".

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND QUESTIONS

If an individual would like to file an ADA grievance, they can contract the Citywide ADA Program at (206) 684-2489 or adacoordinator@seattle.gov.

The grievance process is outlined at www.seattle.gov/americans-with-disabilities-act/ada-grievance-procedure.

To request a deaf advocate, contact the Hearing, Speech and Deaf Center at www.hsdco.org, (206) 452-7967

For domestic violence incidents where victims who are deaf or their families require a Victim Support Team, please contact Abused Deaf Women's Advocacy Services at www.adwas.org, (888) 236-1355

BASICS, COMMANDS & QUESTIONING



Cop/Police Deaf



Lip read



Write



Understand



Yes



No



Please



Thank You



Slow



Stop



Help/Aid



Sick



Hurt/Pain



Doctor



Need



Want



Name



Age/Old



License



Who



Where



Wait