

## **Guide to Applying to Be an Official or Authorized Reporter**

This guide provides information on the application procedure for people who want to provide court reporting services in B.C. Supreme Court as an official or authorized reporter.

Interested individuals should review the [Official Reporters \(Supreme Court\) Regulation \(gov.bc.ca\)](#) (ORR) to understand the qualification standards. If there is a discrepancy between this guide and the ORR, the qualifications as set out in the ORR apply.

Reporters are not employees of the Ministry of Attorney General. The Ministry does not endorse or express preference for any reporter.

The process to become an official or authorized reporter in B.C. consists of six stages, as follows:

### **STAGE 1 – Certification and Work Experience Requirements**

Individuals who wish to perform reporting services will need to meet the following certification and work requirements:

To be qualified as an **official reporter**, an individual will need to:

- Hold a certificate of proficiency in shorthand reporting from a training body recognized by the National Court Reporters Association (NCRA) attesting to a speed of not less than 200 words per minute;
  - If the certificate wasn't issued within the last three years, the individual must be able to demonstrate they have completed at least 500 hours of shorthand reporting in the last three years.
- Not have been discharged from performance of any functions of a reporter for a cause that renders the person unfit to perform the functions and duties of an official reporter.

To be qualified as an **authorized reporter**, an individual will need to:

- Have 1,000 hours of work experience performing the functions of an official reporter within a 2-year period in the immediately preceding 5 years (this experience may include work outside of B.C. before a court or tribunal); OR hold certification as a real time reporter with NCRA and have at least 500 hours of work experience performing the functions of an official reporter within two of the past five years;
- Not have been discharged from performance of any functions of a reporter for a cause that renders the person unfit to perform the functions and duties of an authorized reporter.

### **STAGE 2 – Application and Verification**

- After completing the certification and work experience requirements above, individuals must apply to the Ministry to have their certification and work experience verified. They will be required to submit (by email) the following documents to the Ministry:
- A completed [Application for Official Reporter](#) or [Application for Authorized Reporter](#) form (including references and contact information);
- A document from a training body recognized by the NCRA (i.e.: certificate of proficiency) to validate credentials;
- Any additional proof of qualifications which demonstrate work experience.

The Ministry may review the application and work with the [British Columbia Shorthand Reporter Association](#) (BCSRA) to verify the credentials, work experience, and that applicant has not been previously discharged for a cause that renders them unfit to perform the functions and duties of a reporter. For new graduates who haven't received a certificate of proficiency from their program, the BCSRA can assist with verify their credentials.

The BCSRA is a non-profit, professional association for court reporters, Communications Access Realtime Translation providers, and broadcast captioners in the province. The BCSRA's Board of Examiners follow NCRA testing standards in administering examinations for real time reporter designations, certificates of proficiency, and certificates of achievement therefore is recognized by the Province as being able to verify credentials.

The verification process, on average, takes 2-3 weeks depending on the volume of current applications and the extent to which the application was completed fully and accurately.

### **STAGE 3 – Criminal Record Check**

Once the Ministry confirms the applicant meets the credential and work experience requirements, the Ministry will confirm the applicant has a current Criminal Record Check (CRC) on file. If there is no current CRC, the applicant will receive an email requesting a CRC. All CRC's must be obtained through the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General.

Official and authorized reporters will be required to pass a CRC because they have access to financial, personal, and other sensitive information which may include copies of court records. Authorized reporters also have access to court audio and may be hired by a party to attend and provide court reporter services at hearings held before a justice, master or registrar.

If the CRC discloses the applicant has been convicted of an offence, the Ministry will review the record to determine if the offence presents a relevant security risk that would render the applicant unfit to perform the duties of a reporter. An applicant who is not able to provide a satisfactory CRC, will not meet the qualification standards required by the ORR and will not be permitted to provide reporting services.

A CRC is valid for a period of five years. If the CRC was done over five years ago, the applicant will need to provide a new CRC.

**A CRC obtained for another Ministry, agency or organization is not transferrable.** A previously qualified official reporter with a valid CRC, applying to become an authorized reporter, may use their current CRC.

If the reporter engages staff or subcontractors who assist in the scoping, editing, binding, or copying of transcripts, those persons must also have a valid CRC obtained through the local police agency (RCMP or municipal police). The reporter does not need to submit the CRC's for those individuals to the Ministry unless the CRC discloses a conviction. If so, the reporter must contact the Ministry immediately, and the record will be reviewed to determine if the offence presents a relevant risk which would prevent that person from being involved in the administrative processes supporting court related duties.

**The expiry of the CRC and the agreement with the Ministry may not coincide. It is important for the reporter to track when their CRC expires. The Ministry does not send out a reminder notice. If a CRC is not renewed within 90 days of expiry, the reporter will not be able to continue to perform reporting duties.** If the reporter has signed an agreement it will be terminated, and their name will be removed from the [List of Authorized Reporters](#) and [List of Official Reporters](#).

To initiate a CRC, please email [CSReporters@gov.bc.ca](mailto:CSReporters@gov.bc.ca).

## **STAGE 4 - Agreement**

Authorized reporters must enter into an agreement with the Ministry as they access court audio to prepare a transcript of a court proceeding, and/or attend in court to provide court reporter services during a court proceeding.

Official reporters may choose not to enter into an agreement with the Ministry. They can perform official reporter duties but will not be placed on the Ministry's publicly posted List of Official Reporters and Authorized Reporters.

Agreements differ between the two classifications of reporters; however, all official reporters have the same terms and conditions as one another, and similarly, all authorized reporters have the same terms and conditions as one another. An applicant who is currently an official reporter but is applying to be an authorized reporter will need to sign a new agreement.

Applicants should read the agreement carefully to ensure the terms and conditions are understood and requirements are met. The agreements include, but are not limited to, the following requirements:

- Completing the BC Government online privacy and information training course;
- Storing and accessing court audio only in Canada;
- Providing business contact information including an email address which can be posted on the publicly accessible List of Official Reporters and Authorized Reporters; and
- Ensuring staff or subcontractors have criminal record checks and confidentiality agreements.

Agreements, regardless of when they are entered into, will expire on the same date. This ensures each reporter has the same terms and conditions. Some agreements will be for the full term and others shorter, depending on when the application was submitted.

## **STAGE 5 - Reporter's Oath**

Before performing any reporter duties, a reporter who has not previously taken a reporter's oath in B.C., must take an oath before a commissioner. The oath states that the reporter will, accurately and to the best of their skill and ability, record and transcribe the proceedings.

There is no fee if the reporter's oath is sworn/affirmed at a court registry in B.C. If sworn/affirmed elsewhere, any applicable fee charged by the commissioner (or notary) must be paid by the reporter.

The reporter must forward the original oath to the Ministry.

## **STAGE 6 – Confirmation of Qualifications**

When the Ministry receives the CRC, oath, and agreement (if signed by an official reporter), the applicant will receive a letter from the Ministry confirming their qualifications and they may proceed with performing reporting duties set out in the ORR.

## **List of Official Reporters and Authorized Reporters**

Reporters who sign an agreement will have their name included on the List of Official Reporters and Authorized Reporters which will be made available on the Ministry's website. The reporter's name will remain on the list unless the reporter ceases to meet the qualification standards as set out in the ORR or their agreement with the Ministry expires. [List of Authorized Reporters](#) and [List of Official Reporters](#)

## **Change of Status, Name, Address or Business Contact Information**

A reporter who retires, wishes to remove themselves from the list, changes their name, address or business contact information may submit their notice via email to: [CSReporters@gov.bc.ca](mailto:CSReporters@gov.bc.ca)

The notice should include the effective date to ensure the List of Official Reporters and Authorized Reporters can be updated.

For a change in name, a certificate of marriage, divorce or change of name is not required. A new letter confirming your qualification as a reporter will not be issued in the new name as both names will be referenced on the list and contained in the business records maintained by the Ministry.

If a reporter changes their business contact information, does not notify the Ministry, and the Ministry is unable to reach the reporter, the reporter's name and contact information may be removed from the List of Official Reporters and Authorized Reporters.

### **Privacy and Confidentiality Provisions**

The reporters, their staff and subcontractors are bound by the security and confidentiality provisions set out in the agreements which do not expire at the termination of the agreement. This ensures that the privacy of the court record which is accessed or transcribed by the reporter is maintained.