**National Association of Judiciary Interpreters & Translators**

**Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibilities**

▪ ***Preamble***

Many persons who come before the courts are non- or

limited-English speakers. The function of court interpreters

and translators is to remove the language barrier to the extent

possible, so that such persons’ access to justice is the

same as that of similarly-situated English speakers for

whom no such barrier exists. The degree of trust that is

placed in court interpreters and the magnitude of their responsibility

necessitate high, uniform ethical standards that

will both guide and protect court

▪ ***Applicability***

All NAJIT members are bound to comply with this Code.

**Canon 1. Accuracy**

Source-language speech should be faithfully rendered into

the target language by conserving all the elements of the

original message while accommodating the syntactic and

semantic patterns of the target language. The rendition

should sound natural in the target language, and there

should be no distortion of the original message through

addition or omission, explanation or paraphrasing. All

hedges, false starts and repetitions should be conveyed;

also, English words mixed into the other language should

be retained, as should culturally-bound terms which have

no direct equivalent in English, or which may have more

than one meaning. The register, style and tone of the source

language should be conserved.

Guessing should be avoided. Court interpreters who do not

hear or understand what a speaker has said should seek

clarification. Interpreter errors should be corrected for the

record as soon as possible.

**Canon 2. Impartiality and Conflicts of Interest**

Court interpreters and translators are to remain impartial

and neutral in proceedings where they serve, and must

maintain the appearance of impartiality and neutrality,

avoiding unnecessary contact with the parties. Court interpreters

and translators shall abstain from comment on

matters in which they serve. Any real or potential conflict

of interest shall be immediately disclosed to the

Court and all parties as soon as the interpreter or translator

becomes aware of such conflict of interest.

**Canon 3. Confidentiality**

Privileged or confidential information acquired in the

course of interpreting or preparing a translation shall not

be disclosed by the interpreter without authorization.

**Canon 4. Limitations of Practice**

Court interpreters and translators shall limit their participation

in those matters in which they serve to interpreting

and translating, and shall not give advice to the parties

or otherwise engage in activities that can be construed

as the practice of law.

**Canon 5. Protocol and Demeanor**

Court interpreters shall conduct themselves in a manner

consistent with the standards and protocol of the Court,

and shall perform their duties as unobtrusively as possible.

Court interpreters are to use the same grammatical

person as the speaker. When it becomes necessary to

assume a primary role in the communication, they must

make it clear that they are speaking for themselves.

**Canon 6. Maintenance and Improvement of Skills and**

**Knowledge**

Court interpreters and translators shall strive to maintain

and improve their interpreting and translation skills and

knowledge.

**Canon 7. Accurate Representation of Credentials**

Court interpreters and translators shall accurately represent

their certifications, accreditations, training and

pertinent experience.

**Canon 8. Impediments to Compliance**

Court interpreters and translators shall bring to the Court’s

attention any circumstance or condition that impedes full

compliance with any Canon of this Code, including interpreter

fatigue, inability to hear, or inadequate knowledge of

specialized terminology, and must decline assignments

under conditions that make such compliance patently impossible.

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