

HUMAN GUIDE

Purpose: For two people to travel as efficiently and using as little space as possible, while one is being guided.

Describe the environment to the individual but do not overwhelm the individual with information. The person is probably using his or her hearing to maintain some orientation or gather information.

GRIP

The follower grips your arm just above the elbow. The grip must be firm enough to maintain it while walking, but not so tight as to cause you discomfort.

STANCE

The follower stands next to the guide and one-half step behind. His arm is bent at the elbow and held close to his side. The guide's arm is relaxed and down at his side.

NARROW PASSAGE TECHNIQUE

When coming to a narrow passage, tell the follower and move your guiding arm to the center of your back. The follower will respond by moving behind you and extending his arm. This prevents him from stepping on your heels, and it places both of you in a single file position. Walk slower in this position.

Once you have moved through the narrow area, return to the normal stance.

ALTERNATE GRIP, STANCE and NARROW PASSAGE FOR ADDED SUPPORT

If the person being guided needs physical support, he or she should drape their forearm over the guides' forearm which is bent at 90 degrees. For narrow passages, the guide informs the individual of the need to move behind the guide. The guide keeps arm bent at 90 degrees and person being guided can hold guide's forearm with both hands as if pushing a shopping cart. **This is not as safe as the person being guided is not a ½ step behind and cannot maneuver as easily through the environment.**

DOORS

When approaching a closed door, **give the follower information regarding its position when opened** (i.e. "The door opens away and to the right or towards us and to the left."), or simply say, "The door opens towards (or away) and take the door with your right hand." If, in this case, his right hand weren't free because he was holding his guide's arm, he would need to execute a partial or full switch to free it.

After the guide opens the door and begins to walk through, the follower should have his hand ready to aid in holding it open as they walk through together. The follower should sweep his arm across the front of his body to locate the door with a flat palm. If the door is not self-closing, he should close it behind them.

If the doorway is narrow, use the narrow passage technique in addition to this technique described for doors.

STAIRS

When approaching stairs, tell the follower and let him know whether they are going up or down. Make sure you approach the stairs directly (not at an angle). Have the follower stand on the handrail side of the stairs if a handrail is available. Stop at the top or the bottom of the stairs. The follower should locate the handrail and reach his foot forward to locate the riser or edge of the first step. Start down (or up) the stairs, always keeping yourself one step ahead of him. (Determine if the individual walks one step per stair, or if he or she puts both feet on each stair before moving to the next.) Maintain a continuous pace. **Do not count steps or state how many steps.**

SEATING

When guiding someone to a chair, walk up to it and place your hand on the back of the chair and let the follower trail your arm down to the back. Tell him in which direction the chair is facing, and he can then seat himself.

If the chair is located at a table, the guide should describe the relationships of the chair, the table, and the follower. One hand of the follower should be placed on the chair and the other hand on the table.

You may want to describe an unfamiliar chair to him (i.e. presence or lack of arms, back; presence of swivel or reclining back; movability).

ENTERING OR EXITING A VEHICLE

Inform individual of the following:

- * Is the vehicle next to a curb.
- * Is the vehicle close enough to the curb to step directly to the vehicle, or should the individual step onto the road.
- * Type of vehicle (truck, compact car, SUV, etc)

Open the door for the individual. Place one of his or her free hands on the top of the door and the other on the roof of the car so that the individual knows how much space there is to maneuver into the vehicle as well as how far he or she needs to duck head.

Once seated in car, ask individual if he or she wants to close door or wants guide to. If individual wants guide to close door, have individual put hands in lap so that he or she is not reaching out as door is being closed. If individual wants to close door, "feed" door to him or her slowly so that individual does not lean out of car and lose balance.