

10 AGENCY RULES:

- 1. Purchase Orders:** Please send me a PO (Purchase Order) that includes file name, word count, deadline and price/word, agency information like address, e-mail, phone number website.
- 2. Payment** is due 30 days after receipt of invoice via PayPal (preferred) or Money Bookers. The “time of payment clause” (Translator will get paid once the agency has received payment from its end client) is completely wrong under contract law and should not be signed by any professional translator. As a matter of fact, this “transaction” involves two contracts: one between the agency and its client and another contract between the agency and the freelance translator. The latter is completely independent of the former, and whether or not the end client ever pays the agency is of no concern to the translator. In other words, the agency has to pay the translator according to the contract between them, even if the end client defaults on its payment to the agency. **Therefore, withholding payment until payment has come in from the end client is highly unethical and violates contract law.**
- 3. Unrealistic demands:** Please remember what translation is all about. I WILL NOT accept any unrealistic demands from agencies (e.g. 5000 words within 24 hours). Reputable agencies know that translation involves more than replacing words of language A (source) with words of language B (target). You, the agency, will be subject to late-payment interest if you don't pay within the period of time stipulated. The seller defines the terms of payment, not the buyer.
- 4. Cash flow problems** are NOT a reason not to pay the translator and I will stop accepting any new jobs. I will have to charge late-payment interest and the agency will also be responsible for any legal or collection fees I may incur in the process. I will post information about your payment practices to several payment practices lists.
- 5. Test:** If you require an excessive number of words to be translated by way of a “test”—standard translation tests should not exceed 200-250 words. The test MUST BE a self-contained text, not part of a text.
- 6. References:** I DO NOT under any circumstances give out references. Giving out 2 or 3 references is common practice when applying for a *permanent* position, but as freelancers we cannot do that: we are legally and ethically bound to keep any and all information regarding our clients confidential. I will not breach my clients' confidentiality. Remember: when you see a new doctor, you cannot ask the doctor for his/her patient list either!!!
- 7. Retainer:** For larger projects I will charge a “retainer”, or down payment, of about 25%. I demand to be paid in various stages as the project moves along. I will still have to feed and clothe myself for the duration of the project (e.g., 2 months)—and I will not be available to other, regular, clients for the duration of this project, for which I need to be compensated. 25% upfront, another 25% halfway through the project and the remainder upon completion of the project.
- 8. Work sight unseen:** Never, under any circumstances, will I accept work sight unseen. I WILL NOT agree to handle the job without having had a chance to take a look at it. Here is the scenario: with unsurprising regularity around 4 or 5 PM on Friday afternoons. “It’s an urgent job, and we need it ASAP, but no later than Monday morning.” No professional agency would ever hand an urgent and important job to an untested translator. Most translators would not want to handle the file because the file format is awkward (e.g., source text is available as a hardcopy or, worse, fax copy only) or because it is a generally difficult text.
- 9. Volumes:** In Europe, many translation agencies go by the following standards: 1,000 words a day (normal volume) and 2,000 words (express/rush). Personally, I believe that any professional should be able to handle 2,000 words a day, and 2,000 words is the standard most commonly applied. I will NEVER agree to any volumes that I cannot handle.
- 10. Schedule:** I always deliver on time or ahead of schedule. This will not only ensure repeat business; it is also the professional thing to do. Too many translators today deliver late—sometimes as much as 48 hours after the deadline has passed. Tardiness is a growing “disease” in our profession these days, and many clients are already painfully aware of this trend.