



## **CALIFORNIA RELAY SERVICE (CRS)**

### **What is California Relay Service?**

**California Relay Service** is a telecommunications relay service, which provides full telephone accessibility to people who are deaf, hard of hearing or speech disabled. Specially trained Communication Assistants (CAs) complete all calls and stay on-line to relay messages electronically over a text telephone (TT), so called TTY for "Teletype", or verbally to hearing parties.

**California Relay Service** is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, with no restrictions on the length or number of calls placed. There is no charge for using relay services within your local calling area. Long distance call rates are determined by the carrier of choice.

### **HISTORY**

Signed into law on July 26, 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act is a wide-ranging legislation intended to make the American Society more accessible to people with disabilities.

As shown in the Americans with Disabilities Act – Title IV, it says telecommunications companies offering telephone service to the general public must have telephone relay service to individuals who use telecommunication devices for the deaf (TTYs) or similar devices.



## **HOW DO YOU USE CALIFORNIA RELAY SERVICE?**

### **Sprint – California Relay Service**

TTY Users 1-877-735-2929\*  
1-888-877-5378\*

Voice Users 1-888-877-5379\*

Spanish 1-888-877-5381\*

\*888 and 877 are all toll free numbers.

### **For Voice Users or hearing person**

Standard telephone users can easily initiate calls to TTY users. The Communication Assistant (CA) types the hearing person's spoken words to the TTY user and reads back the typed replies. Simply use the following steps:

1. Dial the Sprint – California Relay Service Voice number, 1-888-877-5379
2. A Communications Assistant (CA) will be right with you to complete your call.
3. Give the CA the area code and telephone number you wish to call and any further instructions.
4. The CA will process your call, relaying exactly what the TTY user is typing. The CA will relay what you say back to the TTY user.
5. Talk to the CA as though you are speaking directly to the person you called. (Avoid saying "tell him" or "tell her")
6. So that the conversation flows smoothly, say "Go Ahead" each time you have finished speaking. This lets the CA know that you are ready for the TTY user's reply.
7. Confidentiality is the law. The CA is required to keep all conversations private.

*Keep in mind that when relaying your call, the CAs will type everything you say and anything that is heard. CAs are trained and instructed in conveying the full content, context, and intent of the relay conversation they translate. Every effort is taken to maintain functional equivalence for both parties during a relay call. All secondary activities that would normally be known to a hearing person engaged in a telephone conversation (i.e. background noises, side conversations, other people coming on the line, etc.) are relayed to the extent possible. For example, the CA may type background noises that are heard such as "baby crying", "loud radio", "noisy", etc.*



## **SPANISH RELAY SERVICE**

**QUESTION:** What if I speak Spanish and want to call a TTY user whose primary language is Spanish?

**ANSWER:** Language should not be a barrier to using relay service. Relay Service provides a special group of bilingual Spanish Communications Assistants (CA) to perform all relay functions for Spanish TTY and Voice users.

### **For Spanish relay users**

1. Dial the Sprint – Relay Service Spanish number, 1-888-877-5381
2. Follow steps 2-7 from “Voice Users or hearing persons.”



## GLOSSARY

**COMMUNICATIONS ASSISTANT (CA)** is a specially trained operator who relays conversations from text to voice and from voice to text. The CA voices what the TTY user types to the hearing party and types what the hearing party says to the TTY user.

**HEARING IMPAIRED/DISABLED** means having any kind of hearing loss, from mild to severe. This term encompasses both hard of hearing, late deafened and deaf person although often people use it interchangeably with the term hard of hearing, late deafened, or deaf. Some people who are deaf and who have been raised without sign language refer to themselves as hearing impaired. Some deaf people do not want to be referred as hearing impaired, only deaf.

**HARD OF HEARING** means having a loss of hearing such that it is difficult, but not impossible, to understand speech. Hard of hearing persons sometimes use TTYs, sometimes telephone amplifiers, and sometimes rely on a special switch "T" setting on their hearing aid when using the telephone.

**DEAF** means having a loss of hearing that is severe that a person cannot understand speech even with the use of amplifying devices such as hearing aids. Deaf people typically rely on TTYs to communicate over the phone, but occasionally, if able, they rely on other solutions used by hard of hearing persons. These people most likely would be involved in the Deaf culture.

**LATE DEAFENED** refers to deafness that happened post-lingually, any time after the development of speech and language. A late deafened person is usually unable to understand speech without visual aids such as speech reading, sign language, and/or assistive hearing devices. A person may have lost their hearing suddenly or gradually as a result of inherited causes, accident, illness, medication, noise or other factors and share in the common experience of having been raised in a hearing world and having become deaf later in life.

**DEAF-BLIND** refers to persons who have a combination of hearing and vision loss which causes communication challenges that cannot be accommodated in the same manner as for the deaf, late deafened, or hard of hearing, or as for the blind or partially sighted.

**SPEECH DISABLED/DISABILITY** refers to persons who have difficulty communicating orally. This may include articulation or pronunciation, fluency, voice or motor difficulties. A loss of speech may range from mild to severe levels. Too often, people who have speech disability are unable to communicate by telephone because the public, or even some family members, cannot understand their speech.

**TTYs, TDDs, & TEXT TELEPHONES** are machines that can be hooked up to a telephone and provide deaf, late deafened, or hard of hearing people with a way to use the telephone. They have keyboard and a small screen like on a computer. People can type messages to each other over the telephone using this device. Only one person can type at a time. A person cannot talk to a TTY, and a TTY cannot talk to a person.