



Elevating Requirements for Legal Interpreting Standards: ISO 20228

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In the intricate world of legal proceedings, the role of interpreters is indispensable. In an ISO standards knowledge-sharing webinar hosted by the [EUATC](#) and [ISO TC 37/SC 5](#), Liese Katschinka, Project Leader of [ISO 20228 in Interpreting services — Legal interpreting — Requirements](#), delved into the nuances of legal interpreting and its critical importance in ensuring justice and fairness in courtrooms globally.

The Genesis of ISO 20228

The journey towards establishing ISO 20228 began with the European Legal Interpreters and Translators Association (EULITA). The impetus was a directive on the right to interpreting and translation in criminal proceedings, which EU Member States were required to transpose. However, the transposition process faced delays and hesitations, prompting EULITA to support it through an international standard. This initiative aimed to broaden the scope of legal interpreting, encompassing various countries and continents.

The Essence of Legal Interpreting

Legal interpreting is a specialised form of interpreting, distinct from conference or community interpreting. It requires a deep understanding of courtroom procedures and the ability to facilitate communication between foreign individuals and the national court system. Unlike conference interpreters, legal interpreters often work in both directions, translating from and into the court's language.

Qualifications and Competencies

To ensure high-quality legal interpreting services, interpreters must possess a high level of proficiency in both their mother tongue and the working languages. They must also have a thorough knowledge of the legal systems of the countries involved, including the administration of justice. Continuous professional development is crucial to stay abreast of legal developments and maintain proficiency.



The Role of Technology

With the revision of ISO 20228, the standard now includes sections on remote and distance interpreting, highlighting the importance of technical skills. Legal interpreters must be adept at using microphones and other technical equipment, especially in remote interpreting scenarios.

Impartiality and Professionalism

Impartiality is a cornerstone of legal interpreting. Interpreters must deliver their services impartially, regardless of the legal setting. This requires conditioning oneself to maintain an impartial attitude, even in potentially traumatic court proceedings.

Working Conditions and Professional Development

Good working conditions are essential for legal interpreters. This includes adequate seating arrangements, access to case files, and breaks during long hearings. It is crucial that interpreters be granted priority access at the entrance door to avoid delays caused by public queues. Such access ensures they have sufficient time to prepare, meet relevant individuals, and deliver the highest quality of service. Legal interpreters must also document their qualifications and continue their professional development to ensure they provide the best possible service.

The Future of Legal Interpreting

The presentation also touched on the future of legal interpreting, including the potential use of artificial intelligence (AI). While AI can assist in legal interpreting, it cannot yet replace the full range of services provided by human interpreters. The standard also includes precautions concerning liability and the limitations of AI in this field.

Conclusion

The ISO 20228 standard is a comprehensive guide to legal interpreting, ensuring that interpreters are well-equipped to provide high-quality services in courtrooms worldwide. By adhering to this standard, legal interpreters can help ensure equal access to justice for all parties involved.

Are you interested in ISO standards for interpreting? Now it's the time! We encourage you to engage with the development of ISO 20228. Your expertise and insights are invaluable in shaping a standard that promotes excellence in legal interpreting. Join your National Mirror Committee and contribute to the future of legal interpreting.

Let's build a stronger, more standardised industry together!

Read more about ISO standards development for language services at

<https://atccertification.com/about-iso-standards/>