

Sighted Guide Technique

Sighted guide is a technique originally developed for people who are blind, but it can also be helpful for people with low vision who are unsure of their bearings in an unfamiliar environment. Remember: First always ask if any help is needed, as not everyone needs sighted guide assistance.

Sighted Guide Technique

The basis of the sighted guide technique is that the person who is blind or has low vision holds the guide's arm lightly above the elbow and allows the guide to walk one-half step ahead. This allows him or her to feel and follow the guide's direction.



1. To begin sighted guide, touch the arm of the person being guided with the elbow you prefer to use. He or she can then take your arm above the elbow. If someone needs extra support for walking, bend your supporting arm, parallel to the ground so he or she can apply weight to your arm.
2. Give guiding signals just when a change in motion is needed. For example, pause briefly at the very edge of a curb. Signalling early can create confusion. Remember, verbal clues are also helpful, i.e., "We are approaching a curb."

3. When going through a narrow door or passage, press your guiding arm backward toward the small of your back so the person being guided can move in single file behind you.

4. When approaching stairs, come to a stop at the edge of the first step and say whether the stairs go up or down and where the railing is located. The person being guided will follow one stair step behind, holding your arm with one hand and the handrail with the other. Pause after completing the stairs.



very edge of the curb

5. When approaching a curb, pause briefly at the and say whether the curb goes up or down.
6. When coming to a door, stop first, then say whether the door opens toward or away from you, and whether it opens to the right or left. The person being guided can then move to the appropriate side. Open the door and proceed.
7. When approaching escalators and revolving doors, use techniques similar to those for stairs, curbs, and doors. If the person you are guiding is uncomfortable, use stairs or regular doors. Buildings with escalators or revolving doors are required to have stairs or regular doors.



8. When approaching a chair, place the hand of the person being guided on the back or side of the chair, if possible, so he or she knows where the chair is and which way it is facing. They can then decide where to sit.
9. When helping a visually impaired person into a car, place one of their hands on the door handle and have them locate the edge of the car roof with their other hand. Then the person can seat himself or herself.



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10. Increase or decrease the amount of assistance you give based comfortable the person being guided is with a sighted guide whether he or she is carrying or using a white cane.