

*The Singapore  
Association  
For The Deaf*





# **ENGAGING SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS FOR THE DEAF COMMUNITY**

## **A Guide for Event Organisers**

*By Sign Language Interpretation Section  
The Singapore Association for the Deaf  
2021*

# Contents

	<b>03</b>	<b>Choosing the Right Accessibility</b>	
		<b>Effective Communication and Providing Accessibility</b>	<b>04</b>
	<b>06</b>	<b>Before Event</b>	
		<b>Day of Event</b>	<b>12</b>
	<b>14</b>	<b>After Event</b>	
		<b>FAQs</b>	<b>16</b>
	<b>19</b>	<b>Plan Checklist</b>	
		<b>Overview</b>	<b>20</b>
	<b>21</b>	<b>Contact Us</b>	

# CHOOSING THE RIGHT ACCESSIBILITY



### SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER

The interpreter's role is to facilitate communication between deaf and/or hard of hearing and hearing individuals who do not share the same language.

Interpreting requires a high level of fluency in Sign Languages and spoken languages and conform to a professional code of ethics, which includes appropriate conduct when on official duty and safeguarding clients' privacy.

### NOTETAKER

The notetaker's role is to provide realtime meaning-for-meaning transcription service to deaf and/or hard of hearing individuals. Notetakers work in a professional and flexible manner, maintaining confidentiality at all times.

The use of a notetaker in events and meetings provide deaf and/or hard of hearing individuals with the freedom to access spoken information conveyed throughout the event.

Individuals who are deaf and/or hard-of-hearing may have access to either a Notetaker or a Sign Language Interpreter, or both, based on their preferences. It is important to note that not all are able to converse in Sign Language and would therefore rely on notetaking services. It is very important that you, as the event organiser, work together with Deaf Access Services to ensure that the deaf participants/guests are provided with full access to information throughout the event.

## 1. Introduction: Effective Communication and Providing Accessibility

***Do you have deaf clients, co-workers, audience members, event participants, or friends? Use a sign language interpreter for better communication, and learn how to do it effectively and professionally.***

Meetings and discussions with deaf persons can be made more effective if you first establish that engaging the right accessibility is integral in your meetings or event planning. Having an interpreter or a notetaker is not an option nor is it something that should be decided at the very last minute.

As the event organiser, we encourage you to take responsibility for providing accessibility for effective communications and not depend on the deaf persons to source for accessibility on their own.

### DID YOU KNOW?

## United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The Singapore Government has signed the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) on 30th November 2012. The Agreement was later ratified on 18 July 2013 and became official on 18 August 2013.

The Convention metes out legal obligations that all countries are to implement in their local policies. Singapore has the Enabling Masterplan that guides the building of a more inclusive society with references to the Convention. The five-year roadmap consists of recommendations for the Government to implement in their initiatives to improve accessibility for persons with disabilities, which include the Deaf Community.

## 1. Introduction: Effective Communication and Providing Accessibility

According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD):

**Article 30: Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport**

Deaf people have the rights to participate in and enjoy all kind of activities. The Government shall ensure that Deaf people can join in and enjoy any activities in which they participate.

These can be made possible by providing Sign Language interpretation and/or Notetaking services in all events.

**Article 21: Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information**

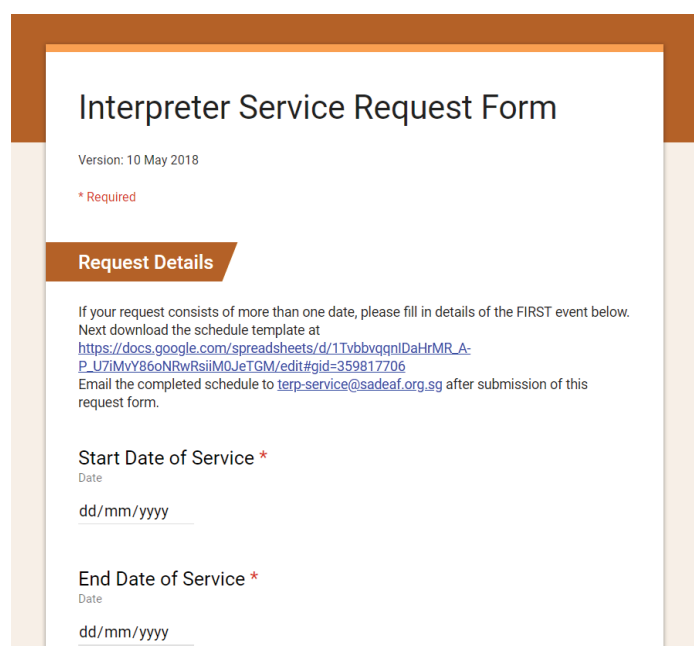
The government shall take measures to ensure that Deaf people can exercise the right to freedom of expression and opinion, to find about, receive and share information and ideas.

More information can be found at:

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html>

## 2. Before the event

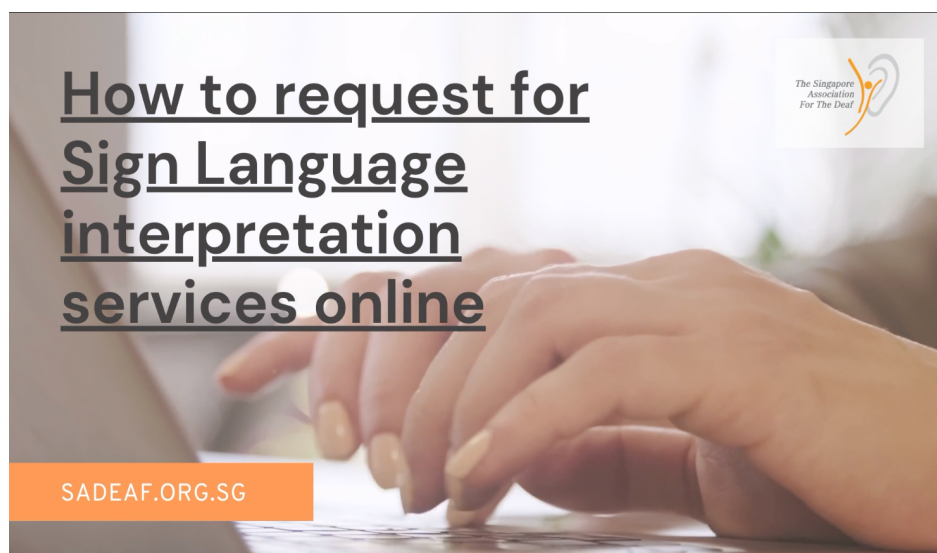
### 2.1 Submit request and details required



The image shows a screenshot of a web form titled "Interpreter Service Request Form". At the top, it says "Version: 10 May 2018" and "\* Required" in red. Below this is a section header "Request Details" in an orange box. The text in this section reads: "If your request consists of more than one date, please fill in details of the FIRST event below. Next download the schedule template at [https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1TvbbvgqnIDaHrMR\\_A-P\\_U7IMvY86oNRwRsiiM0JeTGM/edit#gid=359817706](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1TvbbvgqnIDaHrMR_A-P_U7IMvY86oNRwRsiiM0JeTGM/edit#gid=359817706) Email the completed schedule to [terp-service@sadeaf.org.sg](mailto:terp-service@sadeaf.org.sg) after submission of this request form." Below this text are two date input fields. The first is labeled "Start Date of Service \*" with a red asterisk and "Date" below it, followed by a text input field with the placeholder "dd/mm/yyyy". The second is labeled "End Date of Service \*" with a red asterisk and "Date" below it, followed by a text input field with the placeholder "dd/mm/yyyy".

[Interpreter Service Request form](#)

**Note: Requestors are expected to receive an acknowledgement within 3 working days.**



[Step-by-step guide on booking a request for Sign Language interpretation services](#) via the [Interpreter Service Request form](#).

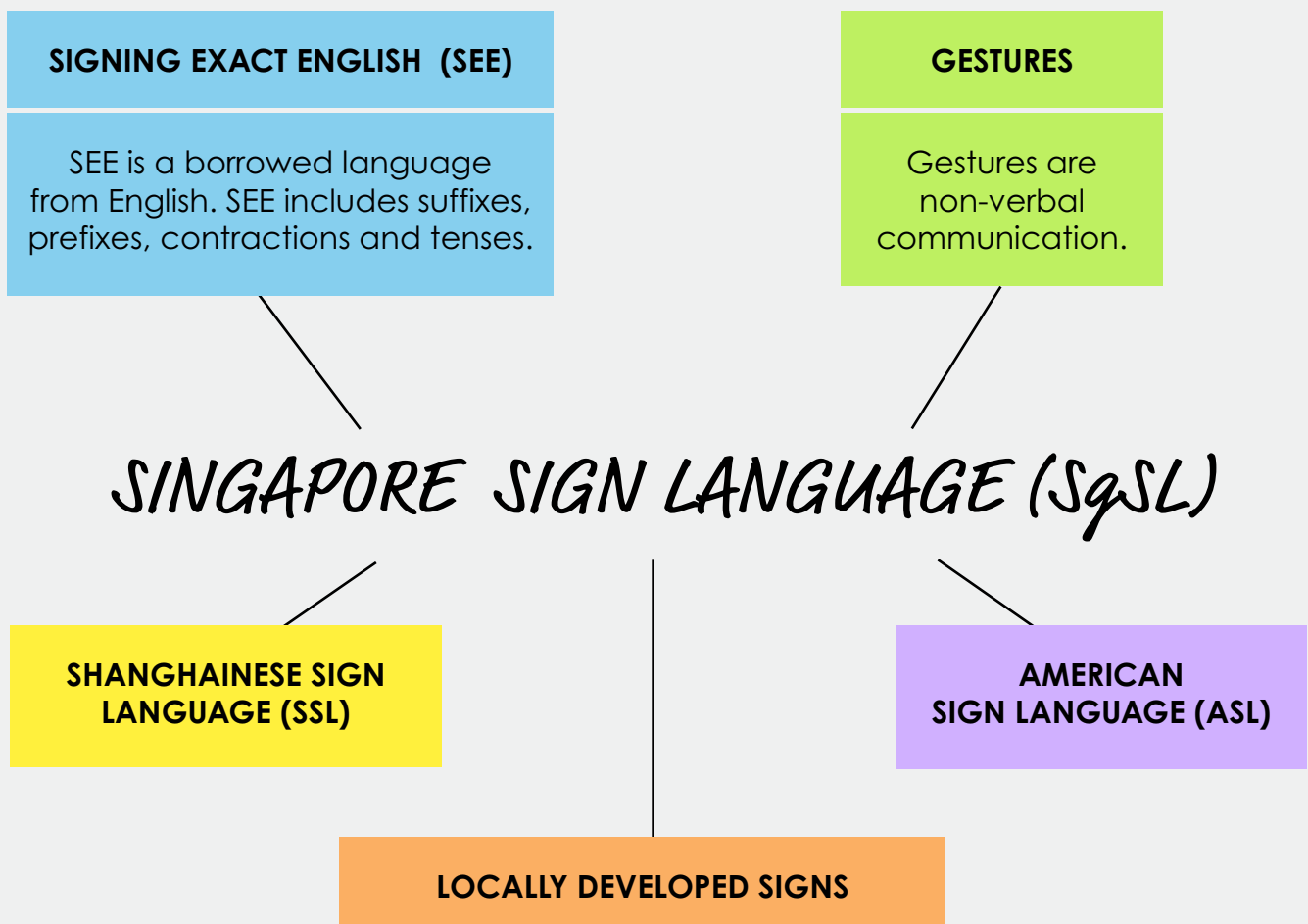
## 2. Before the event

### What is Singapore Sign Language (SgSL)?

**Singapore Sign Language (SgSL)** is Singapore's native sign language that has developed over the last six decades since the setting up of the first school for the Deaf in 1954. It is influenced by **Shanghainese Sign Language, American Sign Language, Signing Exact English and locally developed signs.**

SgSL is socially recognised and accepted by the Deaf community in Singapore. It is a reflection of Singapore's diverse linguistic culture.

Confide in the deaf persons on their preferred sign language/system. Every deaf individual adopts their own sign language/system, thus it is important to ask which kind of sign language interpreters they are comfortable with.



**Learn more about communication in Deaf Community here!**

<https://sadeaf.org.sg/about-deafness/about-sign-language/>

## 2. Before the event

### How many interpreters do I need?

In some situations, engaging one interpreter would suffice.

However, it is recommended that more interpreters are deployed in more complex situations. Some factors to be considered are:

1. Number of deaf participants and speakers.
2. Events with breakout sessions or concurrent workshop streams.
3. Type of Sign Languages used by deaf participants.

The access coordinator, interpreters and deaf participants can advise you whether **relay interpreting** or **team interpreting** should be considered.

#### RELAY INTERPRETING

**Relay interpreting** involves a relay between both the **deaf and hearing interpreters**. Such situations are typically due to difference in Sign Languages used and understood between hearing interpreter and deaf consumer. The deaf interpreter is equipped with various communication strategies that enable a more effective bridging of communication. Below is a typical setup in relay interpreting.

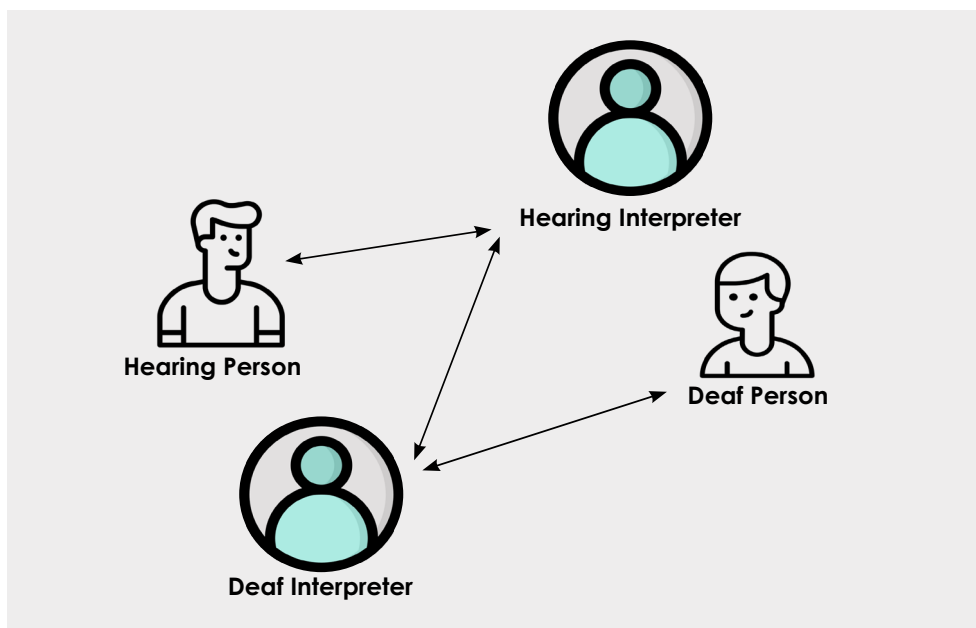


Figure 1: Communication flow goes from **Deaf person** to **Deaf Interpreter** to **Hearing Interpreter** to **Hearing person** and then in reverse when Hearing person speaks.



## 2. Before the event

### TEAM INTERPRETING

**Team interpreting** refers to a situation in which two or more interpreters work together for an interpreting assignment. The interpreting partners observe turn-taking and hold responsibility in providing support to each other and evening out workload.

Team interpreting is highly recommended for several reasons:

1. **Physical fatigue:** Reduce risk of overuse and repetitive injury due to prolonged assignments, typically beyond one to two hours.
2. **Cognitive fatigue:** Interpreters may experience fatigue that compromises the interpreting quality to deaf consumers.
3. **Highly complex assignments** that demand two or more working interpreters for specific situations e.g. focus group discussions, highly interactive meetings.

Figure 2 below is an example of a team interpreting arrangement.

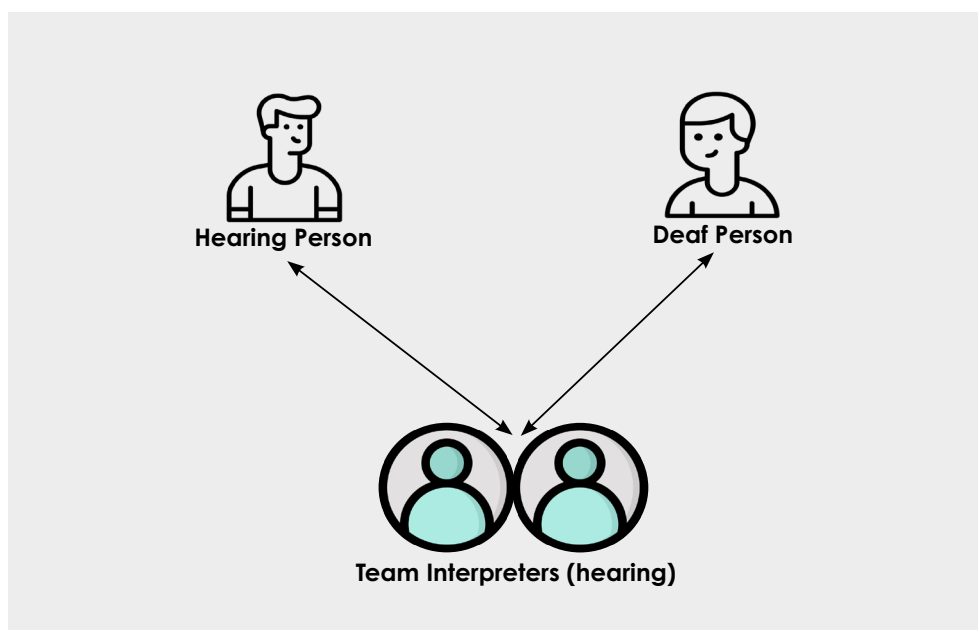


Figure 2: A **team of hearing interpreters** (2 or more) take turns to interpret at intervals (e.g. 15 or 20 minutes) and assist each other to ensure all aspects of interpretation service are covered.

## 2. Before the event

### What do I need to prepare for interpreters?

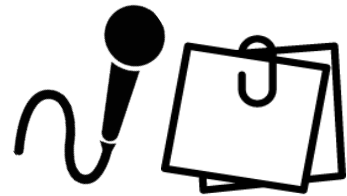
Before the day of your event, it is crucial to arrange an appropriate setup and provide preparation materials for the interpreters. Below are some event logistics to take note of:



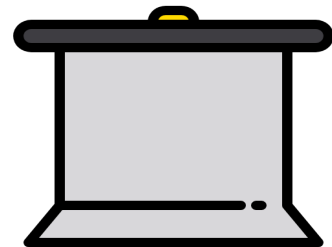
**Discuss with deaf clients, interpreters and speakers to decide on the physical placement of interpreters and deaf clients. It is ideal to place interpreters near the speaker so that both are within the deaf client's sightline. It would also ensure that interpreters are able to clearly hear the speakers.**



**Sufficient lighting should be used at all times so the interpreter is clearly visible.**



**Preparation materials and On-site Equipment  
E.g. Speaker notes, Powerpoint slides, Emcee scripts, Microphones**



**An appropriate backdrop that is not visually distracting.  
(Applicable for video recording and virtual interpreting)**



**Videos should be made accessible with closed captions and subtitles.**

## 2. Before the event

### Any other administration information?



Estimate the numbers of deaf person attending the event.



In case of any changes in day, time or venue please contact the allocated interpreter(s) and access coordinator to update them of the changes.



#### Cancellation Policies

Organisation requestors are not allowed to use the FIS (Free Interpretation Services) entitlement of the clients they are requesting the service on behalf of.

Event schedule changes (rescheduled or cancelled)	
<b>More than 24 hours before</b> the original start time of request.	<b>No late cancellation charge</b> is levied on requestor.
<b>Between 24 hours and 3 hours before</b> the original start time of request.	The requestor is required to <b>pay the full fee</b> of the original request.
<b>3 hours or less</b> before the original start time of request.	The requestor is required to <b>pay the full fee</b> of the original request and is required to <b>pay the late cancellation charge of \$10.</b>
<b>No updates before</b> the original start time of class and only informed the interpreter and/or interpreting team at or after the original start time of event.	

## DOs AND DON'Ts

### WHEN WORKING WITH A SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER



Stay in contact with the interpreters. Allocate a specific time and meeting place, and brief the interpreters on the updated event flow.

Don't assume the interpreter is familiar with the location or setting. There is a good chance that it is their first time there.

Ensure reserved seating is marked for interpreters and deaf clients, which should have been decided prior to event day. Ensure interpreters are clearly visible to the deaf clients.

Don't position the interpreter in front of or next to the loudspeaker.

Use clear references to objects and name them explicitly instead of pointing generally. E.g. say "the second bullet point".

Avoid using vague expressions and descriptions like "look at this" or "put it there".

Speak clearly and at a normal pace. Helpful to pause occasionally after a few sentences.

Don't speak at an overly slow pace. Consciously slow down only if you received feedback from the interpreters to do so.

Speak naturally and avoid speaking sentences word-for-word in a fast pace from slides or notes. If quoting from written material, allow extra time and pause between sentences.

Don't speak in different languages especially if you know that the interpreter does not understand. This disrupts the communication flow.

## DOs AND DON'Ts

### WHEN WORKING WITH A SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER



If your presentations involve any demonstration, get someone else instead of the interpreter.

Don't use the interpreter as a human model.

Do respect interpreter breaks as interpreting is mentally and physically draining. You may use an alternative communication mode (e.g. texting or writing) to interact with the deaf person.

Avoid making the interpreter work during breaks as it is unfair for them to work over their break if you want to speak one-to-one with the deaf person.

The interpreter's responsibility is to bridge communication and ensure full access is provided for both parties. If you have something to say that you do not wish the deaf person to know, excuse yourself momentarily from the room or move beyond the interpreter's earshot.

Avoid saying "don't interpret this...". It disrupts the interpreter's role and goes against the Code of Professional Conduct interpreters are bound to.

Address the deaf person directly as they are the target of your communication.

Don't speak in third person like "Tell her..." as this may confuse or offend the deaf person.

Practise turn-taking and allow only one person to speak at a time.

In a group setting, avoid interrupting each other as the interpreter can only interpret for one person at a time.

## 4. After Event

### Post-Event Administration Procedure

1	Submit the list of deaf attendees in a follow-up e-mail to the interpreter coordinator at <a href="mailto:terp-service@sadeaf.org.sg">terp-service@sadeaf.org.sg</a>
2	The interpreter coordinator will send a confirmation e-mail on the actual duration of services rendered and payment details.
3	Do check that the details are correct and acknowledge the e-mail.
4	Complete payment within credit term stated in the invoice. <a href="#">How to make payment?</a>

## 4. After Event









### How to make payment?



Invoice shall be emailed to the requestor upon completion of the Interpreting services.

Payment has to be made within 30 days, in person or by proxy.  
Note: The relevant e-invoice or printed invoice has to be produced when making payment.

#### PAYMENT METHODS

 <b>CASH</b> 	 <b>NETS</b> 
 <b>CHEQUE</b> 	 <b>PAYNOW</b> 

Cheque should be crossed and made payable to  
**“The Singapore Association for the Deaf”**.  
Please indicate invoice number at the back of the cheque.

For SADeaf operating hours, go to [CONTACT US](#).

### 1 Why is a deaf interpreter required when there is already a hearing interpreter present?

In certain situations, a deaf interpreter is needed because the deaf client may have limited exposure to English and/or SgSL. Therefore, to prevent communication breakdown, a deaf interpreter is needed to relay the message using other communication strategies.

### 2 How do I determine that a deaf interpreter is required for this particular client?

You may check with the deaf client on their preferred mode of communication. You may also check with us at **terp-service@sadeaf.org.sg**.

### 3 How does the relaying of information takes place when a deaf interpreter and a hearing interpreter is involved?

Hearing interpreter will be positioned in a way that he/she is facing the deaf interpreter. The deaf interpreter will need to have a clear and unobstructed view of the deaf client. For more information, please refer to our guide on [Relay Interpreting](#).

### 4 What do I need to provide to the interpreters prior to the event?

Refer to [What do I need to prepare for interpreters?](#)

### 5 What is the appropriate term to address people with hearing loss?

**“Deaf”** and **“Hard-of-hearing”** are most preferred.  
“Hearing impaired”, “Deaf Mute” and “Deaf and dumb” are **inappropriate** terms.



### **6 How do I determine if a person uses Sign Language?**

You can ask the person directly if they use sign language as their mode of communication.

### **7 How do I determine how many Sign Language interpreters will be sufficient for my event?**

Please refer to the guide [“How many interpreters do I need?”](#) on pages 8 and 9.

### **8 Is Sign Language Interpretation service always guaranteed upon request?**

No, as we have a limited number of Sign Language Interpreters, it will be solely based on their availability. You are encouraged to make a booking at least a month before the event to confirm the availability of the interpreters.

### **9 In the event when there is no Sign Language interpreter available, what are the alternatives I can use?**

If there are no Sign Language interpreter available on that day, you may like to use our notetaking services. For more information, please contact [notetaking-service@sadeaf.org.sg](mailto:notetaking-service@sadeaf.org.sg).

### **10 I already have an Interpreter in mind. Can I request for the interpreter I want?**

Due to the high demand of our services, we cannot guarantee the allocation of your requested interpreter. Where possible, we will try our best to cater to your request.

### **11 If I have deaf guests from overseas, can I still engage the Sign Language Interpreter from SDeaf? Will they be using the same sign language?**

It depends. Sign Language is not universal and varies across different countries. We would need to ascertain the sign language they use. For more information, please email to [terp-service@sadeaf.org.sg](mailto:terp-service@sadeaf.org.sg).

### **12 Why does SDeaf have a minimum payable rate? We may not need the interpreter for more than 30 minutes.**

The minimum billable hours policy is to cover the overhead costs of activating a service provider to deliver the service. Such costs include professional fees, operational and administrative costs, transport and other hidden expenses incurred.

### **13 What is the difference between SEE and SgSL? If my request is an open request, which signing term is more appropriate to use for the mass?**

SEE is a borrowed language from English. SEE includes prefixes, suffixes, contractions and tenses.

SgSL is the native sign language used by Deaf people in Singapore. For signing to the masses, it would be better to opt for SgSL.

Refer to [Singapore Sign Language](#).

### **14 I have a deaf person in my event, can I get him to request for the service since he has the membership benefits?**

No. We strongly encourage your company to request for the sign language interpreting services instead of using the deaf person's membership. Note that the membership privileges should be reserved for their personal use.

## Plan Checklist

**Submit your request for interpreters at least a month in advance. You may fill in the [online request form](#)**

More details can be found on SDeaf website: <https://sadeaf.org.sg/service/interpreting/> For further enquiry, you may also e-mail to [terp-service@sadeaf.org.sg](mailto:terp-service@sadeaf.org.sg).

**Be sure to include the following on the Interpreter Service Request Form:**

- Deaf Client's Full Name and Hearing Help Card (HHC) / NRIC No.
- Date, Time, Location, and Purpose of the engagement
- Preferred Sign Language to be used: Signing Exact English 2 (S.E.E. 2), Pidgin Signed English (P.S.E.), Natural Sign Language (N.S.L.), Gestures / Home Signs

**Acknowledge the Terms & Conditions.**

**Prepare and request for materials such as presentation slides and handouts.**

**Submit preparation notes to interpreters, at least 2 to 3 days prior to your event.**

To provide accurate interpretation, the SLI needs to be provided with relevant information relating to the job, including:

- times, dates and location of the job
- key contact person(s) details
- subject material (e.g. powerpoint presentations, previous minutes, course textbooks, speaker scripts)
- if videos are used, please supplement with English Language subtitles
- technical language to be used
- nature of the communication/delivery methodology (e.g. meeting, discussion), organisational purpose, policy and procedures (e.g. an induction program).

**Set up a meeting with the interpreter beforehand, if necessary.**

The interpreters may need to recce the event venue in order to determine the number of interpreters required and other logistical issues (e.g. discuss how much lighting can be maintained so that the interpreters can still be seen if dim lights are needed at any point of the service).

# Overview

## Effective Communication and Providing Accessibility



### SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER

The interpreter's role is to facilitate communication between deaf and/or hard of hearing and hearing individuals who do not share the same language.



### NOTETAKER

The notetaker's role is to provide realtime meaning-for-meaning transcription service to deaf and/or hard of hearing individuals.

### Before the event



[Submit request and details](#)



[Type of Sign Language](#)



[Number of interpreters needed?](#)



[Event Logistics for Interpreters](#)



[Administrative information](#)

### Day of event



[Understand how to work with interpreters](#)



[Dos and Don'ts when working with interpreters](#)

### After event



- [1. Submit full deaf list](#)
- [2. Reply/acknowledge Interpreter Coordinator's email](#)
- [3. To circulate feedback form to deaf participants](#)

\$\$\$

[Complete payment within credit term/period given in invoice](#)

### Plan Checklist

**Submit your request for interpreters at least a month in advance.**

**Request at least 7 days in advance and be sure to include the following on the Interpreter Service Request Form**

**Acknowledge the Terms & Conditions.**

**Prepare and request for materials such as presentation slides and handouts.**

**Submit preparation notes to interpreters, at least 2 to 3 days prior to your event.**

To provide accurate interpretation, the SLI needs to be provided with relevant information relating to the job

**Set up a meeting with the interpreter beforehand, if necessary.**

## Contact Us



### Contact



E-mail: **terp-service@sadeaf.org.sg**



Call / WhatsApp: **9437 1852**



### Address

The Singapore Association for the Deaf  
227 Mountbatten Road  
Singapore 397998

### Operating hours

Monday	8.30am to 5.30pm
Tuesday	8.30am to 5.30pm
Wednesday	8.30am to <b>*9.00pm</b>
Thursday	8.30am to 5.30pm
Friday	8.30am to 5.30pm

Closed on weekends and public holidays.

If you plan to head down to SADeaf office, kindly avoid lunch hour i.e. 1:00pm - 2:00pm.

Half day on the Eves of Chinese New Year, Christmas & New Year's Day.

***\*In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the night office service on Wednesdays is suspended till further notice. For our updated working hours and contact info, please refer to: <https://sadeaf.org.sg/contact-us/>***

