

*MISUNDERSTANDINGS  
CAN PUT THE SAFETY OF  
THE PUBLIC AND THE  
OFFICER AT RISK!*

**I KNOW SOME ENGLISH.  
DO I REALLY NEED AN  
INTERPRETER?**

You may understand or speak some English, but you may still want an interpreter. Interpreters can help you:

- Prevent misunderstandings.
- Give accurate information.
- Understand your legal rights.
- Request services such as victim's services & translated forms.

**WHO CAN OBTAIN  
LANGUAGE SERVICES?**

Language services are provided to anyone who is a limited English proficient (LEP) person. This means that English is not your primary language and you may have difficulties reading, speaking or understanding English.

**WILL I CAUSE AN  
INCONVENIENCE OR  
PROBLEM IF I ASK FOR  
AN INTERPRETER?**

Everyone has the right to effective and accurate communication with the police, and SFPD wants to assist.

Produced by  
The San Francisco Police Department  
in cooperation with  
the Language Access Coalition

The Language Access Coalition is a network of language access advocates that includes the American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California, Asian Law Caucus, Asian Pacific Islander Legal Outreach, Asian Pacific Islander Youth and Advocacy Network, Bay Area Immigrant Rights Coalition, Chinese for Affirmative Action, Community Youth Center, Immigrant Legal Resource Center, La Raza Centro Legal, Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights, Mujeres Unidas y Activas, Legal Services for Children, Office of Citizen Complaints, People Organizing to Demand Environmental & Economic Rights, RAMS, Inc., Safety Network Program, San Francisco Department on the Status of Women, San Francisco District Attorney's Office, San Francisco Immigrant Rights Commission, San Francisco Public Defender's Office, San Francisco Youth Commission, Sunset Neighborhood Beacon Center, and Youth Law Center.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS/CONCERNS:

SFPD's Language Access Liaison Officer  
Hall of Justice  
850 Bryant Street, Rm. 500  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
Tel: (415) 553-9161

or  
Office of Citizen Complaints  
25 Van Ness Ave., 7<sup>th</sup> Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
Tel: (415) 241-7711

**GUIDE TO  
LANGUAGE  
ASSISTANCE  
SERVICES**



**SAN FRANCISCO  
POLICE DEPARTMENT  
PROVIDES FREE  
LANGUAGE SERVICES**

Language assistance for limited English proficient (LEP) individuals is a free service that is part of SFPD's community policing and enforcement efforts and Department General Order 5.20.

*SFPD's GOAL IS TO  
PROVIDE TIMELY AND  
ACCURATE  
COMMUNICATION*

**HOW DO I OBTAIN  
LANGUAGE SERVICES?**

If you can speak some English:

1. Try to tell the officer you need an interpreter in your language. **Say, "I would like an interpreter, and I speak [language or dialect]."**
2. The officer may also have you identify the language you speak, using a Language Identification Card that lists many different languages.
3. **Find the language you speak on the card and point it out to the officer.**
4. The officer will then call for a qualified bilingual officer or a telephone interpreter to help.

If you speak no English:

1. The officer will show you a Language Identification Card.
2. **Find the language you speak on the card and point it out to the officer.**
3. The officer will then call for a qualified bilingual officer or a telephone interpreter to help.

**WHAT IF I DO NOT  
SPEAK A COMMON  
LANGUAGE?**

SFPD has access to telephone interpreters who speak over 90 languages, including Tagalog, Vietnamese, Hindi, Korean, Japanese, German, French, and Italian.

*SFPD WILL PROVIDE  
LANGUAGE SERVICES  
WHEN YOU TALK WITH A  
POLICE OFFICER*

**CAN MY CHILD, RELATIVE,  
OR A BYSTANDER  
INTERPRET FOR ME?**

- SFPD officers will not use children, family, or bystanders unless there is an emergency. Emergencies include a threat to life, safety, or property.
- As soon as the emergency ends, SFPD officers will use an approved interpreter to check the accuracy of the initial interpretation.
- Your child, relative, or a bystander may not understand how to explain what is happening, and SFPD is there to help.

**WHAT KIND OF  
LANGUAGE SERVICES  
DOES SFPD PROVIDE?**

- Qualified bilingual officers who speak Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, and Russian.
- Access to interpreters through a telephone interpreter system for all other languages (such as, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Hindi, etc.) or if a qualified bilingual officer is not available.
- Your rights ("Miranda Rights") will be read to you in your primary language by a qualified bilingual officer or telephone interpreter.
- Interviews with the police will be conducted in your primary language by a qualified bilingual officer or telephone interpreter.
- Written forms will be provided or read to you in your primary language by a qualified bilingual officer or telephone interpreter.

**SFPD'S LANGUAGE  
ASSISTANCE IS ESPECIALLY  
IMPORTANT WHEN YOU ARE:**

1. Interviewed by officers.
2. Read your Miranda Rights.
3. Given forms to fill out.
4. Formally questioned.
5. Needing information