

Guide Dogs.

How to accessibly cater to all people

—
Guide Dogs Queensland
2024



This factsheet aims to equip those in the hospitality and tourism industries with practical tips and strategies to improve and enhance accessibility when welcoming and assisting guests with low vision or blindness.

Did you know?



Did you know someone with low vision or blindness:

- can use a series of tools to access websites and complete paperwork including braille, a magnifier, a monocular, text to speech software, or screen enlargement software
- might use a white cane, Guide Dog, or a human guide to move through an environment
- may not see signs or where you are pointing, or be able to read paperwork or a map
- may not see a name printed on a badge or uniform, or locate a contactless card terminal, or hear information accurately (especially if the person is also deaf).

Planning and booking:

- Ensure your venue website, portal, and booking app are easily accessible and can be read by a screen reader program.
- Provide alternatives to printed forms or offer to email, text, or post the paperwork ahead of check-in time in an accessible format e.g. large print, audio, braille or electronic formats.
- Provide information about the accessibility to transportation and the various options available from or nearby your facility.
- If emailing attachments, check if the customer can access attachments on emails.

Arrival and check-in

- Staff should always identify themselves when welcoming a guest. Ask the guest if they need any assistance to complete check-in and, if so, what assistance they require.
- Provide magnification or screen reading software to an iPad or screen to assist with completing or signing documents at check-in.

- Offer to provide an orientation to the area. Point out key locations, Guide Dog toileting area, the lobby, dining areas and recreation facilities. Be mindful to avoid phrases such as “over there” or relying on visual gestures when giving directions.
- When providing directions be specific. For example, “your room is on the fourth floor, two doors down on your right after you exit the elevator.”
- If passing objects such as a key to the guest, announce when you are passing it and where they can find it. For example, “I am handing you the key to your room, it’s just in front of you.”
- If they have to sign for their account, guide them to the specific spot where they can sign and have a signature guide available.

Lifts:

- Ensure the audio option is turned on in the lift so that floors are announced audibly.
- Post floor numbers visibly and in braille on the side of the lift as passengers step out.
- If lifts only have a screen interface for selecting floors (like an iPad), consider alternative accessible options, such as tactile buttons or a keypad with braille labelling.

Room:

- Ensure rooms are well designed with good lighting, clear pathways and have ample space between the furniture for easy navigation.
- Include accessible room features such as braille labels and large print material, grab rails, tactile signage, an accessible bathroom, air-conditioning and TV remotes with tactile buttons and audio description features.
- Provide orientation to the room by describing where the bathroom, bed and facilities such as fridge, kettle and remotes are located in relation to the door.

Dining room:

- Wait staff should introduce themselves and ask the person if they need any assistance and, if so, what assistance they require.
- Offer menus in an accessible format such as braille, large print, via a QR code that can be read on a mobile phone or offer for wait staff to read the menu. If there is a specials board, provide direction to the board or offer to read it out.
- When setting a dining table, choose contrasting colours or textures between the tablecloth, napkin and placemats. This will help differentiate the dining surface.

- Provide crockery, utensils and glassware with noticeable colour contrasts e.g. use dark plates with light-coloured tablecloths and utensils.
- When placing an item including food or drinks on the table, let the person know by describing the location or make use of a clock-face reference system.
- If they must sign for their account, guide them to the specific spot where they can sign and have a signature guide available.

Room service delivery:

- Staff should announce their arrival and advise they have a tray of food.
- Ask where the guest would like the tray.
- Offer to describe what is on the tray and where each item is located using the clock-face reference system. For example, “The juice is at two o’clock on the tray, the bread is on a plate at seven o’clock.”

Recreation and amenities:

- Ensure recreation facilities and amenities are accessible, incorporating features like tactile paths, audible treatments and braille labels where possible.
- Offer inclusive recreational activities that accommodate varying abilities.

Staff training:

- Conduct regular training sessions to educate staff about the needs of individuals with low vision or blindness to foster a culture of sensitivity and inclusivity among team members.



- Ensure all staff are trained in assisting guests who have low vision, including sighted guiding techniques and effective communication.
- Ensure staff always explain what they are going to do before they do it. For example, touching an individual, moving something, or when the staff member leaves the room.

Emergency preparedness:

- Develop and communicate clear evacuation procedures tailored for guests with low vision or blindness. Ensure all emergency information is available in accessible formats e.g. large font print or braille.

We are here to help. For more information please contact:

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