

Course Title	Improving First Responder Interactions with Persons with Disabilities-Deaf and Hard of Hearing
P.O.S.T. Required Hours	0
Academy Required Hours	0
Instructor(s)	As Assigned by Individual Agencies
Prepared By (name and title)	Commission on Improving First Responder Interactions with Persons with Disabilities
Date Prepared	February 2022
Date Revised	
Learning Goal	The student will understand how law enforcement and first responder interactions with the disabled community can be improved with the knowledge of recognition and tools to approach each unique situation with respect and dignity.
Learning Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Assist law enforcement and first responders with recognizing Individuals that are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. -Teach law enforcement and first responders to understand Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals related behavior and aid in choosing the appropriate responses. -Instruct law enforcement and first responders how to communicate effectively with the individual. -Give law enforcement and first responders the tools to have the ability to refer Deaf or Hard of Hearing individuals community resources for ongoing support. -Work to reduce the potential for a Use of Force response.
Methods of Instruction	Lecture, Case Study, Directed Activity (Scenario Based Training), Table Top Scenario Exercises-At the discretion of the delivering agency.
Equipment Needed	Recommended: Computer, projector, training space, PowerPoint, and paper for handouts/scenario based training/table top exercises.
Handouts	Specifically listed in the Toolkit.
Assessments	At the discretion of the delivering agency
Source Material	Listed separately
Is safety plan included?	No site safety plan required

- c. American Sign Language (ASL): Native language of the majority of deaf people in the United States. A visual/manual language with own set of rules for sentence structure and grammar that differs from the English language.
- d. Sign language Interpreter: Someone who makes communication possible between people who are deaf or hard of hearing and people who can hear. Colorado law requires a sign language interpreter to hold a national certification and a Legal Credential Authorization before interpreting for the police in any legal setting.
- e. TTY/TDD: Term used to describe a telecommunications devices used in making phone calls to or by a deaf person. Due to advances in technology, only a small percentage of deaf and hard of hearing people use this device today. Many individuals now utilize apps such as FaceTime or Messenger. (TTY: Teletypewriter/TDD: Telecommunications Device for the Deaf)

B. Recognizing Individuals that are Deaf of Hard of Hearing

- a. A person may shake their head “no” and point to their ears.
- b. An individual moves their hands in a repeated pattern trying to communicate in sign language.
- c. A person gestures indicating the need to write down communications.

Resource: Colorado Department of Human Services Legal Auxiliary Services
<https://ccdhhdb.com/index.php/las/>

d. Person seems very alert, watching people's faces intently but may not respond to sounds or language.

e. Person may react to environmental noises (siren, alarm, loud noises) but may not be able to understand speech.

C. Approaching Deaf or Hard of Hearing Individuals

a. Walk in front of them, wave your hand or tap the individual's shoulder, arm or hand. Do not tap their back. It may startle them and escalate the situation.

b. Flash headlights, flashlight in view of the individual. Do not point your lights directly in the eyes of the individual.

c. Do not assume that a person with hearing aids can hear and understand you. The device may only permit limited hearing functions, such as capturing environmental sounds, but not speech.

D. Communication Methods

a. Speech Reading (Lip reading)-90% of deaf people do not read lips.

b. Written Notes-May not be effective communication as English tends to be a second language to ASL.

c. Sign Language Interpreter-Generally most accurate and efficient means of communication.

d. When working with a sign language interpreter address the Deaf individual in

Officers/Deputies should ask the person their preferred means of communication. In many cases it will vary depending on the context of the communication.

first person and speak directly to them at a normal pace.

- e. Avoid using family or friends in legal situations as an interpreter. Convey scenarios that would require a Sign Language Interpreter.
 - f. Look at how to obtain a Sign Language Interpreter, i.e. contact dispatch or language line in your area.
 - g. Do not cover your mouth, turn away or chew gum, remain patient.
- E. Officer Safety: You cannot compromise officer safety. Remain aware of your surroundings, the individuals' hands, use of weapons, potential weapons, vehicle use and various other situations.
- F. Cover the use/need of Service Animals.
- G. Tools and Resources: There are various tools and resources listed in the toolkit for content material, videos, handouts, quick tip guides and potential scenarios. You are encouraged to utilize subject matter experts whenever available.
- H. Reality based training scenarios are strongly encouraged. Examples of scenarios are located in the Toolkit provided with this subject matter.