

# **Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID)**

## **STANDARD PRACTICE PAPER ON TEAM INTERPRETING**

### **About Team Interpreting**

Team interpreting is utilization of two or more interpreters functioning as equal members of a team, rotating responsibilities at pre-arranged intervals, and providing support and feedback to each other.

The decision to use a team rather than an individual interpreter generally is based on

- length and/or complexity of the assignment
- unique needs of the persons being served
- dynamics of the setting.

### **The team process**

All team members are constantly active in the team process. They rotate between primary and support roles. Primary roles are directed to the consumers and include tasks such as signing and voicing. Support roles are necessary to enhance the team's performance and include

- monitoring the overall setting
- assuring appropriate and timely transitions
- prompting the primary interpreter.

In team interpreting, interpreters rotate at regular intervals, usually 20 to 30 minutes, while providing continuity in the message transmission. Rotation greatly reduces mental and physical fatigue by allowing a shift of tasks. Continuity is assured as all team members remain present and actively involved, thereby maintaining awareness of the content and context of the information being transmitted.

In some situations, more than one team is required. Factors influencing how many interpreters or teams of interpreters are needed include

- size of the audience
- number of presenters and whether they present individually or as a panel
- whether the audience members are deaf, hearing or mixed
- whether the speakers are deaf, hearing or mixed
- the degree of audience participation
- communication preferences of presenters and audience
- special needs such as tactile, oral, and close visual range interpreting.

To assure quality service delivery, a team will take sufficient time to decide upon the appropriate placement of primary and support interpreters and their respective functions during the assignment. Arrangements for sound system and other equipment or logistical needs should be made in advance.

The Association believes that through team interpreting, presenters, audiences and individuals can receive optimum interpreting services, because interpreters are able to function at their best.

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