



GREENVILLE COUNTY
SHERIFF'S OFFICE

GO - 150

GENERAL ORDERS

DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING INTERACTIONS

PURPOSE:

It is the policy of the Greenville County Sheriff's Office to ensure that a consistently high level of service is provided to all community members, including those who are deaf or hard of hearing. This office has specific legal obligations under the Americans with Disabilities Act to communicate effectively with people who are deaf or hard of hearing. To carry out these policies and legal obligations, this office instructs its personnel to comply with this policy.

POLICY:

People who are deaf or hard of hearing are entitled to a level of service equivalent to that provided to other persons. This office recognizes that effective communication with a person who is deaf or hard of hearing, whether a victim, suspect, witness, or other person encountered, is essential in obtaining what actually occurred, the urgency of the matter, and the type of situation.

This office will make every effort to ensure that employees communicate effectively with people who are deaf or hard of hearing. There are various types of communication aids that may be used when working with a person that is deaf or hard of hearing. These aids include:

- Visual aids
- Gestures
- Notepad and pen to exchange written notes
- Use of an assistive listening system
- Qualified oral or sign language interpreter

In many circumstances, oral communication supplemented by gestures and visual aids or an exchange of written notes will be an effective means of communication. In other circumstances, a qualified interpreter may be needed or other communication aid as needed based on the individual who is deaf or hard of hearing. Any use of a communication aid will be documented and the written notes will be placed in Property and Evidence.

To serve each individual effectively, primary consideration should be given to providing the type of communication aid or service requested by the individual. Employees should find out from the person who is deaf or hard of hearing what type of communication aid they need. Deputies should defer to those choices unless,

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- There is another equally effective method of communication given the circumstances; or
- Doing so would fundamentally alter the nature of the law enforcement activity in question or would cause an undue administrative or financial burden. *Note: only the Sheriff or his designee may make this determination.

People who are deaf or hard of hearing will not be charged for any costs incurred from the use of the communication aid.

Deputies will be provided with the publication *Communicating with People Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing: ADA Guide for Law Enforcement Officers*. This document will be reviewed by all deputies and will assist in providing information on how to effectively communicate in common situations where deputies may encounter a person who is deaf or hard of hearing.

ON-CALL INTERPRETIVE AND TTY/RELAY SERVICES:

This office will maintain a list of sign language interpreting services that are available for Sheriff's Office use. Each of these interpreters will be screened prior to being placed on the list.

Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing often have the ability to communicate via telephone. This communication takes place using either a teletypewriter (TTY) or other relay device. This device is located in Communications and can be accessed by the deaf or hearing impaired person, who has the equipment, by calling either 911 or the non-emergency dispatch number (864-271-5210). This system allows communication by exchanging type written messages between parties. All communications personnel should be aware of the possibility of receiving a call from a Video Relay service. This service allows a deaf or hard of hearing person to communicate with voice telephone users through video equipment. Those using the Video Relay service will communicate with an interpreter by using sign language through a video camera over an internet connection. The interpreter will then place the call and relay the needed information.



Hobart Lewis, Sheriff