




ENGLISH  
HANDBOOK ON  
INTERPRETATION  
SERVICES





## Handbook on Interpretation Services

The “Handbook on Interpretation Services” is intended to assist self-represented persons and lawyers requiring interpretation services in court proceedings and allow them to better understand the procedures when requesting interpretation services in the Supreme Court.

Published in May 2019 and updated in August 2023 by the Interpreters’ Section. The information herein is true and accurate at the time of publication. Recent updates to processes may not be reflected. Parties are advised to refer to the Singapore Courts website for updated information or confirm the procedures with the Interpreters’ Section (See Page 11 for contact details).



# HANDBOOK ON INTERPRETATION SERVICES

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION	2
II. OVERVIEW OF REQUEST PROCEDURE FOR NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING PARTIES	4
III. CRIMINAL CASES	5
A. How to Request Interpreters in Criminal Cases	5
IV. CIVIL CASES	6
A. How to Request Supreme Court Interpreters in Civil Cases	6
B. How to Use Private Interpreters in Civil Cases	9
V. TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE INTERPRETATION	10
VI. CONTACT DETAILS	11
VII. FORMS	12
ANNEX 1 - OATH OF OFFICE OF AN INTERPRETER	12

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Supreme Court (the “Court”) hears cases in English. To ensure accessibility to justice, the Court provides interpretation services in the languages and dialects listed below upon request (fees may apply):

### Languages And Dialects Provided By Supreme Court Interpreters

#### Chinese language and dialects

Mandarin  
Hokkien  
Teochew  
Cantonese



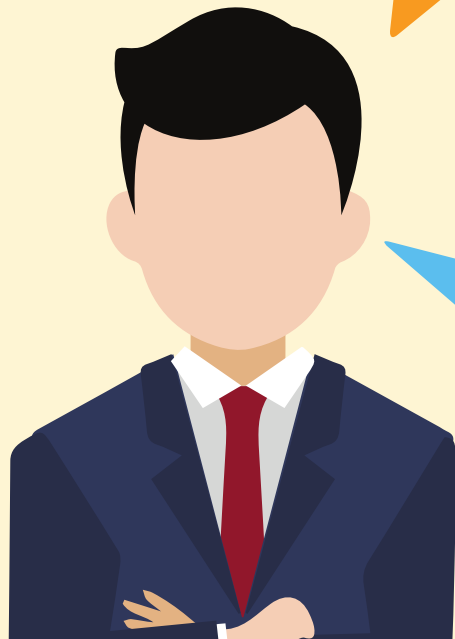
#### Malay language and dialects

Malay  
Javanese  
Boyanesse



#### Indian language

Tamil



2. For criminal cases, the services of an interpreter (irrespective of language) will be provided by the Supreme Court at no cost. For civil cases, if you do not speak English and any of the languages and dialects provided by Supreme Court interpreters, you will need the services of a private interpreter (fees may apply).
3. The interpreter’s job is to ensure effective communication among lawyers, judges and parties. To do so, they are required to interpret accurately and without bias.
4. Interpreters may use any of the following three modes of interpreting, depending on the requirements of the situation:

#### Simultaneous Interpretation

- The interpreter interprets almost at the same time as the speaker is speaking.
- Used when interpreting judgment delivered by the Court or submissions by lawyers.



#### Consecutive Interpretation

- The interpreter may take notes and will interpret only during a pause or when the speaker finishes.
- Used when the witness is testifying from the witness stand.

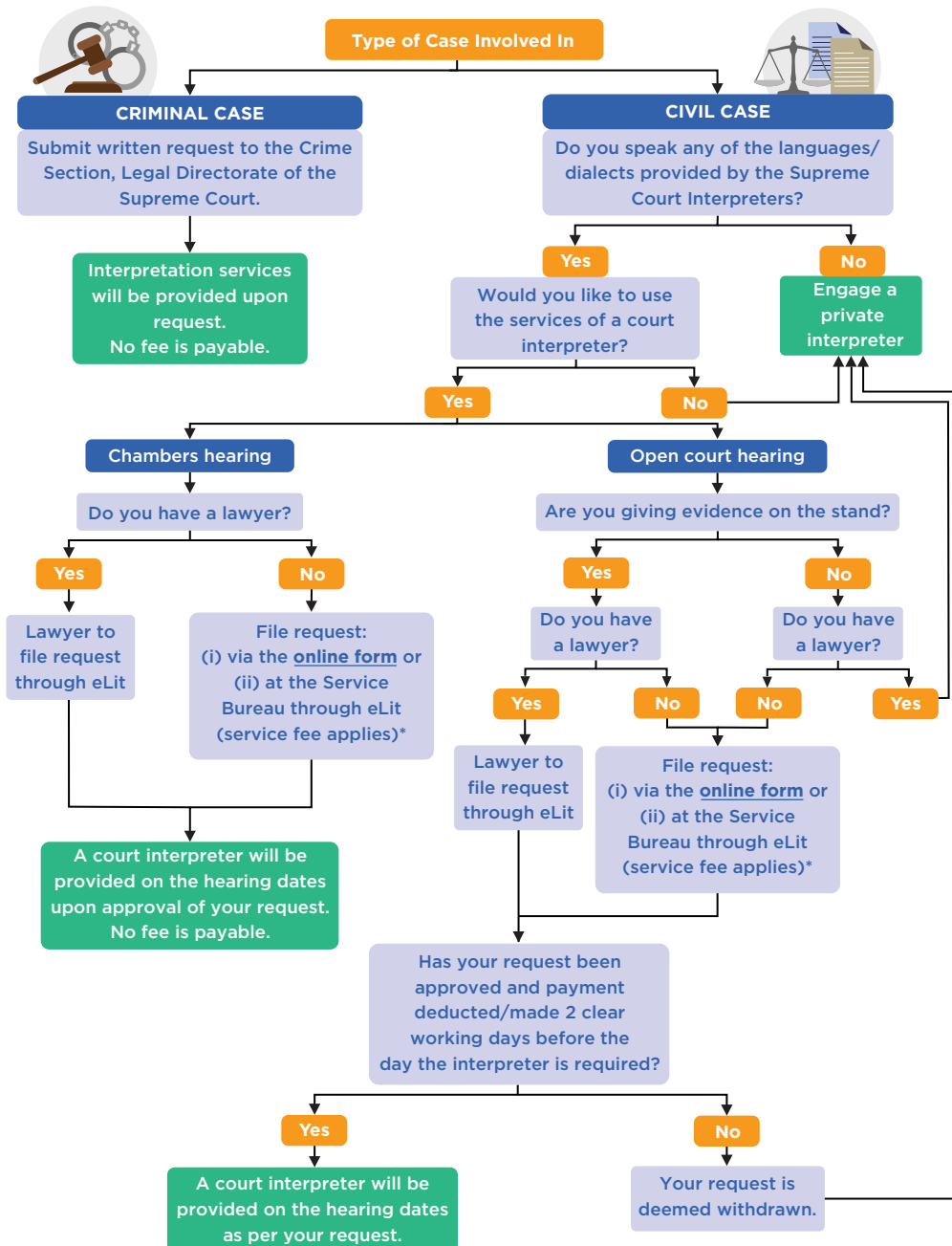


#### Sight Interpretation

- The interpreter reads in one language and interprets on the spot into another language.
- Used when interpreting documents such as affidavits and exhibits.



## II. OVERVIEW OF REQUEST PROCEDURE FOR NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING PARTIES



## III. CRIMINAL CASES

### A. How to Request Interpreters in Criminal Cases

1. All interpretation services (irrespective of language) in criminal cases are provided by the Supreme Court and are free. If you require interpretation in a criminal case, please follow the procedure below.

### How Do I File?

You may address your written request to the Crime Section, Legal Directorate of the Supreme Court and submit it through your lawyer. If you do not have a lawyer, you may submit it by hand to the same section. If you are in remand, you can submit it through the Singapore Prison Service.

### When Do I File?

File your written request **at least seven working days** before your hearing date.

### What Do I Do If... ?

If you require the interpreter for any subsequent hearings of the same case, you do not need to file a new request. The interpreter will take note of the next hearing date.

## IV. CIVIL CASES

### A. How to Request Supreme Court Interpreters in Civil Cases

1. If you are involved in a civil case and you require interpretation in one of the languages and dialects provided by the Court, please follow the procedure below.

#### How Do I File?

For lawyers, please file a Request for Hearing Administrative Support (Interpretation Services) through eLitigation.

If you are not represented by a lawyer, please file your request through the [Singapore Courts website](#) or Service Bureau (see Page 11 for contact details).



#### When Do I File?

File your request **at least seven working days** before your hearing date.

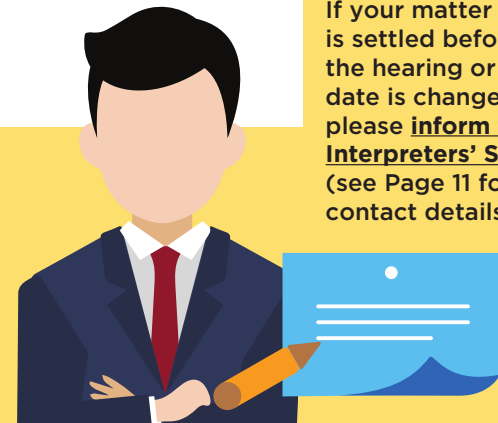


#### What Do I Do If... ?

If you do not hear from the Court or if you have trouble filing the forms, you should **contact the Interpreters' Section** via email or telephone.

If you require an interpreter for any subsequent hearings of the same case, you need to **file a new request**.

If your matter is settled before the hearing or the date is changed, please **inform the Interpreters' Section** (see Page 11 for contact details).



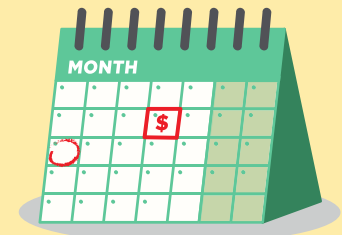
### Will I be assigned a court interpreter?

- Interpretation services are provided by court interpreters based on the availability of suitable interpreters on the day their services are required. You will be informed of the outcome of your request within three working days upon the receipt of your request. Please engage a private interpreter to assist you if the services of court interpreters are not available.
- If you are not represented by a lawyer and you require interpretation in any of the languages and dialects provided by the Court, you may request a court interpreter to help you follow the case and understand what is being said (fees apply in open court hearings).
- However, if you have a lawyer, you can request a court interpreter **only if** you are required to give evidence on the witness stand. If you want an interpreter to help you follow the case, you will have to engage a private interpreter.



### Interpretation Fee

- A fee of \$300 per day or part of the day is payable if you require the services of a court interpreter for any hearing in open court. No interpretation fee is payable for hearings in chambers.
- Any interpretation fee, if applicable, must be paid upon approval of the request. If you fail to pay the fee at least 2 clear working days before the day the interpreter is required ("scheduled day"), the request will be cancelled and no interpreter will be provided.
- If you are unable to pay the interpretation fee due to financial difficulties, you may apply to the Registrar to waive or defer the payment of the fee, giving your reasons. Request for waiver or deferment must be filed together with all supporting documents through eLitigation at least 3 working days before the scheduled day. All requests for waiver or deferment are subject to the Registrar's approval.



If your request for waiver or deferment is disallowed by the Registrar and payment has not been made, no interpreter will be provided on the scheduled day.

## Cancellation of Request

- If you do not require the services of a court interpreter on any of the scheduled days, you must inform the Head Interpreter of the cancellation in writing **at least one clear working day** before the scheduled day, otherwise any fee paid for the scheduled day may not be refunded.

For example, if you have previously requested the services of a court interpreter for Wednesday and would like to cancel the request, the cancellation notice must be given in writing to the Head Interpreter by the end of Monday (leaving Tuesday a clear working day), failing which the fee paid may not be refunded.



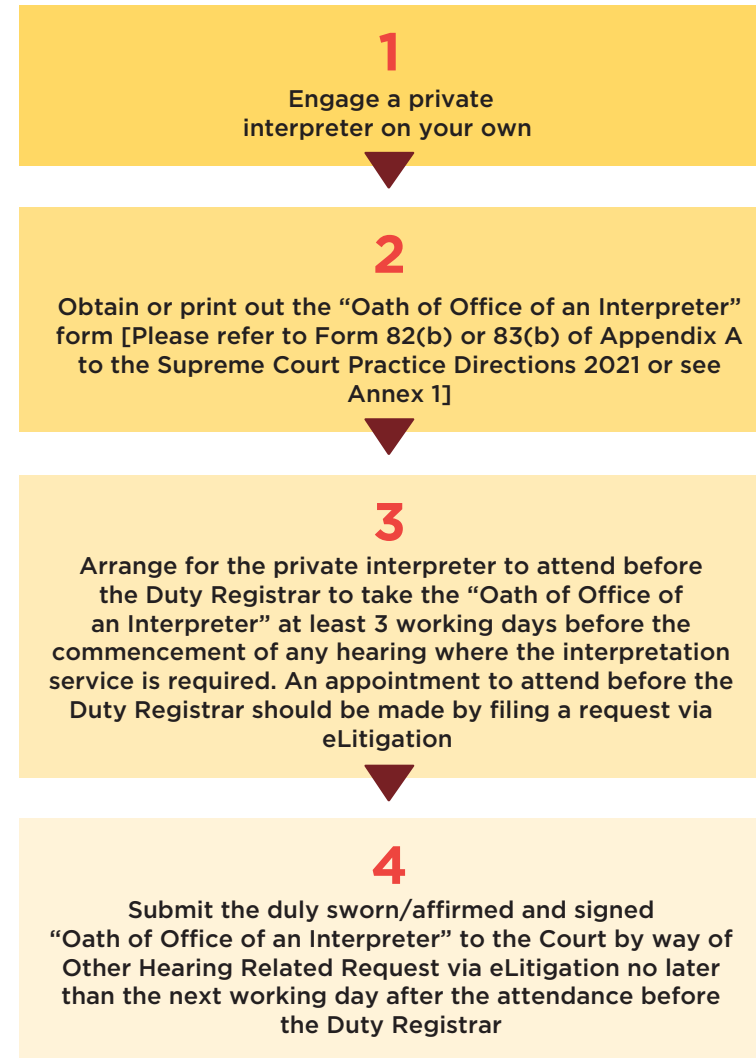
## Refund of Interpretation Fee

- If you are seeking a refund of the fee paid, a Request for Refund of Interpreter's Fee must be submitted to the Registrar through eLitigation soon after you have given written notice of the cancellation to the Head Interpreter. Any refund request made after one month of the date on which the reason for the refund arose will not be entertained.



## B. How to Use Private Interpreters in Civil Cases

1. If you are involved in a civil case and you require interpretation in a language or dialect not provided by the Court, or if you prefer to use the services of a private interpreter or no suitable court interpreter is available, you will have to engage your own private interpreter directly. Please follow the procedure below.



## V. TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE INTERPRETATION



### WHEN ANSWERING QUESTIONS ON THE STAND:

- Please speak clearly and in simple sentences.
- Please do not interrupt the interpreter when he/she is interpreting.
- Please do not ask the interpreter for legal advice or personal opinions.
- If you need a question or comment repeated, please ask the Judge for permission and not the interpreter.
- If you have trouble speaking to or understanding the interpreter, please inform the Court through the Court Officer.



### WHEN ASKING QUESTIONS:

- Please keep questions short and simple.
- Please do not interrupt the interpreter when he/she is interpreting. Allow the interpreter to complete the interpretation for the Court's record.
- Please speak directly to the person on the stand and not to the interpreter.

## VI. CONTACT DETAILS

### SUPREME COURT OF SINGAPORE

1 Supreme Court Lane, Singapore 178879  
www.judiciary.gov.sg  
Tel: 1800 338 1034

### INTERPRETERS' SECTION

Operating Hours:  
Mon - Thu: 9.00am to 5.30pm; Fri: 9.00am to 5.00pm  
Sat, Sun & Public Holidays: Closed  
Tel: 6557 7637 (Chinese), 6332 3970 (Malay),  
6332 3930 (Indian)  
Email: Supcourt\_Head\_Interpreters@judiciary.gov.sg

### ELECTRONIC FILING SERVICE (ELITIGATION)

**LawNet & CrimsonLogic Service Bureau**  
Level 1, Supreme Court

Operating Hours:  
Mon - Fri: 8.30am to 12.30pm and 2.00pm to 5.00pm  
Tel: 6337 9164  
Fax: 6337 9980  
Email: supremesb@crimsonlogic.com.sg

## VII. FORMS

### ANNEX 1 - OATH OF OFFICE OF AN INTERPRETER

#### OATH OF OFFICE OF AN INTERPRETER

I, \_\_\_\_\_  
having been appointed an interpreter in the \_\_\_\_\_ in Case No.  
\_\_\_\_\_ do solemnly \*affirm / swear that I will  
faithfully interpret, translate and transcribe from the \_\_\_\_\_  
language into the English Language and from the English Language into the \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ language to the best of my knowledge, skill and  
ability without fear or favour, affection or ill-will.

Taken and subscribed before me at Singapore this

\_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Interpreter)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Officer Administering the Oath)

\* delete as necessary