

COVINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Subject: HEARING IMPAIRED / BILINGUAL SERVICES

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I. Purpose

To establish guidelines to all sworn and non-sworn employees who come into direct contact with persons whose hearing is so impaired that it prohibits them from communicating verbally. This policy also establishes guidelines for verbal communication for non-English speaking persons.

II. Statement of Policy

It shall be the policy of the Covington Police Department to comply with the provisions of Georgia Code Sections 24-9-100 through 24-9-106 to ensure that the rights of hearing impaired persons are protected. It is also the policy of the department to provide a means to communicate with non-English speaking subjects delivered into our custody.

III. Definitions

HEARING IMPAIRED PERSON – any person whose hearing is totally impaired or whose hearing is so seriously impaired as to prohibit the person from understanding oral communication when spoken in a normal conversational tone.

QUALIFIED INTERPRETER – any person who is certified as an interpreter by the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf or approved as an interpreter by the Georgia Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf

IV. Procedures

The Covington – Newton County Communications Center provides the services of the “Pay Phone TDD Text Telephone” which is designed to work with a standard pay phone. The TDD allows public communications access for people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or speech impaired. The phone is used to make and answer calls in the same way that hearing people use a telephone. A TDD call requires two TDD’s, each with a keyboard and display.

In the event that a subject/contact is deaf, hard of hearing, or speech impaired, the following agencies will be used.

- A. Newton County Mental Health. (Between the hours of 9:00am – 5:00pm Monday – Friday) Telephone Number 770-787-3977.

- B. Georgia Interpretation Services Network (after 5:00pm Monday – Friday, Weekends and Holidays) Telephone Number 404-521-9100
Emergency Pager Number 404-928-7464
Note: This service is available twenty (24) four hours a day seven (7) days a week.

In the event that a subject/contact does not speak English and interpretation is needed, the following guidelines will apply:

The Covington Police Department utilizes the “AT&T Language Line” which provides access over the-phone interpretation twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven (7) days a week. Every employee is issued a special access number, which allows access to the service. This service provides interpretation in over 190 languages.

This SOP supersedes any SOP previously issued.

BY THE ORDER OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE:

Stacey L. Cotton
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Chief of Police