



Legal Seat – Helsinki, Finland

WORLD FEDERATION OF THE DEAF

WORLD ASSOCIATION OF SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS

An International Non-Governmental Organisation in official liaison with ECOSOC, UNESCO, ILO, WHO and the Council of Europe. WFD was established in Rome in 1951.

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Guidelines on Access to Information in National Sign Languages During Emergency Broadcasts

Version date: 6.1.2021

*More than 70 million deaf people throughout the world have the right
to access information in their national sign languages*

Key points:

- In all official events and broadcasts that provide health and emergency information, it is essential that **qualified national [sign language interpreters](#), with nationally or internationally recognised qualifications** are engaged.
- **Audiovisual media services related to health and emergency information should be accessible.** In this way, deaf people have equal access to emergency information as others regardless the platform or service used.
- **Sign language interpreters should be present and visible on the screen next to the presenter making the announcements.** This ensures that deaf people using national sign languages have timely access to health and emergency information alongside other viewers.
- **Live/real time captions/subtitles¹ should be provided and produced either in an open or closed format in line with quality-of-service requirements.** This will ensure optimal and equal access to all viewers.

¹ Also referred to as live captions real time captions or CART (Communication access real-time translation). The terms Captions and subtitles (and other accessibility terms used in this document) are defined in ITU-T Recommendation F.791 "Accessibility terms and definitions".

In this document, good practices are outlined for providing sign language access to health and emergency information in addition to captions/subtitles in different contexts.

I. National press conferences or emergency information broadcasts with national sign language interpreters and captioning/subtitling present:

1. The national sign language interpreter should be clearly visible on the screen. This can be achieved by either:
 - a. positioning the interpreter besides the lecturer physically (Fig. 1)
 - b. adding a physical digital screen of the interpreter in the scene (Fig. 2)
 - c. using picture-in-picture compositing technique for merging videos of interpreter and presenter (Fig. 3)
 - d. applying a chroma key compositing technique for merging videos of interpreter and presenter with static and solid background (Fig. 4).

Note: This method is used exceptionally in the absence of the other options.
2. The interpreter(s) should stand preferably on the right hand of the screen (or on the side which is preferred in the country of broadcast) facing the audience and in shot showing upper body as well as the face and hands.



Fig 1: The national sign language interpreter is physically present and stands next to the presenter (The Netherlands)



Fig 2: The national sign language interpreter is present and displayed on a digital screen facing the audience and in shot (Japan)



Fig. 3: Picture-in-picture compositing technique for merging videos of interpreter and presenter (Spain)



Fig. 4: The national sign language interpreter is presented using chroma key compositing technique and closed captions (UK)

3. The national sign language interpreter should always be displayed in the full screen image, with no text, graphics or captions/subtitles covering the interpreter.
4. Broadcasts may be multiplatform but should always be broadcast on the main public TV channels as well as the Internet to ensure easy access for a wide audience.
5. Two or more sign language interpreters may be required and displayed simultaneously if multiple languages are spoken or signed.
6. Live/Real time captions/subtitles:
 - a. The captions/subtitles should be recorded as open so that the announcement is accessible if the announcement is to be repeatedly broadcast.
 - b. Live/Real time captions/subtitles should be provided and produced by a trained human captioner either as open or closed captions/subtitles.
 - c. If the announcement is deals with urgent instructions and is to be repeated, ie: as in disaster instructions, the captions/subtitles should always be open.
 - d. Captions/subtitles should be available on all TV channels and other forms of media, including the Internet.
 - e. Captions/subtitles should be displayed at the bottom of the screen in contrasted format and should not cover the interpreter. Preferred colours are yellow or white on black background (white captions without black background are not visually accessible).

II. Live (special real-time) news broadcasts with interpreter/s:

1. One presenter - size of the interpreter:

- Preferred: size of the interpreter inset should be $\frac{1}{3}$ of the screen and occupy a space no smaller than $\frac{1}{6}$ of the screen (Fig. 4).
- Another method is where the interpreter is placed in a box filling $\frac{1}{4}$ of the screen, separate from the actual image of the presenter or other images on the screen being verbally discussed (Fig. 5).



Fig. 5: Placement of the interpreter in a separate box of the screen with closed (CC) captions/subtitles turned off (Austria)

2. TV debate - positioning and size of the interpreter(s):

- Preferred: one interpreter displayed per presenter (Fig. 6 & 7)
- Alternative: (as above, under II.1a or II.1b)



Fig. 6: TV debate with one interpreter displayed per presenter (USA)



Fig. 7: TV debate with one interpreter displayed per presenter (France)

- Broadcasts should be multiplatform but should always be provided on the main public TV channels to ensure easy access for a wide audience. Captioning/subtitling should always be provided.

III. Live Ministerial announcements

Sign language interpreters often cannot be present on the floor of parliamentary bodies when Ministers make announcements about updates. In that case the principles for live news broadcasts should be used, with the interpreter live streamed simultaneously on-screen alongside the presenter (Fig. 8). This is often broadcast through a parliamentary web-based platform. Also see above in key points.



Fig. 8: Live ministerial announcement (UK)

IV. Informational public safety videos:

- It is the responsibility of public authorities to ensure that all broadcasted Information is made available in the national sign language(s) of the country, preferably created in that sign language during the live broadcast and not from a translation of written or later spoken text and shown together with captions/subtitles (Fig. 9).

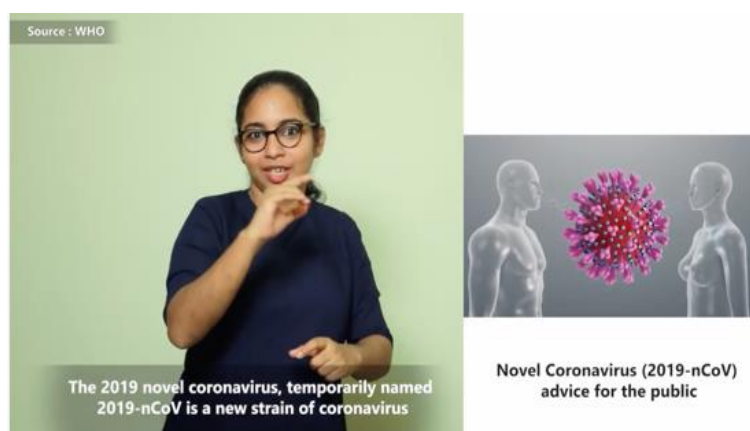


Fig. 9: Informational public safety video (India)

- National and international associations of the deaf should be contacted for their expertise and guidance in developing these videos and authorized standards bodies like the ITU (the UN International Telecommunications Union) who work directly with persons with disabilities and their respective organisations (Fig. 10 and Fig. 11).



Fig. 10: Informational public safety video (India)



Fig. 11: Informational public safety video (Spain)

3. A good practice would be for a deaf presenter to present information in their national sign language(s) emergency or disaster and the safety measures needed to be implemented, so that the information is accurately presented by native user(s) of the national sign language(s).
4. These videos should be published on the national and public health websites alongside other public information.
5. Videos should also be captioned/subtitled in the country's national language(s).
6. Visual images should be used whenever possible to support the information.
7. Present information on how deaf people can access the national or local health authorities either directly in sign language, either face to face or through remote national languages interpretation services in case of further questions.

These Guidelines are also applicable to nongovernmental and international organizations disseminating information on public health and emergency information. National sign language should be used as a first priority, with information given in International Sign for international organisations targeting a global audience.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

These Guidelines were compiled by Matjaž Debevc, Andrea Saks, Maya de Wit, and Joseph Murray with input from Alexandre Bloxs, Christopher Stone, Lidia Best, Masahito Kawamori, Alim Chandani, Elizabeth Lockwood, Marta Bosch i Baliarda, and Dušan Caf. Thanks to Maya de Wit, and Marta Bosch i Baliarda for assistance with sourcing the images used in this document.

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