



New Mexico Commission for Deaf & Hard of Hearing

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Signed Language Interpreter Licensure

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State Licensure

New Mexico requires all signed language interpreters to be licensed in order to protect deaf and hard of hearing consumers. Practicing without a license is a misdemeanor punishable by up to 364 days in jail and/or up to a \$1000 fine. Interpreting is defined as any form of facilitating communication in a visual form, regardless of the individual's job title or position description.

Issuing Agency

Licenses are issued by the Signed Language Interpreting Practice Board (SLIPB) under the Regulation and Licensing Department (RLD). RLD is responsible for licensure of more than 200 professions in the state of New Mexico. The statute, rules, forms and a searchable database of licensed interpreters can be found at the SLIPB website:

www.rld.state.nm.us/boards/Signed_Language_Interpreting_Practices.aspx.

Licenses

There are three types of licenses issued by the SLIPB:

- Community - for interpreters who are nationally certified by the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID). These interpreters may work in almost any setting (court work requires further credentialing).
- Educational - for interpreters who hold a nationally-recognized educational interpreting credential - the ED: K-12 credential from RID. This license is valid only for K-12 interpreting; never for any community or post-secondary settings.
- Provisional - for interpreters who are working toward certification. This license may be held for up to five years and qualifies the interpreter to work in simple educational and community settings.

Specialized Settings

Not all interpreters are qualified to work in all settings. Specialized training in specific skills and vocabulary are required for many types of interpreting, such as work in medical, mental health, legal, and post-secondary environments. It is the responsibility of the interpreter to only accept work for which he or she is qualified. This requirement is established in the Code of Professional Conduct developed by RID and the National Association of the Deaf (NAD), which is included below. *Interpreters with a provisional license are almost never permitted to interpret in court, and should generally not work in medical, mental health, or legal settings.*

Code of Professional Conduct

All licensed interpreters are required to adhere to the RID-NAD Code of Professional Conduct (CPC). The CPC assures accountability, responsibility, and trust to the individuals served by interpreting professionals.

Tenets

1. Interpreters adhere to standards of confidential communication.
2. Interpreters possess the professional skills and knowledge required for the specific interpreting situation.
3. Interpreters conduct themselves in a manner appropriate to the specific interpreting situation.
4. Interpreters demonstrate respect for consumers.
5. Interpreters demonstrate respect for colleagues, interns, and students of the profession.
6. Interpreters maintain ethical business practices.
7. Interpreters engage in professional development.

Further details and the full version of the CPC can be found at the RID website:

<http://rid.org/ethics/code-of-professional-conduct/>

Complaints

Individuals who wish to file a complaint against an individual for interpreting without a license or for a violation of the Code of Professional Conduct may access the necessary procedure and form on the SLIPB website: www.rld.state.nm.us/boards/File_A_Complaint.aspx. Anyone may file a complaint, which will then be investigated and the individual against whom the complaint is filed will have the opportunity to respond. Complaints go before the Board at their regular meetings, but all names are removed before the complaint is presented to the Board to assure neutrality. The Board has several options, ranging from dismissing the complaint, to imposing a fine, to referring the complaint to the Attorney General for prosecution.

Exemptions

The following are statutory exemptions from the licensure requirement:

- nonresident interpreters working in New Mexico less than thirty calendar days per year;
- interpreting in religious or spiritual settings;
- interpreting in informal settings for friends, families or guests;
- interpreting in emergency situations where the deaf, hard-of-hearing or deaf-blind person or that person's legal representative decides that the delay necessary to obtain a licensed interpreter is likely to cause injury or loss to the consumer;
- the activities of a supervised interpreter intern or student who is enrolled in an interpreter education program; or
- multilingual interpreting in order to accommodate the personal choice of the consumer.

Statutory Authority

The Signed Language Interpreting Practices Act is §61-34-1 NMSA 1978 and can be accessed via the SLIPB website. Penalty and sentencing authority citations are as follows.

61-34-15. Penalties.

A person who violates a provision of the Signed Language Interpreting Practices Act is guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction shall be sentenced pursuant to Section 31-19-1 NMSA 1978.

31-19-1. Sentencing authority[;] misdemeanors; imprisonment and fines; probation.

A. Where the defendant has been convicted of a crime constituting a misdemeanor, the judge shall sentence the person to be imprisoned in the county jail for a definite term less than one year or to the payment of a fine of not more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000) or to both such imprisonment and fine in the discretion of the judge.