

**LAWS OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

**INTERPRETERS ACT**

**CHAPTER 6:54**

**Act**  
**27 of 1928**  
Amended by  
45 of 1979  
51/1980

**Current Authorised Pages**

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1-10	.. 1/2006

LAWS OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

2

**Chap. 6:54**

*Interpreters*

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**Index of Subsidiary Legislation**

	<i>Page</i>
Court Interpreters Rules (G. 21.3.29) ... ..	7

**Note on Adaptation**

Certain fees in this Chapter were increased by the Commission under paragraph 4 of the Second Schedule to the Law Revision Act (Ch. 3:03). Where this occurs, a marginal reference in the form normally indicating an amendment is made to LN 51/1980 (the Legal Notice by which the President's approval was signified).

**CHAPTER 6:54**

**INTERPRETERS ACT**

ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS

**SECTION**

1. Short title.
  2. Interpretation.
  3. Certificates of competency.
  4. Annual licence to practise.
  5. Cancellation of licence.
  6. Penalty for practising without licence.
  7. Saving as regards interpretation of documents.
  8. Where licensed interpreter not available.
  9. Saving for public officers acting as Court Interpreters.
  10. Power to make rules.
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CHAPTER 6:54

INTERPRETERS ACT

**An Act relating to Interpreters.**

1950 Ed.  
Ch. 7. No. 8.

27 of 1928.

Commencement.

[1ST APRIL 1929]

Short title.

**1.** This Act may be cited as the Interpreters Act.

Interpretation.

**2.** In this Act—

“Court Interpreter” means any person who acts as interpreter in any cause or matter in any Court in Trinidad and Tobago, and includes any person, other than a Notary Public, who certifies on any document to be used in any such cause or matter that he has interpreted the contents of such document;

“Registrar” means the Registrar of the Supreme Court.

Certificates of competency.

**3.** The Chief Justice may issue certificates of competency to fit and proper persons to act as Court Interpreters.

Annual licence to practise.

**4.** (1) No person shall in any year act as a Court Interpreter without obtaining from the Registrar an annual licence entitling him to practise as such. Every such licence shall unless sooner cancelled remain in force till the 31st December following its date of issue only, and shall be subject to such conditions as are specified in the licence.

(2) The Registrar shall enter the particulars of every such licence in a book to be kept for that purpose.

(3) The Registrar shall at the beginning of every month cause to be published in the *Gazette* a list of persons to whom licences to practise as Court Interpreters have been granted during the preceding month; and notice of the cancellation of any such licence shall be published in like manner.

- 5.** Any licence issued under the Act is liable to cancellation by the Registrar if the holder thereof is convicted of contempt of Court, or of any offence involving dishonesty, or if a breach of any of the conditions of the licence is proved to the satisfaction of the Registrar. Cancellation of licence.
- 6.** Every person, other than a person appointed under section 8, who acts as a Court Interpreter without being duly licensed in that behalf is liable, on summary conviction, to a fine of one thousand dollars. Penalty for practising without licence.
- 7.** The provisions of this Act relating to the interpretation of documents shall apply to interpreters in such languages only as the President may by Regulation prescribe. Saving as regards interpretation of documents.
- 8.** Nothing in this Act shall operate to prevent a Judge or Magistrate or Justice in any cause or matter pending before him from appointing a fit and proper person to act as interpreter for the purposes of such cause or matter if the services of a licensed interpreter are not readily available. Where licensed interpreter not available.
- 9.** Nothing in this Act shall affect section 5 of the Summary Courts Act, and this Act shall not apply to public officers acting as Court Interpreters. Saving for public officers acting as Court Interpreters. Ch. 4:20.
- 10.** The Rules Committee established by the Supreme Court of Judicature Act may make Rules— Power to make rules. Ch. 4:01.
- (a) providing for the examination of applicants for certificates of competency;
  - (b) prescribing the fees to be paid by applicants for certificates of competency;
  - (c) regulating the granting of annual licences to practise as Court Interpreters;
  - (d) prescribing the conditions to be attached to such annual licences;
  - (e) prescribing the fees to be paid for such annual licences;
  - (f) regulating the summoning and employment of licensed interpreters in the Supreme Court;

- (g) prescribing the fees to be paid to interpreters for their services;
  - (h) generally for the better carrying out of the provisions of this Act.
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**SUBSIDIARY LEGISLATION**

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**COURT INTERPRETERS RULES**

ARRANGEMENT OF RULES

**RULE**

1. Citation.
2. Interpretation.
3. Application for Interpreter's Licence.
4. Sworn Interpreters.
5. Fees payable by Sworn Interpreters.
6. Examination of applicants.
7. Result of Examiners.
8. Issuance of Interpreter's Licence.
9. Licence to be subject to section 5 of the Act and the Rules.
10. Fee for annual licence.
11. Registrar to summon Interpreters.
12. Fees payable to Interpreters.
13. Party wishing to engage Interpreter must apply to Registrar.

**SCHEDULE.**

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[Subsidiary]

G. 21.3.29.  
[168/1951  
45 of 1979  
51/1980].

**COURT INTERPRETERS RULES**

*made under section 10*

Citation.

**1.** These Rules may be cited as the Court Interpreters Rules.

Interpretation.

**2.** In these Rules “Registrar” means the Registrar of the Supreme Court.

Application for  
Interpreter’s  
Licence.

**3.** All applications for licences to practise as Court Interpreter shall be made in writing to the Registrar of the Supreme Court giving the full name and address of the applicant.

Sworn  
Interpreters.

**4.** If the applicant for such licence holds a licence as Sworn Interpreter under the Rules relating to Sworn Interpreters of 13th February, 1893 he shall furnish the Registrar with proof that he is the holder of such a licence.

Fees payable by  
Sworn  
Interpreters.  
[51/1980].

**5.** Applicants not holders of a licence under the aforesaid Rules of the 13th February, 1893 must together with their application deposit with the Registrar the sum of twenty-five dollars, as a fee for the examination prescribed by rule 6 and give the Registrar certificates of good character from two persons to whom the applicant is personally known and specify the language or languages which the applicant wishes to interpret in Court.

Examination of  
applicants.

**6.** On being notified by the Registrar of any application complying with rule 5, the Chief Justice shall make an order for the examination as to the competence of the applicant which order shall specify—

- (1) The Examiner or Examiners;
- (2) The time and place of the Examination;
- (3) The manner of the Examination and the subjects thereof.

Result of  
examiners.

**7.** The Examiner or Examiners shall then examine the applicant in compliance with the order issued under rule 6 and shall thereafter report to the Chief Justice as to the result of the Examination, stating in the report his or their opinion as to the competence of the applicant.

- 8.** The Chief Justice on receiving such report shall, if satisfied as to the competence of the applicant, direct the Registrar to issue to the applicant an annual licence in accordance with section 4 of the Act to act as a Court Interpreter in the language or languages wherein the Chief Justice is satisfied that the applicant is competent. Such licence shall be in the form in the Schedule.
- 9.** Every annual licence to practise as Court Interpreter shall be deemed to be subject to section 5 of the Act and also to the conditions set out in the form of Licence in the Schedule to these Rules.
- 10.** The fee for an annual licence to practise as Court Interpreter shall be the sum of ten dollars, to be paid to the Registrar before the licence is issued.
- 11.** The summoning and employment of licensed interpreters in the Supreme Court shall be in the discretion of the Registrar.
- 12.** There shall be paid to interpreters the fees set out in the Schedule.
- 13.** Any party to a cause or matter pending in the Supreme Court wishing to engage the services of an interpreter must apply to the Registrar for that purpose, and at the same time deposit with the Registrar a sum not to exceed fifty dollars in money to meet the expenses of the interpreter.
- The Registrar will thereupon assign an interpreter to interpret for that particular cause or matter.
- The interpreter's fees will be computed by the Registrar according to the scale of fees and will, after the determination of the case, be paid to such interpreter from the amount so deposited and the balance if any will be returned to the party who deposited the same.
- The party engaging the services of an interpreter shall also give an undertaking in writing to the Registrar to pay any sum which

Issuance of Interpreter's Licence.

Schedule.

Licence to be subject to section 5 of the Act and the Rules. Schedule.

Fee for annual licence. [51/1980].

Registrar to summon Interpreters.

Fees payable to Interpreters. Schedule.

Party wishing to engage Interpreter must apply to Registrar. [45 of 1979].

LAWS OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

10

Chap. 6:54

Interpreters

[Subsidiary]

Court Interpreters Rules

the Registrar may compute as due to the interpreter for interpreting over and above what such party may have deposited as above.

No interpreter will be allowed to interpret except he be assigned by the Registrar as above provided or by the Court.

Rules 8, 9, 12.

SCHEDULE

INTERPRETER'S LICENCE

Pursuant to the Interpreters Act, the Registrar of the Supreme Court hereby licenses ..... of ..... to act as a Court Interpreter to interpret English into ..... and vice versa, from 1st January to 31st December 20 ..... , on this Licence being duly stamped as required by Law.

Given under my hand this ..... day of ....., 20.....

Registrar

CONDITIONS

- 1. This licence shall be deemed to be subject to section 5 of the Act.
2. The holder hereof shall not, on pain of cancellation hereof, under any pretence whatever receive any fee or reward for interpreting beyond the fees from time to time prescribed.
3. This licence is issued subject to the holder being able to interpret correctly in Court in any matter in which he is engaged to interpret and may be cancelled if it is proved to the satisfaction of the Registrar that he is not able so to interpret correctly.

SCALE OF FEES

When cited to attend Criminal Sessions or to attend in any Civil cause or matter at Port-of-Spain, San Fernando or Tobago—

- (a) For every day or part of a day for his attendance in Court ... \$25.00
(b) For every hour or part of an hour during which he may be employed in interpreting ... \$10.00