

MISSOURI COMMISSION FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING



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Michael L. Parson
Governor

Greetings on behalf of Missouri Commission for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing,

The Missouri Commission for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing (MCDHH) is a state agency that works with individuals, service providers, businesses, organizations, and government agencies to improve the lives and opportunities of all Missourians with hearing loss. MCDHH strives to be a proactive resource connecting consumers and service providers.

MCDHH seeks to ensure that all law enforcement/police officer to understand their legal obligations with respect and serving deaf and hard of hearing patients' need. The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) "prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in several areas, including employment, transportation, public accommodations, communications and access to state and local government' programs and services.

The specific requirements are listed below:

- Law enforcement/police officer are required to provide qualified American Sign Language Interpreter. Do not use family, friends, employees, staff if they know American Sign Language. Being a relative of a Deaf and hard of Hearing person does not mean they are qualified as an interpreter. A qualified certified and licensed interpreter is necessary to communicate with Deaf and hard of hearing witnesses/suspects/victims.
- Law enforcement/police officer should not exclude, deny, segregate, or treat individuals with disabilities differently from individuals without disabilities. Ensure equal access to your facilities with auxiliary aid or services.
- Law enforcement/police officer are strongly encouraged to consult Deaf and hard of hearing witnesses/suspects/victims to determine the most effective way to communicate.
- Law enforcement/police officer are responsible for the auxiliary services that do not result in such alteration financial in service or burden. Such services must be provided at no cost and with to the consult of Deaf and hard of hearing witnesses/suspects/victims.
- Law enforcement/police officer are responsible to understand that auxiliary aids and services are not limited to Certified Deaf Interpreter (CDI), Video Remote Interpreters (VRI), and Communication Access Realtime Transcription (CART).
- Law enforcement/police officer cannot charge Deaf and hard of hearing witnesses/suspects/victims requesting auxiliary aid or service for those services.
- law enforcement/police officer must accept a call or make a call from or through video relay services (VRS) or text-based telecommunication relay services (TRS) to communicate Deaf and hard of hearing witnesses/suspects/victims as the same as direct telephone calls

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

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Sincerely,

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Sources:

American with Disabilities Act:

<https://www.dol.gov/general/topic/disability/ada>

National Association of the Deaf & Hard of Hearing:

<https://www.nad.org/resources/advocacy-letters/>

American Sign Language Interpreting Agency in Missouri:

https://www.canva.com/design/DAE9rzbyvvl/WC1Bb9buswcNQ--C-cAXZA/view?utm_content=DAE9rzbyvvl&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link&utm_source=publishsharelink