

**MISUNDERSTANDINGS
CAN HARM THE SAFETY
OF OFFICERS AND THE
PUBLIC!**

**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:

- o Prevent misunderstandings.
- o Give accurate information.
- o Understand your legal rights.
- o 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 BE CAUSING
INCONVENIENCE OR
PROBLEMS 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, 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) 533-9161
or
Office of Citizen Complaints
25 Van Ness Ave., 7th 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 many different languages, including Tagalog, Vietnamese, Hindi, Korean, Japanese, German, French, Italian, and many more!

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

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

- o SFPD officers will not use children, family, or bystanders unless there is an emergency. Emergencies include a threat to life, safety, or property.
- o As soon as the emergency ends, the SFPD officer will go back to using an approved interpreter and use that interpreter to check the accuracy of the initial interpretation.
- o Your child, relative, or a bystander, may not know the right vocabulary to interpret for you.

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

- o Qualified bilingual officers who speak Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, and Russian.
- o 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.
- o Your rights ("Miranda Rights") will be read to you in your primary language by a qualified bilingual officer or telephone interpreter.
- o Interviews with the police will be conducted in your primary language by a qualified bilingual officer or telephone interpreter.
- o 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.