

WESTCOAST ASSOCIATION OF VISUAL LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS

Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Professional Conduct

Approved by the Board (effective date): June 12, 2017

Professional accountability.....	1
Confidentiality.....	1
Professional Conduct.....	1
Duty to Report.....	2
Conflict of Interests.....	2
Scope of Practice	2
Integrity of Service	2
Professional Competence	2
Qualifications to Practice	3
Faithfulness of Interpretations.....	3
Accountability for Professional Competence.....	3
Ongoing Professional Development	3
Non-discrimination.....	3
Communication Preferences	4
Deaf Interpreters.....	4
Professional Relationships.....	4
Impartiality	4
Respect for Colleagues.....	4
Support for Professional Associations.....	5
Integrity in Business Relationships and Practices.....	5
Accurate Representation of Credentials	5
Reimbursement for Services	6

Professional accountability

1. A Member must demonstrate sound professional judgment and accept responsibility for all professional decisions made and actions taken.

Confidentiality

2. A Member must respect the privacy of consumers and hold in confidence all personal information obtained in the course of professional service, but may be released from this obligation with the consent of the consumers or when authorized or required by law to breach privacy.
3. Where necessary, a Member may exchange pertinent information with a colleague in order to provide consistent quality of service, so long as this protects the information and the consumer.
4. A Member in private practice must be aware of the *Personal Information Protection Act* and any other professional codes of conduct that may impact upon their work, and make appropriate professional decisions and conduct themselves in a manner befitting the setting and the profession.

Professional Conduct

5. A Member must act in a professional manner at all times.
6. A Member must hold the needs of consumers primary when making professional decisions.
7. A Member must recognize that all work they undertake on an individual basis, whether pro bono or paid, will ultimately reflect the integrity of that Member and of the profession as a whole.
8. A Member must not badger or coerce individuals or agencies to use their professional services.
9. A Member must
 - a. take into account the limitations of their abilities, knowledge and the resources available to them prior to accepting work, and
 - b. remove him or herself from a situation when the Member realizes he or she is unable to provide professional service.
10. A Member must refrain from conduct that can lead to substandard performance or harm to anyone, including the Member and consumers.
11. A Member must be accountable to the Association for their professional and ethical conduct.
12. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, a Member must discuss and resolve, in a professional manner, issues arising from a colleague's breach of this Code or any other unethical or improper professional conduct the Member becomes aware of.

Duty to Report

13. In the case where a colleague's breach or conduct may be harmful to others or chronic, and the Member's attempt to resolve the issue was not successful, the Member must then report that colleague's breach or conduct to the Association in accordance with Part 10 of the Bylaws.

Conflict of Interests

14. A Member must
 - a. be aware of personal circumstances or conflict of interest that might interfere with their effectiveness, and
 - b. make every attempt to avoid situations that constitute a real or perceived conflict of interest.
15. Members will ensure there is full disclosure to all parties should their ancillary interest be seen as a real or perceived conflict of interest.

Scope of Practice

16. A Member must refrain from using his or her professional role to perform other functions that lie beyond the scope of an interpreting assignment and the parameters of their professional duties.
17. A Member must not counsel, advise, or interject personal opinions
18. When functioning as part of a multi-professional team (e.g., education, legal, medical and mental health settings), a Member must limit his or her expertise to interpretation, but – if it is appropriate – the Member may, within the context of the multi-professional team, comment on the overall effectiveness of communication, the interpreting process and to suggest appropriate resources and referrals.
19. A Member must refrain from manipulating work situations for personal benefit or gain, but
 - a. when working as independent contractors, a Member may promote their professional services within the scope of their practice, or
 - b. when working as an employee or for an agency or other employer, a Member must not promote their professional services independent of their agency or employer.

Integrity of Service

20. Members will demonstrate sound professional judgment and accept responsibility for their decisions.

Professional Competence

21. A Member must provide the highest possible quality of service through all aspects of professional practice.

Qualifications to Practice

22. A Member must possess the knowledge and skills to support accurate and appropriate interpretation work.
23. Given the range of settings and work provided to a variety of consumers, a Member must be adept at meeting the linguistic needs of consumers, the cultural dynamics of each situation, and the spirit and content of the discourse.

Faithfulness of Interpretations

24. A Member's interpretation must be faithful to and render exactly the message of the source text.¹

Accountability for Professional Competence

25. A Member must accept full responsibility for the quality of their own work and will refrain from making inaccurate statements regarding their competence, education, experience or certification.
26. A Member must properly prepare him or herself for the work contracted.
27. A Member must accept contracts for work only after determining the Member has the appropriate qualifications and can remain neutral throughout the assignment.

Ongoing Professional Development

28. A Member must incorporate current theoretical and applied knowledge, enhance that knowledge through continuing education throughout their professional careers and strive for national certification.
29. A Member must aim to be a self-directed learner, and pursue educational opportunities relevant to their professional practice.²

Non-discrimination

30. A Member must approach professional services with respect and cultural sensitivity towards all participants.
31. A Member must respect the client's individuality, the client's right to self-determination, and the autonomy of the people with whom they work.
32. A Member must not discriminate based on ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion, personal beliefs and practices, social status or any other factor.

¹ *COMMENTARY: A faithful interpretation should not be confused with a literal interpretation. The fidelity of an interpretation includes an adaptation to make the form, the tone, and the deeper meaning of the source text felt in the target language and culture.*

² *COMMENTARY: This could include but is not limited to peer review, collegial consultation, mentoring and regular feedback regarding specific areas of skill development.*

Communication Preferences

33. Members will respect and use the form of communication preferred by those deaf and hard of hearing consumers for whom they provide service.

Deaf Interpreters

34. A Member must recognize the need for a Deaf interpreter and will ensure their inclusion as a part of the professional interpreting team.³

Professional Relationships

35. A Member must deal honestly and fairly with consumers and colleagues while establishing and maintaining professional boundaries.

36. A Member must

- a. understand the difference between professional and social interactions,
- b. establish and maintain appropriate boundaries between themselves and consumers, and
- c. assume responsibility to ensure relationships with all parties involved are reasonable, fair and professional.

Impartiality

37. A Member must

- a. remain neutral, impartial, and objective, and
- b. refrain from altering a message for political, religious, moral, or philosophical reasons, or any other biased or subjective consideration.

38. Should a Member not be able to put aside personal biases or reactions which threaten impartiality, the Member must examine options available to them, which may include not accepting the work or withdrawing their services from the assignment or contract.

Respect for Colleagues

39. A Member must act toward colleagues in a spirit of mutual cooperation, treating and portraying them to others with respect, courtesy, fairness and good faith, etc.

40. A Member must assist and encourage practitioners who are new to the interpretation profession.

41. A Member must not abuse the good faith of other Members, breach a trust or use unfair tactics.

³ *COMMENTARY: The services of a Deaf interpreter may be required when working with individuals who use regional sign dialects, non-standard signs, foreign sign languages, and those with emerging language use. They may also be used with individuals who have disabling conditions that impact on communication.*

Support for Professional Associations

42. A Member must support the Association, its affiliates, and other organizations representing the profession and the Deaf community.

Integrity in Business Relationships and Practices

43. A Member must establish and maintain professional boundaries with consumers and colleagues in a manner that is honest and fair.

44. A Member must refrain from any unfair competition with their colleagues, including but not limited to the following:

- a. engaging in comparative advertising;
- b. willfully undercutting a colleague;
- c. artificially inflating fees during times when market demand exceeds supply.

45. A Member must conduct him or herself in all phases of the interpreting situation in a manner befitting the profession, including negotiating work and contracts, obtaining suitable preparation material, and choice of attire and professional demeanor.

46. A Member must

- a. honour professional commitments made when accepting work,
- b. follow through on their obligations, and
- c. not unilaterally terminate work or a contract unless they have fair and reasonable grounds to do so.

47. A Member must

- a. take reasonable care of material or property given to them by a consumer, and
- b. not lend such or use it for purposes other than those for which it was entrusted to them.

Accurate Representation of Credentials

48. A Member must not by any means engage in, or allow the use of, statements that are false, misleading, incomplete, or likely to mislead consumers or members of the public.

49. A Member must refrain from making inaccurate statements regarding their competence, education, experience or certification.

50. Only a Member certified by the Association of Visual Language Interpreters of Canada (COI) may use the term "certified" in printed, electronic, signed or oral transmission.⁴

⁴ COMMENTARY: This may include, but is not limited to, interpreter directories, business cards and forms, promotional materials, resumes or publications they have authored.

51. In accordance with bylaw 19, only an Active Member in good standing who has been registered as an ASL-English Interpreter is entitled to use one or more of the occupational titles granted to the Association under the *Societies Act*.

Reimbursement for Services

52. A Member must

- a. bill a client only for services provided,
- b. negotiate fees, including cancellation policies, preferably in writing or contract form before service is provided, and
- c. be sensitive to professional and community norms when establishing fees for services.

53. A Member may provide bartered or pro bono service in situations where the profession of interpreting and the livelihood of other practitioners will not be threatened.