

# Video Relay Communication With the Deaf Made Easy

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## How Video Relay Service Works

VRS allows persons who are Deaf who use sign language to communicate through the telephone system with hearing persons. The VRS caller, using a television or a computer with a video camera and a broadband (high speed) internet connection, contacts a VRS CA (communication assistant) who is a qualified sign language interpreter. They communicate with each other in sign language through a video link. The VRS CA then places a telephone call to the party the VRS user wishes to call. The VRS CA relays the conversation back and forth between the parties -- in sign language with the VRS user, and by voice with the telephone user. No typing or text is involved. A voice telephone user can also initiate a VRS call by calling a VRS center, usually through a toll-free number.

## Benefits of VRS

VRS has quickly become a very popular service. It offers several features not available with the older text-based TTY relay systems.

VRS allows those persons whose primary language is ASL to communicate in ASL, instead of having to type what they want to say.

- A VRS call flows back and forth just like a telephone conversation between two hearing persons. For example, the parties can interrupt each other.
- Because the conversation flows more naturally back and forth between the parties, the conversation can take place much more quickly.
- VRS calls may be made between ASL users and persons speaking either English or Spanish.

## How to use Video Relay Services (VRS) to call a Deaf person:

Deaf individuals can also call directly to one another to communicate in ASL, or to a hearing person who also has their own compatible equipment and knows ASL. Most Deaf people have arranged videophone service with one of the three popular relay providers in Utah: Sorenson VRS, ZVRS or Purple. All the hearing person has to do is call the Deaf person's phone number and the call will automatically be routed through the VRS provider. A hearing person may hear something similar to: "Welcome to \_\_\_ VRS. Please hold while your call is being connected." Soon followed by a live voice saying something similar to "Operator 1234 I will now connect your call. Is there someone to ask for?" When the Deaf individual answers the videophone, the interpreter will sign what you say to the Deaf person, and when the Deaf person responds, the interpreter will voice the message to you.

