

Spanish for Bailiffs

The duties and responsibilities of a bailiff vary from court to court, the one unvarying duty being that of court security. In keeping the court secure, we often focus on equipment, policies/procedures, and plans. In this article, we take a different focus, a look at communication and security.

The ability to communicate with all our court participants is often an overlooked aspect of court security, but an important aspect. Identifying problem situations before they occur is a proactive approach to court security. Often, court participants become difficult people when the communication between them and court personnel break down. Therefore, it is important that those controlling the courtroom traffic flow be able to communicate with as many defendants as possible.

According to the 2000 Census Data, 26 percent of Texan homes speak Spanish.¹ Many courts have certified Spanish translators on staff, but those translators are not always available. In order to improve communication, thereby improving security, speaking fluent Spanish is not required. Instead, court security can be improved simply by being able to communicate and understand key terms and phrases.

Following is a list of Spanish phrases that are helpful in the courtroom. The list is not exhaustive; instead, it is an introduction to a few terms and phrases² that will aide in improving the communication in the courtroom. For a Spanish pronunciation key with sounds, visit www.lingolex.com/pronounce/.

Location - words used to indicate or locate objects, people or other places

Question: ¿Dónde pago mi infracción?
(Where do I pay my ticket?)

a / hacia - toward
por aquí - this way
derecha - right
izquierda - left
adelante - forward/ahead
atrás - back/behind
arriba - up
abajo - down
aquí - here
allá - there

Useful Court Vocabulary

Buenos días . - Good Morning.
Buenas tardes . - Good Afternoon.
¿Dígame? - Yes?
¿Puedo servirle? - Can I help you?
el juez - judge
el fiscal - prosecutor
la corte - courthouse
la sala de corte - courtroom
infracción - ticket
multa - fine
tiene que - you have to
regresar - to return
pagar – to pay
ir – to go
esperar - to wait
por favor - please

Answer: Por aquí a la derecha. (This way, to the right.)

en un momento - in a moment
¿Cómo se dice? - How do you say?

Useful Phrases in Court

Entre - Come in
Pase por aquí. - Come this way.
Venga conmigo. - Come with me.
No se mueva. - Don't move.
¿Perdón? - Excuse me?
Pase otra vez. - Go through again.
Tome asiento. - Have a seat.
Hagan una fila. - Make one line.
Hagan dos filas. - Make two lines.
¿Puedo revisar su bolsa? - May I check your bag/purse?
No se permite comida o bebidas en la corte.
- No food or drinks allowed in the court.
Ponga los objetos de metal en la charola.
- Place metal objects in the tray.
Ponga su bolsa en la máquina. - Place the bag/purse in the machine.
Levante los brazos. - Raise your arms.
Quítese el sombrero dentro de la sala de corte.
- Remove your hat inside the courtroom.
Haga fila. - Stand in line.
De pie. - Stand up/All rise.
Salga. - Step out.
Deténgase. - Stop.
Saque todo de sus bolsillos. - Take everything out of your pockets.
Llévelo a su carro. - Take it to your car.
Dígame. - Tell me.
No se permite traer esto a la corte. - That is not allowed in the court.
Tire su chicle. - Throw away your gum.
Voltee su gorra. - Turn your baseball hat around.

Security Related Terms/Phrases

pistola/cohete - pistol
rifle - rifle
escopeta - shotgun
tijeras - scissors
navaja/cuchillo/filero - knife
botella - bottle
vidrio - glass
¡Suelta el arma! - Drop the gun!
¡Manos arriba! - Hands up!
Voltéese despacio. - Turn around slowly.
¡Alto! - Stop!
¡Extienda los brazos hacia adelante! - Extend your arms in front of you!
¡Voltéese de espalda a mí! - Turn with your back towards me!
Deme la otra mano. - Give me your other hand.
Ponga las manos de trásde la espalda. - Put your hands behind your back.
Levántese. - Get up.
Siéntese. - Sit down.
Está arrestado. - You are under arrest.

<p><i>Apague su teléfono.</i> - Turn your telephone off.</p> <p><i>Espere.</i> - Wait.</p> <p><i>A la salida se lo damos.</i> - We'll give it to you on your way out.</p> <p><i>¿Cómo se llama?</i> - What is your name?</p> <p><i>¿De quién es esto?</i> - Whose is this?</p> <p><i>Tiene que dejarlo aquí.</i> - You have to leave it here.</p>	
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¹ *Language Use and English-Speaking Ability: 2000*, Census 2000 Brief, Issued October 2003.

² Terms and phrases compiled from 2004 Bailiff/Warrant Officer course material prepared by Ricardo Salazar and the Intermediate Spanish for Criminal Justice Response Professionals TCLEOSE Lesson Plan.