



## Working with an interpreter

### The role of interpreters

- Interpreters help people to talk to and understand each other.
- Interpreters will make sure everything is communicated in both languages.
- Interpreters will keep the message the same. They will not add or take away anything.
- Interpreters should not be asked to do non-interpreting work or give opinions.
- Interpreters are bound by a code of ethics which requires impartial, confidential, and accurate interpreting.

### Before the session

**Conduct a briefing meeting with the interpreter at the beginning of each job.  
Please cover the following:**

- Introduce yourself to the interpreter. Have you worked with interpreters before?
- Confirm that the interpreter does not have a conflict of interest with anyone related to the current matter.
- Has the interpreter done this type of work before?
- Explain the objective of the interaction. What are you expecting to achieve?
- Will you be using new or technical words and concepts in the session? If so, please explain these words to the interpreter BEFORE the interview begins.
- Show the interpreter any pictures, documents, or objects that will be shown to the client or referred to.
- Tell the interpreter phrases you are likely to use and allow the interpreter to practice interpreting for you.
- Agree on how the interpreter will interrupt during the session. The interpreter may need to ask for clarification or repetition from both parties.
- Does the interpreter have any questions, issues, or concerns?

### During the session

- Introduce the interpreter to the client and allow the interpreter to explain his/her role.
- It is best to arrange seating in a triangle formation. This is so that the interpreter can see everyone's face.
- Pause regularly to allow for the interpretation.
- Speak directly to the client.
- Avoid more than one person speaking at once.
- Speak in plain English using clear, short sentences.
- Be aware that the interpretation might be longer than the English question or statement.

### After the session

- After the client has left, debrief the interpreter regarding the interview.
- Fill out the interpreter timesheet and provide feedback to the Aboriginal Interpreter Service.