



Practice Direction #20

Interpreters

1.0 This Practice Direction explains

- who can interpret at a WSIAT hearing
- how to arrange for an interpreter
- the information the WSIAT needs about your language
- the services provided by interpreters

2.0 Who can Interpret at a WSIAT Hearing

2.1 WSIAT hearings are conducted in English or French. If a party or witness does not speak or understand either of these languages, the WSIAT will provide a qualified, impartial interpreter for the hearing. The WSIAT's interpreters swear an oath that they understand the language to be interpreted and the English or French language. They also swear that they will interpret accurately to the best of their ability. They maintain the confidentiality of all personal information while interpreting.

2.2 Relatives and friends of parties or witnesses cannot interpret evidence at a hearing.

3.0 How to Request an Interpreter at a Hearing

3.1 To request an interpreter for yourself at your hearing, indicate the language and dialect on your Notice of Appeal (NOA) Form or Response Form.

3.2 If your witnesses need an interpreter at the hearing, indicate the language and dialect on your Hearing Ready Form.

3.3 If you find that you need an interpreter after filing the Hearing Ready Form, you must request an interpreter more than **6 weeks** before the hearing. This is so the WSIAT has enough time to arrange for an interpreter.

4.0 Information about the Language to be Interpreted

- 4.1 Parties must provide the WSIAT with precise information about the language and the dialect of the party or witnesses who need an interpreter. This will help the WSIAT arrange for an appropriate interpreter to be at the hearing. It will also help to avoid delays and possibly adjournments at hearings.

5.0 WSIAT Expectations of Interpreters

- 5.1 Interpreters must provide word for word interpretation services at the hearing. This is sometimes called “verbatim”. The Vice-Chair or Panel may ask the interpreter to assist in a different way. Interpreters are not allowed to paraphrase evidence. They also cannot attempt to clarify a response given by a witness. The interpreter must inform the Vice-Chair or Panel if they are not able to translate a word or phrase in testimony, or if they do not understand the testimony. The Vice-Chair or Panel will give them instructions.
- 5.2 A party or witness may be able to testify in English or French and only need interpretation for unfamiliar words. In these cases, the Vice-Chair or Panel will consult with the parties and the interpreter before the hearing. They will direct a form of interpretation that is not verbatim.

6.0 References and Resources

6.1 Legislative Authority

Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997, sections 131 (the WSIAT can determine its own practice and procedure) and 178 (French language services)

6.2 Related Practice Directions

- #1 – How to Start an Appeal at the WSIAT
- #4 – How to Prepare an Appeal at the WSIAT
- #21 – Who May Attend a Hearing
- #36 – Delivery and Filing Documents