



# Interpreter Guidelines

## December 2009

## ***Welcome!***

*WHEN you agree to work for VISCOM, you are an integral part of VISCOM. We cannot exist without you. With that in mind, it is vital that you are aware of our business philosophy as well as the expectations we have of our interpreters. If our ideals are in line with your own values and you agree to meet our expectations, we want to establish a mutually beneficial business relationship with you; one based on loyalty, integrity and common values.*

*As an agency, VISCOM strives to provide experienced interpreters the guarantee that they will be working with interpreters of equal competency, knowledge, enthusiasm, expertise and professionalism.*

*Gina Lynne*

*CI & CT, Owner*

## ***VISCOM Philosophy***

*Maintain an exceptional reputation by ensuring high standards and providing top quality, professional interpreting services.*

*Hire only extremely qualified Interpreters whose professionalism, loyalty, and opinions are valued.*

*Assure our Clients that because of VISCOM's high standards, they are meeting ADA communication access requirements responsibly.*

## ***Benefits of Working for VISCOM***

*Loyalty! We are in this together. Because your approach to interpreting reflects VISCOM's philosophies and values, we will share a long and beneficial business relationship.*

*You are valued. At VISCOM we recognize that it is our interpreters who provide the outstanding services we guarantee. In turn, we are committed to providing you the best possible support services and compensation.*

*When scheduled to work for VISCOM you have access to Jina Lynne for the duration of the assignment, regardless of the time of day or night. You will always have the support you need.*

*VISCOM's hourly rates exceed the industry average and payment is issued within 3 weeks from the date the invoice is received.*

*We respect you. Therefore, your decisions, judgment, and behavior on an assignment will be supported by VISCOM: especially when something goes wrong.*

*Once you've accepted an assignment, you will be given information, details and support that are exceptionally accurate and helpful.*

*Your team will always meet the minimum qualifications set by VISCOM: Certification and 7 years experience as a full-time community interpreter.*

*Assignments cancelled with less than 48 hours notice will be paid in full. When this occurs and you accept another assignment, it is also billable.*

## ***What We Expect from You:***

*Prompt response to job requests, whether to accept or to decline, through the VISCOM Database.*

*Best practices which include timely arrival and presence functioning as an interpreter, whether in the active or supportive role, at the assignment for your full, scheduled time.*

*Professional appearance, behavior and best interpreting effort during assignments; you shall reflect the values and reputation of VISCOM.*

*The very best customer service shall be extended to each and every person at the assignment location.*

*Prompt notification to VISCOM of any changes, issues, or concerns regarding the assignment you are covering.*

*Invoices shall be submitted within 35 days of the assignment; please use the VISCOM Invoice Template.*

*Please hand out ONLY the business cards that VISCOM has provided you.*

## ***VISCOM Policies & Explanation of Expectations***

### ***Responding to Requests***

*VISCOM is committed to providing an answer to the hiring entity within 48 hours of the request for services. The VISCOM DB allows you to respond to a request with only 3 clicks; your prompt reply to assignments offered to you is necessary so VISCOM can fulfill this promise. ALWAYS respond, even if you must decline an assignment.*

### ***Accepting Assignments***

*Please DO NOT accept an assignment that you do not really want. When you represent VISCOM on an assignment, we want you to be happy. If you are not interested, it is okay to say, "No."*

### ***On the Job***

*Appearance is important. It is the first impression that you make, and it reflects your attitude about yourself and toward the world. VISCOM has developed a reputation for using interpreters who care about sending a positive message about who they are. You are a valued, well paid professional; your appearance shall reflect that.*

*EVERYONE in the room is a CUSTOMER, so please extend your best customer service to each person. Understand that complaints from the hiring entity, your team, or anyone in the room about an interpreter behaving inappropriately, being unhappy, grouchy, etc., will affect our business relationship. Your demeanor and behavior reflect not only your own professional values but those of VISCOM.*

*You are expected to be in the assignment's room 15 minutes before the scheduled start time. There is consistently increased security and unpredictable escorting practices, so please allow enough time. For example: Entering a location that requires a 10 to 12 minute wait for an escort and then getting to the job location at the last moment is not considered a timely arrival.*

*When a team of interpreters is hired, both are expected to **be present and working** for the full assignment time. Keep in mind, the hiring entity is paying for TWO working interpreters. VISCOM is dedicated to being fair to our clients and we will not charge for services not rendered.*

*Interpreters will only be paid for time they are working and present at the assignment. Working it out with your team to leave early or arrive late and billing for the entire time is NOT acceptable. Also, making arrangements which differ from the original job assignment without approval from VISCOM is not permitted. You will not be paid for those services.*

*Again: agreement between you and your team is insufficient. If you need to make arrangements to adjust your begin/end time, it is necessary for you to call VISCOM to make this change. The hours billed to the hiring entity will be adjusted to agree with your adjusted time.*

*If your team has made arrangements with VISCOM to adjust begin/end time and you have agreed to this, you will be paid time and a half for the period you are working alone. VISCOM is committed to a safe working environment for our interpreters, so that period will not exceed 1 hour.*

## **Common Concerns**

### **Tardiness**

*You shall call VISCOM to explain that you are running late, and then inform us of your actual arrival time so billing can be adjusted. You may not bill for time you were not present. Please list the Late Arrival Penalty/\$20.00 deduction on your invoice.*

*If your team is running late, please do not wait until 1 minute before the job begins to inform VISCOM. You and your team should be present at least 10 minutes before the start time. Please do not think you will get your team “in trouble”. The goal is to make certain that you are not stuck working alone; so please make the call so VISCOM can be sure your team is safe and you have someone to work with.*

*\*If you are the team of a tardy interpreter, you will be compensated for working alone.*

### **Absenteeism**

*If you do not show for an assignment, VISCOM's reputation is at stake. Please contact the office ASAP if something unforeseen happens. It is important that VISCOM replace you right away so the assignment you were scheduled for is covered or so that your team is not alone.*

### **Illness**

*If you are not well, PLEASE do not wait until the morning of the assignment to provide that information. You are not expected to be healthy all the time, but you are expected to inform VISCOM in a timely manner so that we can arrange for a replacement.*

### **Job Cancellation**

*If an assignment is cancelled with less than 48 hours notice, it is still billable. Additionally, when this occurs, if you accept another assignment, you may bill for it and the Emergency Incentive Fee if that assignment is a last minute request.*

### **Job Dismissal**

*If you arrive on a job which cancels, you may only be released from the assignment by VISCOM or the individual who actually made the request **and** is responsible for payment; the On-Site Contact Person often is not one in the same and therefore does not have the authority to release you. Please follow this protocol and contact VISCOM. Remember that you are being paid by VISCOM, and by no one else. Do not accept anyone else's instruction to leave. **You will not be paid if you take it upon yourself to leave without approval.***

## **Contact VISCOM**

*When something happens on an assignment that is out of the ordinary, whether good or bad, inform VISCOM so the matter can be dealt with when contact is made by the hiring entity. This is an important element of the trust VISCOM wants to share with our interpreters. If VISCOM has no knowledge of an incident when either complimented or confronted, the wrong message is sent.*

*Things happen, which is understandable, PLEASE KEEP VISCOM IN THE LOOP.*

*The minimum qualifications for VISCOM Interpreters are national certification and 7 years of professional, full-time community experience. If you EVER feel that your team may not be qualified for a particular assignment, please discuss this at the time of request. If that fact becomes known during the assignment, contact the office IMMEDIATELY.*

## **Invoicing**

*Please use the VISCOM Invoice Template; it is available on your DB page under the Forms Tab. If you use a bookkeeping program which requires you to use your own invoice, that is fine; please detail your jobs with the same information requested on the VISCOM Invoice.*

*Refer to your rate sheet so you bill the correct hourly rate and any additional fees for each assignment.*

***You want to be paid on time.  
Your invoice needs to be received on time.***

*Submit invoices within 35 days of the assignment. If a job is invoiced beyond the 35-day deadline, 10 percent of that job will be deducted for each 15-day time frame beyond day 36.*

*Integrity of all parties is vital. You are responsible to ensure that the information on your invoice is accurate and is a true reflection of what actually happened on the job. This is required so that VISCOM can both invoice its clients and pay its interpreters accurately.*

## **Travel**

*As a Freelance Interpreter, travel is your cost of doing business and is not billable unless an assignment is considerably outside the DC Beltway. Mileage and parking fees may be discussed and negotiated on a case by case basis at the time of job acceptance.*



Interpreter Signature Sheet

I, \_\_\_\_\_ understand and agree to abide by  
the expectations and policies set forth in the VISCOM Interpreter Guidelines.

\_\_\_\_\_ Signature

\_\_\_\_\_ Date



2417 South 26<sup>th</sup> Road, Arlington, Virginia 22206  
Office 703 838 5755 Fax 703 637 1268  
[www.viscominterpreting.com](http://www.viscominterpreting.com)

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