

SCR CHAPTER 63

CODE OF ETHICS FOR COURT INTERPRETERS

SCR 63.001 Citation of rules; definitions.

(1) SCR 63.001 to 63.10 may be cited as the "Code of Ethics for Court Interpreters."

(2) In this chapter "code" means the Code of Ethics for Court Interpreters.

(3) "Shall" is used in the code to define principles to which adherence is required.

SCR 63.002 Preamble. Many persons are partially or completely excluded from participation in court proceedings due to limited proficiency in the English language, as described in ss. 885.37 (1) and 885.38 (1) (b), stats. Communication barriers must be removed as much as is reasonably possible so that these persons may enjoy equal access to justice. Qualified interpreters are highly skilled professionals who help judges conduct hearings justly and efficiently when communication barriers exist.

SCR 63.003 Applicability. The code governs the delivery of services by foreign language and sign language interpreters working in the courts of the State of Wisconsin. Its purpose is to define the duties of interpreters and thereby enhance the administration of justice and promote public confidence in the courts. The code also applies to real time reporters when functioning in the capacity of providing access to court users.

SCR 63.004 Interpretation. The comments accompanying this code are not adopted. The comments are intended as guides to interpretation, but the text of each rule is authoritative. If a court policy or routine practice appears to conflict with any provision of the code the policy or practice should be reviewed for modification.

SCR 63.01 Accuracy and completeness. Interpreters shall render a complete and accurate interpretation or sight translation by reproducing in the target language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, without altering, omitting, or adding anything to the meaning of what is stated or written, and without explanation.

SCR 63.02 Representation of qualifications. Interpreters shall accurately and completely represent their certifications, training, and experience.

SCR 63.03 Impartiality and avoidance of conflict of interest. Interpreters shall be impartial and unbiased, and shall refrain from conduct that may give an appearance of bias. Interpreters shall disclose any real or perceived conflict of interest to the judge and the parties.

SCR 63.04 Professional demeanor. Interpreters shall conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the dignity of the court.

SCR 63.05 Confidentiality. Interpreters shall protect the confidentiality of all privileged and other confidential information.

SCR 63.06 Restriction on public comment. Interpreters shall not publicly discuss, report, or offer an opinion concerning a matter in which they are or have been engaged, even when that information is not privileged or required by law to be confidential, except to facilitate training and education.

SCR 63.07 Scope of practice. Interpreters shall limit themselves to interpreting or translating and shall not give legal or other advice, express personal opinions to persons using their services, or engage in any other activities that may be construed to constitute a service other than interpreting or translating while serving as an interpreter.

SCR 63.08 Assessing and reporting impediments to performance. Interpreters shall assess at all times their ability to deliver their services. When interpreters have any reservation about their ability to satisfy an assignment competently, the interpreters shall immediately convey that reservation to the appropriate judicial authority.

SCR 63.09 Duty to report ethical violations. Interpreters shall report to the proper judicial authority any effort to impede their compliance with any law, any provision of this code, or any other official policy governing court interpreting and translating.

SCR 63.10 Professional development. Interpreters shall improve their skills and knowledge and advance the profession through activities such as professional training and education and interaction with colleagues and specialists in related fields.

Adopted by the supreme court on April 25, 2002, effective July 1, 2002.