

IDENTIFICATION

Department	Position Title	
Justice	Chief Court Reporter	
Position Number	Community	Division/Region
82-2024	Yellowknife	Court Services/HQ

PURPOSE OF THE POSITION

The Chief Court Reporter manages the provision of court reporting services in all Supreme Court and Territorial Court sittings throughout the Northwest Territories to ensure that a complete and accurate written record of court proceedings is created.

SCOPE

Located in Yellowknife and reporting to the Director of Court Services, the incumbent is responsible for the planning and direction of court reporting services for the Courts of the Northwest Territories. This includes responsibility for financial and HR management. The incumbent is responsible for an approximate \$535,000 budget which must be appropriately allocated and accounted for.

The Chief Court Reporter supervises three court reporter positions in Yellowknife and indirectly supervises the court reporter position located in Hay River. The Chief Court Reporter manages all court reporting service contracts and ensures that delivery of the service by the contractors is in accordance with the contracts, applicable regulations and policies and established procedures, financial and otherwise.

The Incumbent provides advice, support and professional counsel and works with subordinate staff to resolve problems and issues that may affect them as employees and/or as court reporters.

In addition to the responsibilities specific to the Chief Court Reporter, the incumbent provides verbatim reporting of court proceedings to the Judiciary, court officers, members of the bar, and the public in all communities throughout the NWT. The incumbent will produce through CAT (computer-aided transcription) transcripts (approx. 6000+ pages in total per year) of varying complexity, content and length. Transcripts and readbacks are used by the judiciary in the decision-making process in sentencings and judgments, by the accused in the appeal process, by juries in coming to a verdict, by court registry staff for

confirmation of court proceedings and judicial orders, by lawyers to assist in their professional capacity, and by the public.

Court reporters are bound by the Rules of Court, Practice Directions, and the requirements set out in the Criminal Code of Canada, Youth Criminal Justice Act, and other applicable statutes or regulations pertaining to court reporting practices and procedures.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The Chief Court Reporter is responsible for the management of the court reporters office in accordance with the Financial Administration Manual, Human Resource Manual, Collective Agreement and other established policies and procedures.

- Assesses the need for and facilitates the delivery of supplies, equipment and services required by the court reporters office, prepares cheque requisitions and authorizes expenditures, and ensures all expenditures are in accordance with established procedures.
- Verifies expenditures monthly, projects expenditures and advises the Director of anticipated budgetary concerns.
- Assesses and adjusts work assignments on a regular basis and ensures court reporting services are in place at all Court sittings and coordinates court reporting resources (service contractors/Yellowknife positions/Hay River position) in the most cost efficient arrangement.
- Arranges all necessary transportation and accommodation for Court Reporters.
- Identifies individual and team performance goals and objectives and develops a training strategy to assist in development and achievement of those goals.
- Provides guidance and support to each court reporter to facilitate professional development relative to his or her duties and responsibilities and provides direction and leadership to the court reporting office as a whole.
- Participates in and provides input and approval into the tendering process for all court reporting service contracts.
- Arranges and Implements all specialized court reporting services as directed by the Director of Court Services and/or the Judiciary (e.g. bilingual court reporting services, facilitating proceedings for the hearing impaired)
- Liaises and consults with the Manager, Criminal Division; Manager, Civil Division; Manager, Sheriff's Services to identify and resolve areas of concern and interest to the court reporters office.
- Takes the lead role in developing, implementing, maintaining and revising court reporting directives, regulations, practices, policies and procedures and will provide input and make recommendations to the Director of Court Services and/or Judiciary regarding major practice or procedural changes to the scope or delivery of court reporting services.
- Collects and prepares statistical information as directed by the Director of Court Services

- Participates in research (e.g. hardware and/or software upgrades, electronic appeal books) and special projects (e.g. analysis of fee structures and projected costs, developing inventory and recordkeeping management plans).
- Provides input in discussions and participates in bi-weekly meetings to plan, implement, and evaluate the objectives and goals of the court reporters office in relation to the Court Services Division and the Department of Justice.
- Takes the lead role in researching current and ongoing technological changes in court reporting and is responsible to assess the needs of the court reporters office relative to specialized equipment, services, software and hardware, and will provide a cost analysis and proposal to the Director of Court Services as appropriate.
- Deals with the general public in responding to general inquiries or orders for transcripts.

2. The Chief Court Reporter attends court and quasi-judicial proceedings when required to do so and take down by machine shorthand a full and complete record of proceedings.

- Uses a Stenograph machine to take verbatim shorthand notes at a minimum of 225 words per minute including writing with the necessary commas, periods, colons, dollar signs, brackets, decimal points, quotation marks, hyphens, dashes, proper apostrophes and speaker identification.
- Attends proceedings in Territorial Court, Supreme Court, NWT Court of Appeal, and quasi-judicial proceedings of varying complexity, subject matter and length, and reports such proceedings with a high level of proficiency.
- Locates and provides a readback of shorthand notes of the proceedings in open court or otherwise as required by officers of the court, Judiciary, and juries.
- Securely stores the original paper notes produced of any court or quasi-judicial proceedings which form the official record, and an electronic copy of either the shorthand notes or the English transcript of the notes on computer disks.
- Makes judgment calls when in the courtroom, i.e. when or whether to interrupt a soft-spoken witness especially during emotional testimony; when or whether to ask counsel to speak slower or more clearly; coping with equipment failures and power outages.
- Ensures staff court reporters are trained in the court reporting software and office programs currently in use by the office.
- Works independently with minimal supervision, maintaining responsibility for the prioritization of work to meet all deadlines.
- Writes words in phonetic "chunks", with discrete keystroke combinations that correspond to a dictionary stored in a laptop, and the instantaneous translation into English appears on the laptop for immediate access
- The Court Reporter will be called upon to know litigation-support software and evidence-presentation equipment in order to assist counsel/judges in the courtroom.
- Prepares for realtime trials by carrying out extensive terminological and documentary research from varying sources; for example, medical, pharmaceutical, legal, construction, environmental.
- Continuously develop theory in writing to reflect the ongoing changes in technology.

- Researches subject matters of varying complexity to produce the official court record, and must also be able to research case law when such is referred to and quoted from during court proceedings. For example, technical matters may be discussed and in order to ensure that the record is accurate, a Court Reporter may have to gain an understanding of the context to ensure that the correct wording is used in a transcript.
- Makes judgment calls as to transcript preparation; i.e. when to use initials denoting an accused/young person and/or relatives, when to use (sic), when to use (inaudible) or (phonetic) translation.
- Troubleshoots and finds software and hardware solutions as there is minimum local technical support computer-aided transcription software.
- Keyboarding at computer terminal when editing transcripts.
- delivers transcripts ordered in a timely fashion and prepares transcripts on an expedited or overnight basis when required to do so.

3. Court reporters are expected to remain current with new and evolving practices in their profession. (Continuing Education is required of the incumbent to maintain good standing in the Alberta Shorthand Reporters Association and the incumbent must accumulate a minimum of 30 hours continuing education every 3 years.)

- Remains proficient in the member's professional skills.
- Keeps abreast of current literature, technological advances and developments, and participate in continuing education programs.
- Strives to further knowledge and skill through participation in workshops, professional meetings, interaction with professional colleagues and reading of current literature in the field.
- Avoids any appearance of conflict of interest and shall contribute to the integrity and impartiality of the judicial process or of any other proceedings by conducting himself in a manner that is fair and courteous to all participants.
- Preserves the confidentiality of information entrusted to his possession which is so classified and shall take whatever steps are necessary to ensure its security and privacy.
- Subject to the powers and duties of the Practice Review Committee, Discipline Committee, and the Code of Ethics of the Alberta Shorthand Reporters Association.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

- A demonstrated thorough understanding of the role of an Officer of the Court and the independence of the Judiciary is required to perform statutory duties in the day-to-day interaction with the Judiciary and the Executive Branch.
- A demonstrated sound knowledge of current court reporting trends in order to keep court reporting practices current and to plan, develop, coordinate, control, implement and contribute to a comprehensive court reporting service appropriate to the Northwest Territories.

- Demonstrated strong analytical and critical thinking skills, and advanced communication skills both written and oral.
- Demonstrated ability to effectively supervise and manage human resources, motivate independent development and facilitate teamwork.
- Demonstrated efficient time management and effective prioritizing workload skills.
- Self-motivated and able to work independently and as a team player.
- Demonstrated Initiative and desire to evaluate and implement advancements in technology, improvements to policy and procedures.
- Demonstrated ability to work well in a cross-cultural environment/setting.
- Demonstrated ability to proficiently operate computer-aided translation software, Microsoft Word, E-mail and Internet.
- Demonstrated strong combined concentration-auditory-hand-visual coordination in order to write shorthand verbatim, capturing each spoken word in court.
- Demonstrated knowledge and understanding of English language concepts, mastery of grammar and punctuation principles and excellent proofreading skills are essential.
- Demonstrated ability to work effectively and efficiently as part of a multi-disciplined judicial team.

Typically, the above qualifications would be attained by:

Registration with the *Alberta Shorthand Reporters Association*. This requires completion of a 2-year Court Reporting diploma. Thirty hours of continuing education must be completed every three years. Two to three years experience as a practicing Court reporter and one year of supervisory experience.

WORKING CONDITIONS

(Working Conditions identify the ***unusual and unavoidable***, externally imposed conditions under which the work must be performed and which create hardship for the incumbent.)

Physical Demands

	Frequency	Duration	Intensity
The Court Reporter must maintain continuous movement of the fingers and wrist when writing shorthand. The Court Reporter is locked into a very confined position that allows only for restricted movement of the shoulders and forearms, resulting in muscle fatigue and creating undue pressure on the back, neck and shoulders. (Proven cases of carpal tunnel and tendonitis may prevent the Court Reporter from continuing in his career).	All the time	Up to 4 hours with no break, 8 hours a day	High
The Court Reporter is personally responsible and is required to lift and carry heavy reporting equipment and laptops to court and while on court circuits. (40 pounds)	Daily/weekly	Varies	Low

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Environmental Conditions

	Frequency	Duration	Intensity
Traveling in small planes, potentially during adverse weather conditions.	Twice a month	Up to 3 hours	Medium
Working in inadequate facilities on circuit (lack of proper chairs, lack of proper ventilation, lack of proper heating).	10 days a month	Up to 4 hours with no break	Medium

Sensory Demands

	Frequency	Duration	Intensity
Listening and concentrating intensely, sometimes to multiple speakers speaking at high rates of speed, and writing shorthand for extended periods.	Daily	Up to 4 hours with no break, 8 hours a day	Extreme
Focused while proofreading and editing transcripts.	Daily/weekly	Hours at a time	High
Constant noise from equipment and external factors i.e. distractions by fans, outside noises, the gallery.	Daily	All the time	High

Mental Demands

	Frequency	Duration	Intensity
Concentrated attention to detail and accuracy while editing/proofreading transcripts causes varying degrees of mental stress, as the Court Reporter must certify the accuracy of his transcripts upon completion	Daily	Hours at a Time	High
Exposure to other people's emotional trauma (murder, sexual assault and child abuse cases).			
Dealing with witness anxiety (emotional witnesses cry, mumble, speak very quickly, speak softly).	Daily	Hours at a Time	Medium
Hear very personal testimony.	Daily	Hours at a Time	High
	Daily	Hours at a Time	Medium
See graphic exhibits entered in court proceedings.	Monthly	Varies	Medium

Lack of control over work pace in court (length of daily sittings, technical content of evidence).	Daily	Hours at a Time	High
Stress in producing certified transcripts in extremely short time frames with little or no advanced notice, and in having to meet critical deadlines, thereby giving up family/personal life to meet the deadlines imposed on him by others.	Monthly	Hours at a Time	High
Providing readbacks of portions of the proceedings in open court is mentally demanding. Readbacks often resolve dispute and objections among witnesses, lawyers and Judges and are an extremely stressful part in the performance of a court reporters duties.	Monthly	Up to 2-3 hours	High
Accused and witnesses approach staff in social settings. This may impact on personal and social life.	Monthly	Varies	Medium

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Position Security (check one)

- ☐ No criminal records check required
- ☐ Position of Trust – criminal records check required
- ☒ Highly sensitive position – requires verification of identity and a criminal records check

Official Language Considerations (check one)

- ☐ Not required
- ☐ Bilingual required (state language): _____