
	Florida State University Police Department	
Qualified Interpreter for the Deaf or Hard of Hearing		
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Policy - Qualified Interpreter for the Deaf or Hard of Hearing

It is the policy of the Florida State University Police Department to ensure that a consistently high level of service is provided to all community members, including those who are deaf or hard of hearing. The purpose of this policy is to provide Departmental members with guidance when communicating or attempting to communicate with the hearing impaired.

The Department will make every effort to ensure that officers and other employees communicate effectively with people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

A. Discussion

Effective communication with a person who is deaf or hard of hearing that has been involved in an incident, whether as a victim, witness, suspect, or arrestee, is essential in ascertaining what actually occurred, the urgency of the matter, and type of situation.

1. Various types of communication aids known as auxiliary aids and services are used to communicate with people who are deaf or hard of hearing. These include:
 - a. Use of gestures or visual aids to supplement oral communication.
 - b. Use of a notepad and pen or pencil to exchange written notes.
 - c. Use of a qualified interpreter.
 - d. Use of any other communication aid
2. The type of aid that will be required for effective communication will depend on the individual's usual method of communication, and the nature, importance, and duration of the communication.
3. In many circumstances, oral communications supplemented by gestures and visual aids or an exchange of written notes will be an effective means of communicating with people who are deaf or hard of hearing.
4. In other circumstances, a qualified interpreter may be needed to communicate effectively with persons who are deaf or hard of hearing. The lengthier, complex and important the

communication, the more likely it is that a qualified interpreter will be required for effective communication. An example would be: If there has been an incident and the officer is conducting witness interviews, a qualified interpreter may be required to communicate effectively with someone whose primary means of communication is sign language. A qualified oral interpreter may be required to communicate effectively with someone who has been trained to speech read (read lips).

5. A qualified sign language or oral interpreter is one who is able to interpret effectively, accurately and impartially, both receptively and expressively, using any necessary specialized vocabulary.
6. Accordingly, an interpreter must be able to sign to the deaf individual (or interpret orally to the person who speech reads) what is being said by the officer and be able to voice to the officer what is being signed or said by the deaf individual.

Procedure

B. Qualified Interpreter Services

The Communication Section will have access to a list of qualified interpreters that can supply services 24 hours per day. The list will also be posted on the FSUPD intranet. The list of qualified interpreters utilized by FSUPD will be provided by The Student Disability Resource Center within the Dean of Student Office. Procedures for Obtaining Qualified Interpreters for the Deaf, and Hard of Hearing will be the following:

- a. If an officer deems it necessary to contact an interpreter he/she will contact the on-duty shift supervisor for authorization.
- b. If a qualified interpreter is needed during the University regular business hours Monday thru Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., the PCO, Police Communication Officer shall call the Student Disability Resource Center, 644-8504 and ask for the Staff Interpreter for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. If assistance cannot be provided via the Staff interpreter the PCO shall utilize the qualified interpreter's call-out list.
- c. After normal business hours the qualified interpreters call out list shall be the primary method for requesting an interpreter. If an interpreter from the existing call out list cannot be reached contact shall be made with surrounding law enforcement agencies for assistance.

C. Expenses

The Department shall incur the cost for providing the services of a qualified interpreter, unless the services would fundamentally alter the nature of the law enforcement activity in question, or if it would cause an undue administrative or financial burden. Only the Chief of Police or designee may make this determination.

Glossary

Qualified Interpreter – a professional who facilitate communication between deaf and hearing impaired individuals. A qualified interpreter is able to interpret effectively, accurately and impartially both receptively and expressively, using any necessary specialized vocabulary. The qualified interpreter has specialized training in interpreting from one language to another for example, American Sign Language (ASL) to English and English to ASL.

Deaf Person – people with such extreme hearing loss who cannot understand spoken words.

Persons Hard of Hearing – those persons who have residual hearing, sounds that may be audible but not clear.

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- Qualified Interpreter
- Deaf Person
- Hard of Hearing
- FSU Student Disability Resource Center
- American Sign Language
- Speech Read (lip read)
- Auxiliary Aids

Attachments: None

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