

Transportation Hearing Access: An Immediate Need



Communication access in the transportation sector needs immediate attention. The United States lags far behind [Europe](#) in making sure people with hearing loss can understand essential information while traveling.

Traveling, even locally, is stressful for everyone, but this is more true for people with hearing loss. Hearing aids amplify all sound, so they become virtually useless in environments with competing noise. That’s where hearing assistive technology comes in.

The ADA **requires** communication access, and the Air Carrier Access Act of 1986 mandates information be accessible, including requiring captions on airport televisions. Yet today, millions of people—veterans,

children, seniors, and people in between—cannot clearly comprehend gate announcements, safety warnings, instructions, bus stop calls, or train announcements.

Many transportation spaces use captions, like airport terminals and for some in-flight information. Delta airlines, for example, visually displays information about boarding, upgrades, and standbys. But many unscheduled onboard announcements are neither captioned nor understandable to many people wearing hearing aids or cochlear implants.

Captions are necessary, but they can’t be read from everywhere. Communication access takes many forms, and in fact, it *must*. That’s why technologies such as hearing loops (induction loops) are needed, too. Especially in emergencies, we need more than one communication access tool, a concept we call “redundancy.”

Hearing loops are the preferred choice—sometimes the only choice—for certain transient transportation environments. Hearing loops become part of the infrastructure of a space, not subject to equipment checkout, staff availability and know-how, or equipment repair and charging. Several airports in the U.S. and Europe use hearing loops at terminals, enabling people with hearing loss to travel independently, safely, and comfortably.

We need loops, captions, and other communication access on buses, trains, stations, airports, subways, cabs, airplanes, and vessels.



Where can I hear when I travel?

Looped Transportation

Washington State

Colman Ferry Dock, Seattle
Metro ORCA office, Seattle
Mobile assistance vans, Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH)

United States

Albert J Ellis Airport, North Carolina
Boston Logan International Airport
Muskegon Airport
Los Angeles International Airport
Kalamazoo/Battle Creek airport
Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport,
Detroit Airport (Delta terminal)
Gerald R. Ford International Airport in Grand Rapids
South Bend International Airport

New York City Cabs
New York City subway ticket booths
New York City Amtrak information booths, ticket counters
Washington DC Union Station ticket counter
Milwaukee Intermodal Station concourse
Michigan Indian Trails/MDOT buses



International

Canberra Airport, Australia (loop) Canterbury train station ticket window
Christchurch Airport, New Zealand
Dublin LUAS trains
Dubai buses
Edinburgh Airport counters
Gatwick airport
Heathrow airport, throughout
Heathrow Express train
Helsinki airport (Finavia's information desks)
Hong Kong Underground information desks and platforms
London Underground, ticket halls, help points, platforms, walkways, and lifts
Manchester Airport
Melbourne Airport
Norwegian State Railways (looped)
Schiphol Airport, Amsterdam



Resources

Hearing Loss Association of America

www.hearingloss.org

Hearing Loss Association of Washington

www.hearingloss-wa.org

Loop Washington

www.loopwashington.org

Washington State Communication Access Project (Wash-CAP)

(caption advocates)

www.wash-cap.com

Collaborative for Communication Access via Captioning (CCAC)

www.ccaptioning.org

In the News

BART Trains in San Francisco to Get Hearing Loops

<http://www.bart.gov/news/articles/2016/news20160329>

How New York City Hears People with Hearing Loss

<http://www.forbes.com/forbes/welcome/>

A Technical Godsend to Counter Hearing Loss

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/a-technological-godsend-to-counter-hearing-loss-1440717831>

