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A Guide to VRS Best Practices

March 18, 2025 · VRS

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A Guide to VRS Best Practices

VRS

March 18, 2025

1. Deaf user signs to the interpreter

Guide to VRS Best Practices Part 1 of 3

4. Interpreter signs to the Deaf user

3. Hearing user speaks to interpreter

03:30

have a conversation.

Want to know more about VRS? Check out our blog explaining the service: What is VRS Using Video Relay Service for phone calls requires an account through a federally approved provider. Sorenson is the leading VRS provider in the U.S. Only Deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals who communicate with ASL can register for VRS accounts. However, anyone can make VRS calls — outgoing from deaf account-holders or incoming

Video Relay Service (VRS) is a powerful tool for equitable communication between deaf

and hearing people, allowing connection between signed and spoken languages over the

phone. The convenience of communication by phone remains an essential aspect of life

and society, and — used correctly — VRS makes it easy for deaf and hearing people to

VRS is part of the federally funded Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) that enables

phone calls between Deaf and hard-of-hearing American Sign Language (ASL) users and

to VRS numbers from hearing individuals. Everyone involved in a VRS call has a part to play in making it go smoothly.

Understanding VRS

hearing English- or Spanish-speakers through an ASL interpreter.

Best practices for using VRS

communication. Basic conversation etiquette counts for more when using VRS:

• Interruptions break the flow of conversation. We all interrupt sometimes, but with an

interpreter in the middle interruptions can cause confusion and frustration because

simultaneously, there may be pauses while you wait for them to finish and the other

person to respond. The most accurate way to interpret your statements may take

There are additional guidelines to improve your calls specific to which end of the call you're

the other person doesn't know how much of their comment you received before

Every conversation is a two-way street, and in the case of a VRS call there's one more

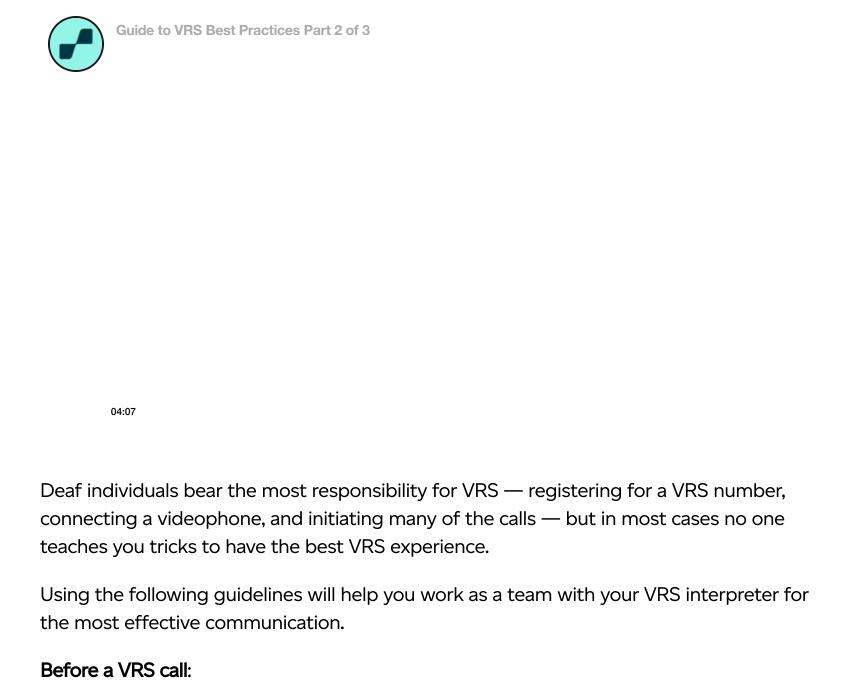
person — the interpreter — in the middle. You each share the responsibility for effective

interjecting. Express yourself clearly for better understanding. In addition to choice of words, speaking or signing so it's easy for the interpreter to see or hear will help get your message across effectively to the other person.

Patience is critical. While your VRS interpreter typically relays your messages

longer in the other language.

on.



Choosing an area without distractions, and not while driving, is ideal.

you) so the interpreter can see you clearly.

highest sign (dad) to the lowest sign (baby).

information to prepare them for your conversation:

specialized terms and language you use

VRS calls.

names.

calls

During your VRS call:

another interpreter for a better fit.

Need a VRS account? Sign up for Sorenson VRS ®

• Confirm your equipment and internet are working correctly to avoid delays.

• Use a high quality videophone or camera with good lighting (without a window behind

• Make sure your hands and face are visible in the frame so the interpreter can see the

These tips can make a big difference when you dial your VRS provider or answer incoming

When you're making a call, before the interpreter connects you it's helpful to share

• context: is the call personal, medical, legal? Is the call to an automated system?

• Have details ready you might need in the call, like account numbers or prescription

You and the interpreter are a team. Sometimes, you may get an interpreter who doesn't

continue with the interpreter and give constructive feedback or you can ask to switch to

match your interpreting preferences or style. You have options when this happens. You can

• the contact person's name and relationship or job, if applicable

• Let the interpreter know if you don't want the call announced.

How deaf callers can have better VRS calls

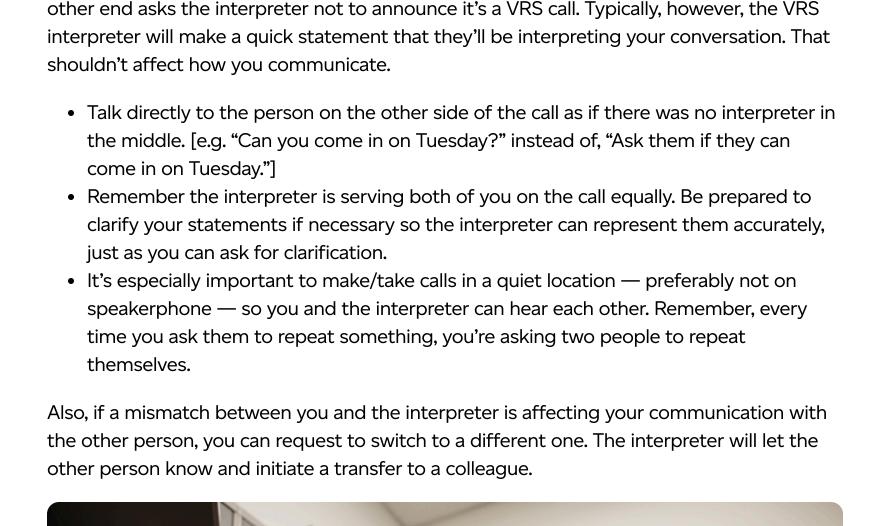
When your call is over, if you have suggestions that would improve future calls Sorenson welcomes feedback about your VRS experience using our online form.

How hearing callers can have better VRS

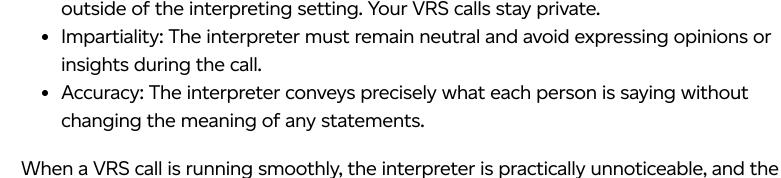
On the hearing end of a VRS call, the steps you can take for effective communication are

similar to what you'd do on any other phone call, starting with the basic guidelines above.

You may not even know there's anything unusual about the call if the deaf person on the



The role of the VRS interpreter **Guide to VRS Best Practices Part 3 of 3**



either side.

effective than written exchanges.

like a call with no one in the middle:

person they're talking to shares their language.

Spanish like they would on a typical phone call.

Sorenson Sorenson VRS **Enterprise** Desktop App Video Remote Interpreting (VRI)

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02:13 Your ASL interpreter is an integral part of a successful VRS call. To interpret well requires not only proficiency in both languages, but experience and skill. Sorenson hires only interpreters who meet a high standard of interpreting skill and offers extensive professional development and interpreter training programs — all to provide optimal interpreting service on VRS calls.

The interpreter will relay everything you say on the call — not only your words, but your

tone, emphasis, and emotion. Those details make a big difference in understanding each

While the interpreter plays a critical role in your VRS call, they are not a participant in the

Confidentiality: Interpreters do not share details of the conversations they interpret

conversation plays out as if there were no difference in language between the people on

Best practices for VRS calls are

the key to better calls — period

When everyone does their part to make a VRS call run like a well-oiled machine, it plays out

The deaf person receives responses to their questions and comments in ASL as if the

The hearing person speaks with the person on the other end of the line in English or

call. Interpreters follow strict professional protocol for every conversation:

other and are a key element of why communicating through an interpreter is usually more

Making this work depends on each person following basic conversation best practices express yourself clearly, be patient, and take turns. In short, treat others the way you want them to treat you.

Sorenson Express Trial CaptionCall Become a Provider On-site Interpreting **Education and Training Schedule Services** Home Phone

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Compass Program Refer a User for Veterans Connections **Deaf Interpreter Academy** Support Synergy Program Call Forwarding

International Travel

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Toll Free Numbers

CaptionCall and CaptionCall Mobile are available in the United States only. FEDERAL LAW PROHIBITS ANYONE BUT REGISTERED USERS WITH HEARING LOSS FROM USING INTERNET PROTOCOL (IP) CAPTIONED TELEPHONES WITH THE CAPTIONS TURNED ON. IP captioned telephone service may use a live operator. The operator generates captions of what the other party to the call says. These captions are then sent to your

FCC rules permit you to port your telephone number to the VRS provider of your choice. If you request a new number, Sorenson will provide you with one for the geographic area where you live or work. To ensure proper routing of 911 calls, it is important that you provide, and update in the event it changes, the physical address (i.e., the Registered Location) from which you are placing the call. You can update your Registered Location in your device settings or by calling (866) 756-6729. To learn how to update on your device visit Sorenson Account Management. Emergency calls made via internet-based TRS may not function the same as

traditional E911 service. For example, you may not be able to dial 911 if there is an internet-service failure or if you lose electrical power, and your 911 call may not be routed correctly if you have not updated your

Sorenson's VRS to place a 911 call, please visit Sorenson's website: 911 Legal Disclaimer | Sorenson. For information on toll-free numbering, please visit Sorenson Toll Free | Videophone Number Linking

Registered Location. Hearing point-to-point video users will not be able to place emergency calls. For more information on the process of obtaining ten-digit numbers and the limitations and risks associated with using

VRS Feedback

Support

English ~

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Community

- phone. There is a cost for each minute of captions generated, paid from a federally administered fund. No costs are passed along to individuals who qualify for the service. The CaptionCall phone and CaptionCall Mobile app remain the property of Sorenson in order to provide ongoing support, service, and upgrades. Legal Notices: sorenson.com/legal. Sorenson VRS is only available if you are eligible for VRS and have registered in the FCC's User Registration Database. The cost of VRS is paid by a federally administered fund. Accordingly, use of Sorenson VRS calling for video conferencing is subject to compliance with FCC regulations and Sorenson's VRS EULA. Under federal law, you may use VRS only if you have a speech or hearing disability and need VRS in order to communicate. Also, call participants must be in a different location than the other individuals on the call.

2. Interpreter speaks to the hearing user

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March 3, 2025 · Enterprise **Driving Communication Innovation** at the NYC Tenement Museum

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