

## TRANSLATIONS

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Translations provide written or oral information in a foreign language to a community with a significant number of community members who are not proficient in English. Translations can be provided for text (online and print), as well as oral communications through an interpreter.

Written translations and use of interpreters fosters a bridge to language barriers and facilitates the participation of community members in the RCRA permit decision-making process.

However, translations are very costly, especially simultaneous translations of public meetings. Sentence-by-sentence oral translations frequently double the length of public meetings, and may make information more difficult to present effectively and smoothly. In addition, very few translators are familiar with the RCRA permitting and corrective action processes.

### Required activity?

No. However, EPA recommends using multilingual communications, as appropriate, to provide equal access to information throughout the RCRA process. When warranted, translations also should be used for information posted to websites and social media.

Chapter 2 of the [2016 Edition of the RCRA Public Participation Manual](#) has a case study on the use of written translations to engage local communities.

## Making It Work

### *When to Use*

Translations may be necessary when a significant portion of the community is not proficient in English. If data shows that a significant number of stakeholders are uneducated, consider providing oral interpretations at public events. In certain cases, an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter may be needed for the hard-of-hearing.

The need for translations is often determined during **Community Assessment** and **Community Interviews**. Translations may be used for fact sheets, online content, public notices, presentations, public meetings, public hearings, and news conferences.

Using local resources to provide oral or ASL interpretations at community meetings or news briefings can be a powerful tool. Some Regions use local contractors, community groups, and college students in language programs as resources.

### *How to Use*

- **Evaluate need:** Are there a significant number of stakeholders in the community who may not be able to participate in the decision-making process due to a lack of English proficiency?
- **Dialects:** Ensure that translators speak the same dialect as community members.
- **Technical concepts and tone:** Hire translators and interpreters and writers who have demonstrated the ability to convey technical concepts and nuanced scientific results (e.g., chemical names, statistical findings) in an accessible manner.

- **Simultaneous translation:** Quality assurance is more difficult during simultaneous translation, as there is no time for review. In this instance, translate the technical aspects of the subject in advance. Practice speeches beforehand with the translator and review all relevant RCRA jargon beforehand. Consider whether translations should be simultaneous or not.

## Checklist for Translations

- Determine need for translations.
- Identify translation service or staff capable of translating in the relevant languages.
- Prepare list of technical and RCRA terms that will need to be translated.
- Translate text materials, including materials posted to websites and social media.
- For meetings, determine if translation will be simultaneous (using audio equipment) or if translations will occur following statements. If simultaneous, provide the appropriate audio equipment.
- For meetings, prepare responses to expected questions in advance with the translator.