



WFD-WASLI International Sign Interpreters Code of Conduct

WFD-WASLI Accredited International Sign (IS) Interpreters are expected to maintain high standards of professional conduct in their capacity and identity as interpreters. National interpreter associations will have their own Codes of Ethics and/or Codes of Conduct, and there are a number of tenets that are in common across all codes of conduct, including confidentiality, impartiality¹, professional competence, professional accountability for one's decisions, and integrity in all business dealings. However the following document articulates ethical behaviour expected of the Accredited IS interpreter in their daily professional decision-making. The Code of Conduct is a public document and is the document by which the public is protected in the delivery of service.

I. Purpose and Scope

Article 1: WFD-WASLI International Sign Accredited Code of Conduct

- a) This WFD-WASLI Code of Professional Conduct (hereinafter called the "Code") identifies the standards of integrity, professionalism and confidentiality which all WFD-WASLI IS accredited interpreters shall be bound to respect in their work as interpreters.
- b) WFD-WASLI IS accredited interpreters are expected to maintain membership in their national sign language interpreter association and also individual membership in WASLI and WFD. The interpreters also abide by the national Code of Ethics or Code of Conduct, in addition to this WFD-WASLI Code of Conduct².
- c) The WFD-WASLI IS Interpreter Accreditation Disciplinary and Disputes Committee³ shall impose penalties for any breach of the rules of the profession as defined in this Code. Disciplinary actions may include, and are not limited to, recommended professional development, determining a suitable resolution for all parties (for example, formal apologies), or the loss of WFD-WASLI IS accreditation.

¹ We recognise that an interpreter should not alter source messages according to their own beliefs or convictions, and we also honor the fact that no human being can be totally impartial. In keeping with current research in the field, we recognise that interpreters are participants in the interpreter-mediated interaction, albeit in a professional manner.

² We recognise that there may be exceptional circumstances where accredited interpreters live in countries where the interpreters have not yet formed a professional association, however the expectation is that those countries will form an association and adopt an agreed upon Code of Conduct/Ethics, at which point membership is required.

³ Committee members will be posted on the WFD and WASLI websites.

Article 2: Professional Conduct & Confidentiality

- a) Interpreters shall be bound by the strictest confidentiality, which must be observed towards all persons and with regard to all information disclosed in the course of the practice of the profession.
 - While many of the events at which an interpreter works may provide services to the public, the interpreter will not share information about the assignment through social media, email, or personal conversations unless there is legal or moral obligation to do so. Consumers may choose to share information about the event; however, interpreters will not re-post/re-share such information.
 - When necessary, an interpreter may disclose information with another colleague and/or contracting parties in order to provide consistent quality of service.
- b) Interpreters will conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times. They shall refrain from deriving any personal and/or economic benefit or gain whatsoever from confidential information they may have acquired in the exercise of their duties as interpreters. Nor will interpreters actively promote themselves and/or their personal company in the course of an assignment in order to obtain further work, rather interpreters may refer inquiries to the WFD-WASLI website for a complete list of accredited interpreters.⁴
- c) Interpreters will recognise that all work undertaken by them, whether pro bono or paid, will ultimately reflect on them as an individual and on the interpreting profession. Interpreters will conduct themselves in a manner befitting the profession, including when negotiating work and contracts, obtaining preparation materials, and choice of attire and professional demeanour.
- d) Interpreters will conduct themselves appropriately in work-related social settings where priority should be given to interpreting for the deaf person in order that s/he can network with their hearing counterparts.

Article 3: Accountability for Professional Decisions

- a) Interpreters shall not accept any assignment for which they are not qualified and/or cannot maintain impartiality throughout the assignment.
- b) Acceptance of an assignment shall imply a moral undertaking on the interpreter's part to work with all due professionalism.
- c) Interpreters are responsible to ensure that they have a competent and complete complement of team members in assignments that require more than one interpreter.
- d) Interpreters will refrain from making inaccurate statements about their experience, education, certification and competence.
- e) Interpreters will demonstrate sound professional judgement and bear full responsibility for their decisions. This includes being aware of personal circumstances or conflicts of interest that could interfere with the effectiveness of interpreting services. Interpreters will ensure they have fully disclosed to all parties should there be a potential conflict of interest.
- f) Any interpreter recruiting other interpreters for an interpreting assignment will seek other Accredited Interpreters and will ensure they are appropriately qualified and have the matching language combination for the assignment. There may be circumstances where an Accredited Interpreter is not available and in those instances, interpreters will secure the services of the most qualified interpreters suitable for the assignment, however the expectation is that preference will always be given to WFD-WASLI Accredited

⁴ When asked for a business card, interpreters may provide a card however the intent of this tenet is to avoid the active promotion of one's company.

Interpreters. When interpreters are working with a feed interpreter, they will ensure that they are nationally certified, and possess the training and skills necessary to work in the feed/pivot role.

- g) Interpreters shall not double book themselves by accepting more than one assignment for the same period of time.
- h) Throughout an assignment, interpreters will maintain impartiality and objectivity, and provide a faithful culturally and linguistically appropriate rendering of the interpretation. Interpreters will refrain from altering messages for political, religious, moral or philosophical reasons.

Article 4: Upholding the Profession

- a) Interpreters shall not accept any job or situation that might detract from the dignity of the profession.
- b) Interpreters shall refrain from any act that might bring the profession into disrepute.

Article 5: Professional Relationships

- a) For any professional purpose, interpreters may publicise the fact that they are WFD-WASLI IS Accredited Interpreters, and are members of their national and international associations, either as individuals or as part of any grouping or region to which they belong.
- b) It is the duty of the interpreters to afford their colleagues professional respect and collegiality.
- c) Interpreters shall refrain from any utterance or action prejudicial to the interests of the WASLI or WFD or its other Accredited Interpreters. Any complaint arising out of the conduct of any other member or any disagreement regarding any decision taken by the WFD or WASLI shall be pursued and settled within the respective organisation itself.
- d) Interpreters are responsible to discuss and resolve, in a professional manner, any breach of ethics or professional conduct that arises between two or more interpreters. This must be addressed directly between the parties within ninety (90) days of the event that led to the dispute. If there is no resolution reached through direct conversation between the parties, the parties can report the conduct/perceived breach to the WFD-WASLI Disciplinary and Disputes Committee for arbitration.
- e) Interpreters will understand the difference between social and professional interactions. They will maintain appropriate boundaries and ensure that relationships with all parties involved are reasonable, fair, and professional.
- f) When functioning as a member of a team, the interpreter may be asked to provide feedback on the effectiveness of the interpretation, working conditions, technical requirements, etc. and/or suggest resources.
- g) Interpreters will refrain from any unfair competition with their colleagues, including but not limited to: wilfully undercutting; engaging in negative advertising about another interpreter agency; artificially inflating professional fees when the market demand exceeds supply.

Article 6: Working Conditions

With a view to ensure the best quality interpretation, interpreters:

- a) shall endeavour always to secure satisfactory conditions of sound, visibility and comfort, having particular regard to the professional and technical standards that support effective interpretation;
- b) as a general rule, should work in teams in conference-like settings; a team allows for support and rest breaks in order to ensure the quality of interpretation is of the highest calibre;
- c) shall try to ensure that teams of interpreters are formed in such a way as to support professional service delivery with respect to the language requirements, skills, experience, education and preparation required for the assignment;
- d) require a direct view of the speaker/signers and the room and therefore will not agree to work remotely except in circumstances where:
 - it is an accessible room designed for access for deaf people using screens.
 - there is no interaction and/or deaf consumers present (for example: a UN Webcast of a meeting where there are no deaf participants).
 - Further, remote interpreting for webcasts will require the use of multiple interpreters for webcasts. In the case of deaf-hearing teams, it will be important to have teams that are in the same location.
 - Individual remote meetings may allow for only one interpreter if the meeting is less than thirty (30) minutes.
- e) shall require that working documents, texts, video clips be made available in advance and take reasonable care of any property or materials given to them by consumers/hiring bodies. Further, interpreters may not lend materials or use them for any other purpose or provide these without consent of the owner to the consumer;
- f) shall request a briefing session whenever appropriate;
- g) shall not perform any other duties outside the scope as an interpreter while working as an interpreter⁶;
- h) may also provide bartered or pro bono service in situations where the profession of interpreting and the livelihood of other interpreters is not threatened.
- i) Interpreters shall neither accept nor offer to work under conditions that are contrary to those laid down in the WFD-WASLI Code of Conduct.

Article 7: Ongoing Professional Development

- a) Interpreters will incorporate current theoretical and applied knowledge and enhance that knowledge through continuing education throughout their professional careers.
- b) Interpreters will aim to be self-directed learners, pursuing educational opportunities that are relevant to their professional practice. This could include but is not limited to peer review, collegial consultation, mentoring and regular feedback regarding specific areas of skill development. WFD-WASLI requires all Accredited IS interpreters to complete a specified number of hours yearly as requested by WFD-WASLI.

⁵ If an interpreter has accepted a contract where the working conditions are set by an AIIC agreement, the AIIC working conditions overrule those outlined in this WFD-WASLI Code of Conduct.

⁶ Such as offering advice, or specialised consultancy

By signing this document, the WFD-WASLI Accredited International Sign Interpreter agrees to abide by this Code of Conduct.

I _____
(please print full name)

of _____
(please print full residential address)

Signed:

Date:

References:

AIC Code of Conduct

AVLIC Code of Conduct and Guidelines for Professional Conduct