

Simultandolmetscher für alle Sprachen – live oder via Videokonferenz
Englisch, Deutsch, Französisch, Italienisch, Spanisch, Chinesisch, Japanisch, Russisch, Portugiesisch etc.

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Seite 1 / 2

Blog post: Social distancing in the interpreters' booth

If the world seems to have become a little smaller during the lockdown and in the weeks thereafter, it has grown a lot with the lifting of the 1000 persons limit for major events. What has not grown, however, is the typical working environment of a conference interpreter, which has always only been around 2 x 2 x 2 metres - and is usually occupied by two people at a time. **Under these conditions, how can the applicable hygiene and distancing regulations be implemented, and the health of the involved parties be protected?** This is the challenge that all professionals now must face as the event sector begins to recover. If two interpreters working together as a team need more than 25 cm at each end of the booth, we notice that there is no 1.5 m space between them. Even a mouth-and-nose protection does not seem to be a reasonable alternative for (literally) understandable reasons. So other measures are needed - a few thoughts:

- Probably the most obvious solution is to limit the number of people per square metre, as we see daily in supermarkets and restaurants. In other words: **one interpreter per booth**. Conversely, this also means one booth per interpreter, which means double the cost of materials and sometimes also of technical assistance. There is no question that this investment in preserving the health of all those involved in an event is worthwhile, in any case. However, should this solution lead to the budget for the event being exceeded, we have two further options at hand, which are also worth evaluating.
- An alternative to increasing the number of booths is to leave them out altogether. If booths are not absolutely necessary due to the nature of the event (e.g. for events in three and more languages or for livestream events), we currently recommend **switching to a mobile whispering system** instead and simply placing the interpreters at the front of the hall at a distance of at least 1.5 m from each other. Of course, the sound quality is a little inferior to using a soundproof booth, but if the safety of all parties can be increased, this is a good compromise in many cases.

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Seite 2 / 2

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- And as in the days of the lockdown, it is of course still possible to **connect the interpreters from their secure home office**. The prerequisite for this is that a good picture and sound can be made available via a videoconference platform suitable for several voice channels (e.g. Zoom). Once installed, this setting has the advantage that even a part of the audience can follow the event from home, thus directly enabling a larger hybrid event.

It goes without saying that all technical equipment is currently cleaned and disinfected with extra care.

In this sense - and in full awareness that we are not the first to make use of this pun - we wish you *by far the best* events for the coming months.

Sincerely,

avl interpreters llc