



# Minneapolis Police Department Policy and Procedure Manual

Number:  
7-1000

## Volume Seven – Field Operations

### Persons With Disabilities and Limited English Proficiency

#### **7-1002 Communicating With Deaf or Hard of Hearing Individuals**

(02/08/96) (12/05/08) (05/06/15)

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It is the policy of the Minneapolis Police Department that American Sign Language interpreters will be provided to deaf or hard of hearing individuals who request them. Upon becoming aware that a person may be deaf or hard of hearing, MPD employees must inform the person that sign language interpreters are available at no cost and that it may take up to an hour for an interpreter to arrive. Employees should also ask the deaf or hard of hearing person what kind of interpreter or auxiliary aid he/she needs to communicate.

If a deaf or hard of hearing person suggests a mode of communication, MPD employees should try to accommodate the suggestion. Employees shall not require the deaf or hard of hearing person's friend or family member to interpret on his/her behalf.

If it is determined that an interpreter is needed, employees shall refer to the LEP Guide located on MPD Net under Manuals and Guides for specific contracted City vendors to request the interpreter service. If no immediate police action is required, employees may offer to schedule an interview or appointment to include an interpreter, for a later mutually agreeable date and time.

Before an interpreter arrives, employees should not take a suspect's statement, give Miranda warnings or have any other conversation which may be used in a court of law. During exigent circumstances, an interpreter will be offered after the exigency ends.

Officers assigned to 911 response cars have the discretion to determine whether to stay with the deaf or hard of hearing person while waiting for an interpreter to arrive. If there is no immediate threat of danger and the person has requested an interpreter, officers should direct them to go the nearest precinct where the interview will take place upon arrival of the interpreter. Officers shall return to the precinct when the deaf or hard of hearing person and the interpreter are present.

Upon encountering a deaf or hard of hearing person, officers should note the person's deafness in the CAPRS report. Any actions taken to accommodate suggestions made in order to facilitate communication should also be noted. If an interpreter was requested, the CAPRS report should include the time the interpreter was requested and the time the interpreter began interpreting. In addition, issues or problems that arise as a result of attempts to provide a qualified interpreter should be documented in the CAPRS report, if applicable, and the LEP Coordinator shall be notified via phone (673-2338), memo, or email.

MPD employees should direct questions and concerns regarding communication with deaf or hard of hearing individuals to the LEP Coordinator.

### **Communication Guidelines**

In general, when communicating with deaf or hard of hearing individuals in the absence of an interpreter, employees should be aware of the following:

- Face the person; get his/her attention. Face the light.
- Communicate with the deaf or hard of hearing person directly; maintain eye contact.
- Use gestures and facial expressions. Do not restrict the use of both arms (unless necessary for officer safety).
- Offer the person a pencil and paper, or if available, use a computer. (02/08/96) (12/05/08)
- Written communications may require more effort to understand. American Sign Language is a language with different sentence structure and word usage than the English language. (02/08/96) (12/05/08)