

HANDOUT FOR CONTRACT COURT INTERPRETERS

Translation of Documents

Translations are considered legal documents and as such are to be delivered in a professional form suitable for presentation in court. They must be submitted on white bond paper, typed, or computer-generated. They must be free of typographical and grammatical errors. The translation must reflect the source language content without omissions or additions. The level of the source language (register) should be maintained as much as possible. If the meaning of a word or phrase in the source language is unclear, that fact should be indicated by giving a literal translation followed by [sic]. The fact that a word or phrase is illegible or crossed out should also be indicated, either by a translator's note on the bottom of the page or enclosed in brackets following the text in question. Faulty grammar, spelling, and syntax in the source language are *not* to be reflected in the translation, but this fact may be indicated by means of a translator's note at the end. The translation should also include the wording of seals, stamps, and marginal notes, as well as an indication of the position of any photographs or other phenomena that appear in the original document. The word **TRANSLATION** should appear at the top of the first page of the translation. All pages should be sequentially numbered, and the file name of the translation should be indicated on the bottom of each page.

All translation projects involve a due date for submission to the party requesting the translation service. Often these documents are to be presented as evidence in a pending matter or submitted to the court for a variety of reasons. The successful prosecution or defense in a case may hinge on the timely presentation of the document. The interpreter who accepts a

translation project agrees to submit the completed work on or before the due date.

On occasion, the translator may be called at a later date to testify regarding the translation, and under certain circumstances the court may issue an order to produce additional copies of the work. The translator should keep either a hard copy of the translation, or maintain a file of translations on a disk. These file copies should be kept for a period of no less than one year from the date of submission of the work.

The Department of State recommended per-word rate will apply for written work. If a translation project payable under the Criminal Justice Act is likely to exceed \$800.00, prior court authorization is required. Counsel of record should file an ex-parte application (CJA 21) with the court, and a copy of the order approving the expenditure should be given to the translator. Do not start work on a translation project that is likely to exceed the \$800.00 limit without a court order. The CJA 21 voucher, authorized in box 15 by the presiding judicial officer, must be submitted for payment along with an invoice and any supporting documentation.

If the translation was requested by the U.S. Attorney's Office, the interpreter/translator should contact the U.S. Attorney's Office for payment.