

SPOKANE COUNTY 911 PROCEDURE 310-1 PRO

LANGUAGE BANK

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This procedure applies to all operational employees.

GENERAL INFORMATION

This is the primary procedure document for use of the Language Bank. Additional guidance is found within General Call Processing 301-1 G, Item #13 c. Call receivers must exercise sound judgment, keeping responder and citizen safety their primary concern when deviating from these procedures.

1. USING LANGUAGE BANK SERVICES

- a. Call receivers will use the Language Bank services whenever a foreign language speaker calls and the call receiver is not able to obtain enough information to successfully process the call. This includes calls in which the caller apparently speaks no English and calls in which the caller's grasp of English does not allow him or her to provide adequate information to process the call or complete a police report.
- b. The Language Bank will be used for both 911 and report processing calls.
- c. The call receiver will contact the Language Bank following the procedure shown below (also contained in each workstation reference book):
 - i. Enter a "TRBLU" CAD incident if a location is available. Enter whatever information is available in the CAD incident text, including a statement that the language bank is being utilized.
 - ii. Use the "Language Bank" transfer button on the KEM for 911 calls, or dial 1-800-523-1786.
 - iii. The Language Bank operator will ask for the information shown below
 - (1) Client ID number
 - (2) Agency Spokane County Emergency Communications
 - (3) Your NameNote: You might get an automated system that will ask you to enter the ID number and your "badge number" (personnel number), followed by a request to say the language you believe you need translated.
 - iv. The operator will then ask what language needs translation.
 - (1) If the language is known, provide the language and the operator will connect you with a translator.
 - (2) If the language is unknown, tell the operator something to narrow the possibilities such as "maybe Russian" or "some kind of Oriental language". Some techniques for ascertaining what language is being spoken are shown below:
 - (a) Ask what country the caller is from.
 - (b) Try guessing the country from the accent. The caller may recognize his or her country spoken in English.

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- v. Once the translator is on the line, he or she will provide an ID number then will start translating your questions. Many translators are very helpful in providing aid in appropriate questions for a person of that culture (i.e. they might translate a question that some cultures would find offensive into a more appropriate form).
- vi. If the caller hangs up before or during the transfer, provide the number to the translator. Their lines are set up to make callbacks very easy.

c. Foreign Speaking Callers

- i. Do not attempt to act as a translator for a foreign speaking caller unless the Director, in writing, specifically authorizes you to perform translator duties. Translator services are available through the Language Bank. See 310-1 PRO, Language Bank.
- ii. Often times a caller will speak some English. You must speak slowly and clearly to the caller.
- iii. Talking louder will not help them understand English. Speak distinctly, using simple phrases that persons with limited English skills are likely to understand.
- iv. Sometimes you may have to do nothing more than continue to ask the caller to repeat his or herself. This is particularly true if the caller is attempting to give you the information in English, but is difficult to understand because of an accent. The caller may also become frustrated from trying to relay information to you about the assistance they need.

