

GOVERNMENT CODE  
CHAPTER 57. COURT INTERPRETERS  
SUBCHAPTER A. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Sec. 57.001. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter and for purposes of Subchapter B:

(1) "Certified court interpreter" means an individual who is a qualified interpreter as defined in Article 38.31, Code of Criminal Procedure, or Section 21.003, Civil Practice and Remedies Code, or certified under Subchapter B by the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services to interpret court proceedings for a hearing-impaired individual.

(2) "Department" means the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services.

(3) "Commissioner" means the commissioner of the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services.

(4) "Hearing-impaired individual" means an individual who has a hearing impairment, regardless of whether the individual also has a speech impairment, that inhibits the individual's comprehension of proceedings or communication with others.

(5) "Licensed court interpreter" means an individual licensed under Subchapter C by the Texas Commission of Licensing and Regulation to interpret court proceedings for an individual who can hear but who does not comprehend English or communicate in English.

(6) "Real-time captioning" means transcribing the spoken words of an oral proceeding to simultaneously project the words on a screen.

(7) "Court proceeding" includes an arraignment, deposition, mediation, court-ordered arbitration, or other form of alternative dispute resolution.

Added by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1139, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2001. Amended by Acts 2005, 79th Leg., ch. 614, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2005.

Sec. 57.002. APPOINTMENT OF INTERPRETER. (a) A court shall appoint a certified court interpreter or a licensed court interpreter if a motion for the appointment of an interpreter is filed by a party or requested by a witness in a civil or criminal proceeding in the court.

(b) A court may, on its own motion, appoint a certified court interpreter or a licensed court interpreter.

Text of subsec. (c) as amended by Acts 2005, 79th Leg., ch. 584, Sec. 1.

(c) Subject to Subsection (e), in a county with a population of less than 50,000, a court may appoint a spoken language interpreter who is not a certified or licensed court interpreter.

Text of subsec. (c) as amended by Acts 2005, 79th Leg., ch. 614, Sec. 2.

(c) In a county with a population of less than 50,000, a court may appoint a spoken language interpreter who is not a licensed court interpreter and who:

(1) is qualified by the court as an expert under the Texas Rules of Evidence;

(2) is at least 18 years of age; and

(3) is not a party to the proceeding.

(d) Subject to Subsection (e), in a county with a population of 50,000 or more, a court may appoint a spoken language interpreter who is not a certified or licensed court interpreter if:

(1) the language necessary in the proceeding is a language other than Spanish; and

(2) the court makes a finding that there is no licensed court interpreter within 75 miles who can interpret in the language that is necessary in a proceeding.

(e) A person appointed under Subsection (c) or (d):

(1) must be qualified by the court as an expert under the Texas Rules of Evidence;

(2) must be at least 18 years of age; and

(3) may not be a party to the proceeding.

Added by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1139, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2001. Amended by Acts 2005, 79th Leg., ch. 584, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2005; Acts 2005, 79th Leg., ch. 614, Sec. 2, eff. Sept. 1, 2005.

SUBCHAPTER B. INTERPRETERS FOR HEARING-IMPAIRED INDIVIDUALS

Sec. 57.021. COURT INTERPRETER CERTIFICATION PROGRAM. (a) The department shall certify court interpreters to interpret court proceedings for a hearing-impaired individual.

(b) The department may contract with public or private

educational institutions to administer a training program and by rule may provide for suspension of training offered by an institution if the training fails to meet requirements established by the department.

(c) The department shall maintain a list of certified court interpreters and other persons the department has determined are qualified to act as court interpreters and shall send the list to each state court and, on request, to other interested persons.

(d) The department may maintain a list of persons certified by the Texas Court Reporters Association as qualified to provide communication access real-time translation services for a hearing-impaired individual in a court proceeding and, on request, may send the list to a person or court.

(e) The department may accept gifts, grants, or donations from private individuals, foundations, or other entities to assist in administering the court interpreter certification program under this section.

Added by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1139, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2001. Amended by Acts 2005, 79th Leg., ch. 614, Sec. 3, eff. Sept. 1, 2005.

Sec. 57.022. CERTIFICATION; RULES. (a) The department shall certify an applicant who passes the appropriate examination prescribed by the department and who possesses the other qualifications required by rules adopted under this subchapter.

(b) The executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission by rule shall provide for:

(1) the qualifications of certified court interpreters;

(2) training programs for certified court interpreters each of which is managed by the department or by a public or private educational institution;

(3) the administration of examinations;

(4) the form for each certificate and procedures for renewal of a certificate;

(5) the fees for training, examinations, initial certification, and certification renewal;

(6) continuing education programs under this subchapter;

(7) instructions for the compensation of a certified court interpreter and the designation of the party or entity responsible for payment of compensation; and

(8) administrative sanctions enforceable by the department.

Added by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1139, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2001. Amended by Acts 2005, 79th Leg., ch. 614, Sec. 4, eff. Sept. 1, 2005.

Sec. 57.023. EXAMINATIONS. (a) The department shall prepare examinations under this subchapter that test an applicant's knowledge, skill, and efficiency in the field in which the applicant seeks certification.

(b) A person who fails an examination may apply for reexamination at the next examination scheduled after the date the person failed the original examination.

(c) Examinations shall be offered in the state at least twice a year at times and places designated by the department.

Added by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1139, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2001. Amended by Acts 2005, 79th Leg., ch. 614, Sec. 5, eff. Sept. 1, 2005.

Sec. 57.024. DUTIES OF THE COMMISSIONER. (a) The commissioner shall enforce this subchapter.

(b) The commissioner shall investigate allegations of violations of this subchapter.

Added by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1139, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2001. Amended by Acts 2005, 79th Leg., ch. 614, Sec. 6, eff. Sept. 1, 2005.

Sec. 57.025. DENIAL, SUSPENSION, OR REVOCATION OF CERTIFICATE. (a) The executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission shall adopt rules establishing the grounds for denial, suspension, revocation, and reinstatement of a certificate issued under this subchapter. The department may revoke or suspend certification under this subchapter only after a hearing.

(b) The department may reissue a certificate to a person whose certificate has been revoked if the person applies in writing to the department and shows good cause to justify reissuance of the

certificate.

Added by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1139, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2001. Amended by Acts 2005, 79th Leg., ch. 614, Sec. 7, eff. Sept. 1, 2005.

Sec. 57.026. PROHIBITED ACTS. A person may not interpret for a hearing-impaired individual at a court proceeding or advertise or represent that the person is a certified court interpreter unless the person holds an appropriate certificate under this subchapter.

Added by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1139, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 2002. Amended by Acts 2005, 79th Leg., ch. 614, Sec. 8, eff. Sept. 1, 2005.

Sec. 57.027. CRIMINAL OFFENSE; ADMINISTRATIVE PENALTY. (a) A person commits an offense if the person violates this subchapter or a rule adopted under this subchapter. An offense under this subsection is a Class A misdemeanor.

(b) A person who violates this subchapter or a rule adopted under this subchapter is subject to an administrative penalty assessed by the department.

Added by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1139, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 2002. Amended by Acts 2005, 79th Leg., ch. 614, Sec. 9, eff. Sept. 1, 2005.

SUBCHAPTER C. COURT INTERPRETERS FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO DO NOT COMMUNICATE IN ENGLISH

Sec. 57.041. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

(1) "Board" means the licensed court interpreter advisory board.

(2) "Commission" means the Texas Commission of Licensing and Regulation.

(3) Repealed by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 816, Sec. 8.005.

(4) "Department" means the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation.

(4-a) "Executive director" means the executive director of the department.

(5) "Licensed court interpreter" has the meaning assigned by Section 57.001.

Added by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1139, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2001. Amended by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 816, Sec. 8.001, 8.005, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Sec. 57.042. LICENSED COURT INTERPRETER ADVISORY BOARD. (a) The licensed court interpreter advisory board is established as an advisory board to the commission. The board is composed of nine members appointed by the presiding officer of the commission, with the commission's approval. Members of the board serve staggered six-year terms, with the terms of one-third of the members expiring on February 1 of each odd-numbered year.

(b) The advisory board is composed of:

(1) an active district, county, or statutory county court judge who has been a judge for at least the three years preceding the date of appointment;

(2) an active court administrator who has been a court administrator for at least the three years preceding the date of appointment;

(3) an active attorney who has been a practicing member of the state bar for at least the three years preceding the date of appointment;

(4) three active licensed court interpreters; and

(5) three public members who are residents of this state.

(c) The presiding officer of the commission, with the commission's approval, shall select from the board members a presiding officer of the board to serve for two years.

(d) Members shall be appointed without regard to race, sex, religion, or ethnic origin. The membership of the board must reflect the geographical and cultural diversity of the state.

(e) The presiding officer of the commission, with the commission's approval, may remove a member of the board for inefficiency or neglect of duty in office. If a vacancy occurs on the board, the presiding officer of the commission, with the commission's approval, shall appoint a member who represents the same interests as the former member to serve the unexpired term.

(f) The board shall meet at least twice a year at the call of the presiding officer at a place designated by the presiding officer. A majority of the board constitutes a quorum.

(g) The board shall advise the commission regarding the

adoption of rules and the design of a licensing examination.

(h) A board member is entitled to reimbursement for expenses incurred in attending meetings of the board in the amount of the per diem set by the General Appropriations Act. A member may not receive compensation for the member's services as a board member. Service on the board by a member appointed under Subsection (b)(1) is an additional duty required by the member's other official capacity, and that service on the board is not a dual office holding.

Added by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1139, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2001. Amended by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 816, Sec. 8.002, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Sec. 57.043. ISSUANCE OF LICENSE; TERM. (a) The executive director shall issue a court interpreter license to an applicant who:

(1) can interpret for an individual who can hear but who does not comprehend English or communicate in English;

(2) passes the appropriate examination prescribed by the executive director; and

(3) possesses the other qualifications for the license required by this subchapter or by rules adopted under this subchapter.

(b) The commission shall adopt rules relating to licensing under this subchapter and the executive director shall prescribe all forms required under this subchapter.

(c) A license issued under this subchapter is valid for one year from the date of issuance.

Added by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1139, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2001. Amended by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 816, Sec. 8.003, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Sec. 57.044. COURT INTERPRETER LICENSE. To qualify for a court interpreter license under this subchapter, an individual must apply on a form prescribed by the executive director and demonstrate, in the manner required by the executive director, reasonable proficiency in interpreting English and court proceedings for individuals who can hear but who do not comprehend English or communicate in English.

Added by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1139, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2001. Amended by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 816, Sec. 26.001, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Sec. 57.045. FEES. The commission by rule shall set license and examination fees under this subchapter.

Added by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1139, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

Sec. 57.046. EXAMINATIONS. (a) The executive director shall prepare examinations under this subchapter that test an applicant's knowledge, skill, and efficiency in interpreting under this subchapter.

(b) An individual who fails an examination may apply for reexamination at a scheduled examination held at least six months after the date the individual failed the original examination.

(c) Examinations shall be offered in the state at least twice a year at times and places designated by the executive director.

Added by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1139, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2001. Amended by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 816, Sec. 26.002, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Sec. 57.047. DEPARTMENT DUTIES; INSPECTIONS. (a) The executive director shall enforce this subchapter.

(b) The department shall investigate allegations of violations of this subchapter.

Added by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1139, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2001. Amended by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 816, Sec. 26.003, 26.004, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Sec. 57.048. SUSPENSION AND REVOCATION OF LICENSES; REISSUANCE. (a) After a hearing, the commission shall suspend or revoke a court interpreter license on a finding that the individual:

(1) made a material misstatement in an application for a license;

(2) disregarded or violated this subchapter or a rule adopted under this subchapter; or

(3) engaged in dishonorable or unethical conduct likely to deceive, defraud, or harm the public or a person for whom the interpreter interprets.

(b) The executive director may reissue a license to an

individual whose license has been revoked if the individual applies in writing to the department and shows good cause to justify reissuance of the license.

Added by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1139, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2001. Amended by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 816, Sec. 8.004, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Sec. 57.049. PROHIBITED ACTS. A person may not advertise, represent to be, or act as a licensed court interpreter unless the person holds an appropriate license under this subchapter.

Added by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1139, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 2002.

Sec. 57.050. OFFENSE; ADMINISTRATIVE PENALTY. (a) A person commits an offense if the person violates this subchapter or a rule adopted under this subchapter. An offense under this subsection is a Class A misdemeanor.

(b) A person who violates this subchapter or a rule adopted under this subchapter is subject to an administrative penalty assessed by the commission as provided by Subchapter F, Chapter 51, Occupations Code.

Added by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1139, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 2002.

Sec. 57.051. SUNSET. The licensed court interpreter advisory board is subject to Chapter 325, Government Code (Texas Sunset Act). Unless continued in existence as provided by that chapter, the board is abolished and this subchapter expires September 1, 2013.

Added by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1139, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.