

State of California - The Resources Agency CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS		MANUAL
DEPARTMENTAL NOTICE		Park Operations
No. 2001-04		
SUBJECT		CHAPTER
USE OF QUALIFIED SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS		DOM 1800 (new)
ISSUED	EXPIRES	REFERENCE
March 19, 2001	When incorporated	

DPR 375 (Rev. 11/97)(Word, 12/30/97)

WHEN APPLICABLE, ENTER THE NUMBER AND DATE OF THIS DEPARTMENTAL NOTICE IN THE MARGIN OF THE MANUAL PAGE, ADJACENT TO THE SECTION(S) AFFECTED BY IT.

Background

The use of a Qualified Sign Language Interpreter (QSLI) is a visual method of communicating. Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) specifies that public agencies' programs, services and activities must be accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities. To meet this obligation, governmental agencies must make available appropriate auxiliary aids and services, such as qualified sign language interpreters to communicate with people who are deaf and hard of hearing. Even without a specific request from a member of the public, use of a QSLI should be considered for special events, "all employees" meetings and anytime there is a diverse audience together for government business.

A Qualified Sign Language Interpreter (QSLI) means "an interpreter who is able to interpret effectively, accurately, and impartially both receptively and expressively, using any necessary specialized vocabulary." QSLI's receive certification through national organizations, state organizations and state agencies. There are several different types of sign language, the most common being American Sign Language (ASL) and signed English. Many interpreters are certified, and certified interpreters should be able to interpret both of these forms of sign language. QSLI's have received certifications in interpreting and have extensive experience in their field.

Guidelines

Whenever the District/Sector or Headquarters Office is planning an upcoming event, where oral communication is part of the event, printed announcements, publicity flyers, advertisements and meeting announcements need to include the following statement: "To request a sign language interpreter or other auxiliary aids or services for people with disabilities, please contact (appropriate staff person.)" This should be the District Accessibility Coordinator or event coordinator's contact number. The individual coordinating the special event or meeting should be responsible for requesting and arranging for the QSLI.

Upon request for a sign language interpreter, the District/Sector or Headquarters Office is required to use its best efforts to provide a sign interpreter, preferably a QSLI. Other forms of communication, such as written communication, assistive listening devices, or Computer Assisted Real Time Captioning ("CART") may be preferred by the deaf or hard of hearing person. It is best to ask the deaf or hard of hearing person which method will work best. The individual's particular need is the most important thing to consider in order to achieve the most effective communication possible in any situation. If the preferred method cannot be provided, the next best method should be made available.

A resource list with information and a listing of organizations and referral agencies is available from the District/Sector Headquarters Accessibility Coordinator and the Accessibility Office at Headquarters. In attempting to obtain a QSLI, staff should use their judgement in deciding which organizations to contact first, but staff must exhaust all options on the resource list before determining that a QSLI is unavailable. The District/Sector or Headquarters Office providing the service will be responsible for the cost associated with the QSLI services. Therefore, billing should be sent to the responsible District/Sector or Headquarters Office.

The Department's "All Visitors Welcome" publication is a handbook specifically written as a reference for planning programs and delivering them to the general public, many of whom have some type of disability. The section on "Hearing Impairments" provides suggestions for making existing programs more accessible to people with hearing loss.

Communication for the hearing impaired is a link for experiencing the park environment. Providing accessible programs and services will enable all visitors an enjoyable and satisfying park experience.

If you have any questions, please contact the Statewide Accessibility Program Office at (916) 654-5687 or CalNet 8-464-5687.

Dick Troy
Deputy Director
Park Operations