

INTERPRETATION SERVICES GUIDE



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INTRODUCTION

This guide provides information on requests for interpretation services in court proceedings.

Access to justice

All proceedings in the State Courts are conducted in English. Parties who do not speak English or have limited proficiency in English may request the services of Court Interpreters to help them understand the court proceedings.



Role of Court Interpreters

Court Interpreters play an integral role in the justice system. They act as an intermediary to bridge any communication gap between parties and help them to understand the court procedures.

Court Interpreters will assist you to understand the various court procedures. However, there are certain aspects that they cannot assist with. For example;

Cannot side with any party

Cannot help you examine the witnesses in a trial or write notes for you in court proceedings

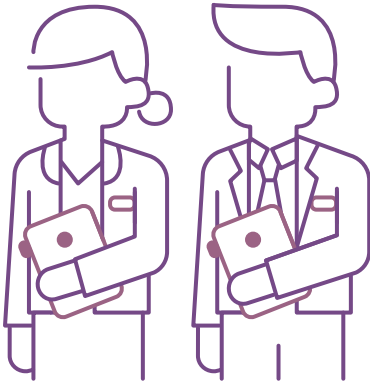


Cannot prompt the response required for a question

Cannot give you legal advice on what you should do for your case

INTERPRETERS IN THE STATE COURTS

There are two types of court interpreters providing interpretation services in the State Courts. They are:



In-house Court Interpreters

They are employees of the State Courts. They provide interpretation services in the major local languages and dialects.



Freelance Interpreters

They are freelance interpreters who provide sign language and foreign language interpretation services to the State Courts.

In-house Court Interpreters

In-house Court Interpreters are provided for all types of cases dealt with in the State Courts. These include criminal, civil and tribunal matters. Please refer to Pages 8 and 9 for more details.

The languages and dialects provided by the in-house Court Interpreters are:

Language Group	Main Language	Dialects
Chinese	Mandarin	Hokkien Teochew Cantonese
Malay	Malay	Javanese Boyanese
Indian	Tamil Malayalam Urdu	

Interpretation services provided by in-house Court Interpreters are **free of charge**.

Freelance Interpreters

Freelance Interpreters are provided for criminal matters and Magistrate's Complaints for sign language and foreign languages such as Bengali, Bahasa Indonesia, Thai, Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese, Hindi, Punjabi, Myanmar and Tagalog.



Interpretation services provided by Freelance Interpreters for **criminal matters** and **Magistrate's Complaints** are **free of charge**.

REQUEST FOR INTERPRETATION SERVICES

I. What are the types of cases heard in the State Courts?

You can request the services of an in-house Court Interpreter for the following matters in the State Courts:

Criminal Cases

Civil Cases

Tribunal Cases

Small Claims Tribunals

Employment
Claims Tribunals

Community Disputes
Resolution Tribunals

Interpretation services are also available for mediation sessions and for enquiries made by court users at the counters.



II. How to make a request for an in-house Court Interpreter?



(a) Criminal Cases

In-house Court Interpreters are available in Mentions Courts 4A, 4B, 7A and 7B.

You should approach the court officer to make a request for the services of an in-house Court Interpreter if your case is fixed for a 'Plead Guilty Mention' on another day.

You must inform the Judge at the Pre-Trial Conference of your preferred language and that of your witnesses (if any), for an in-house Court Interpreter to be arranged for your trial.



(b) Civil Cases

You should approach the court officer if you require interpretation services.

Your lawyer can make an application on your behalf through eLitigation **at least 1 week before** the start of your trial.



(c) Tribunal Cases and Magistrate's Complaints

You should approach the court officer if you require interpretation services.

If you have a lawyer for Magistrate's Complaints, your lawyer should make the request on your behalf **at least 1 week before** the start of your trial.

Note: If no prior request has been made, any deployment of an interpreter will be subject to availability.



III. How to make a request for a Freelance Interpreter?



(a) Criminal Cases / Magistrate's Complaints

For first court mentions, the Investigation Officer (IO) will arrange for a Freelance Interpreter for the first mentions of your case.

If your case is postponed, the court officer will make a request for you.

If you need a Freelance Interpreter to record a Magistrate's Complaint, you should inform the counter staff who will make the request for you.

(b) Civil and Tribunal Cases

Civil Cases: Either you or your lawyer should arrange for a Freelance Interpreter at your own cost.

Tribunal Cases: You will have to arrange for a Freelance Interpreter at your own cost.

Note: If no request is made for a Freelance Interpreter, your case may be adjourned for arrangements to be made to engage the Freelance interpreter.

THE DOS AND DON'TS WHEN USING INTERPRETATION SERVICES



Dos



Make an early request if you require an interpreter for your case.

Choose a language/dialect that you are most proficient in and use the same language/dialect throughout the court proceedings.

Wait for the interpreter to interpret the question to you fully before you give your response.

Speak audibly and clearly at a reasonable pace for interpretation and audio recording.

Don'ts



Do not speak in a mixture of two languages as this may cause confusion.

Do not interrupt the interpreter during interpretation. Let the interpreter finish the interpretation for the court's records.

Do not talk over each other when one party is speaking as this will disrupt the recording and cause confusion.

Do not ask the interpreters for advice on what you should do regarding your case as the courts are not in a position to give you legal advice.



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