

Coronavirus (COVID-19) and how it may affect interpreting

This past week the [World Health Organization](https://www.who.int) characterized COVID-19 (coronavirus) as a pandemic and its effects have become impossible to ignore. COVID-19 is a flu like virus spread by direct, person-to-person contact and respiratory droplets. Symptoms can include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. With the rise in the number of people infected, this virus is impacting many aspects of life and interpreting is no different. We wanted to talk a bit about how the virus may impact the world of interpreting and translation.

Our main goal is to keep our interpreters safe while still providing the very necessary interpreting services needed nationwide. We have prepared a few suggestions and tips for onsite cases, listed below. We are not medical experts and encourage you to research further safety precautions to keep you and your families safe.



- **If you suspect you have the virus or have been exposed, you must notify us as soon as you become aware.**
- **Avoid physical contact, i.e. handshakes, hugging.** When meeting new patients, doctors, lawyers, etc., try to bump elbows or tap [feet](#). If someone reaches out to shake your hand, you can politely refuse and or offer one of these alternatives.
- **Ask staff if there are any policies in place that you as an interpreter can follow to prevent the spread.** Many businesses and medical offices are updating policies in light of this virus to keep their staff safe. When you arrive, you can ask front desk staff if there are any new policies you should know, and we will be doing the same.
- **If you are not feeling well, let us know ASAP.** Symptoms can include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. If you are experiencing any of these, please let us know so we can send someone else. It's better to be safe than sorry!



Symptom	Cold	Flu	Coronavirus
Fever	Common	Common	Common
Fatigue	Uncommon	Common	Common
Cough	Common	Common	Common
Sneezing	Common	No	Sometimes
Aches & pains	Common	Common	Sometimes
Runny/stuffy nose	Common	Common	Sometimes
Sore throat	Common	Common	Sometimes
Diarrhoea	No	Sometimes	Sometimes
Headaches	Common	Common	Uncommon
Short of breath	No	No	Common

How the coronavirus (COVID-19) could affect your business:

The world is rapidly changing, and proficient interpreting has become more important than ever. While many events and travel options are closing, the medical field and Social Services' need for assistance is growing. Some normal requests may be affected by government/school closures; however, we may see an increase in cases for medical appointments. As of now we do not anticipate any interruption in onsite-oral interpretation.

Here are a few more precautions we can all take in our daily lives:

- **Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and warm water.** It seems basic but wash them as often as possible. Any time you sneeze, cough, or touch your face. Many songs have choruses that last [20 seconds](#) including happy birthday to sing while you wash.
- **Use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.** Washing hands with soap and water is best but this is a close second.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, mouth, and face.** That is often how the virus spreads. We know it's hard, but you can do it!
- **Wipe down and disinfect surfaces that you touch, especially your phone.**
- **Cough or sneeze into your elbow**
- **Avoid all non-essential travel.**
- **Avoid large public gatherings**

We will work to keep you informed, including any updates. The health and safety of our interpreters and customers is of the utmost importance. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your work as an interpreter, please feel free to reach out by phone or email.