

Travel Information & Considerations

There are many things that you can do to help make travel safe, comfortable, and enjoyable. Planning ahead and informing fellow travelers, transportation hosts and hotel clerks of communication needs will help your trip go smoothly. This article is directed towards teens and young adults who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, but can be adapted for use with younger children.

What are Common Problems?

- Inability to hear or understand airline boarding and in-flight announcements.
- Difficulty making reservations.
- Inability to hear someone knocking on the door, or warning signals such as smoke alarms.
- Difficulty using public telephones, hotel phones, cell phones, etc.
- Inability to hear or understand tours, museum lectures, and live performances.
- Lack of sign language interpreters.
- Lack of accommodations for hearing assist dogs.

General Information When Planning or Traveling

- Try to make all travel arrangements in advance. Once transportation arrangements have been made, request written confirmation to ensure that information is correct. Always inform the ticket representative that you are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

- Be sure to print copies of important information such as confirmation numbers, reservations, and maps. Keep copies of travel arrangements easily available.
- Arrive early at the airport, bus terminal, or train station. Tell the agent at the boarding gate that you are Deaf or Hard of Hearing and need to be notified in person when it is time to board.
- Check the display board repeatedly while waiting in the terminal to confirm your destination and departure time as there may be delays or the departure gate may change. Confirm the flight/bus/train number and destination before boarding.
- Do not be afraid to ask for help from fellow travelers. Most are more than willing to offer assistance.
- Consider carrying a medical identification card with your personal identification (e.g., driver's license) or passport with all your important medical and contact information in the event of an emergency. A wallet-sized template follows this article or create one free at <http://www.medids.com/>. For example, implant users might write NO MRI.
- Program your phone with the contact name ICE (in case of emergency) with information for your emergency contact and how best to get in touch with them (e.g., phone by voice/TTY, text, email, etc.).

Tips for Traveling by Plane

- When booking a flight, always sign up for text and email alerts regarding travel updates.
- Try to book a seat up front where the flight crew can find you and communicate with you easily.
- Let the flight crew know what your communication needs are and ask them to notify you of any changes.
- Don't worry about removing your hearing technology. Hearing aids and cochlear implants do not need to be removed. Hearing devices do not

interfere with the plane's navigational instruments. You can keep them on the entire time even when asked to "turn off all electronic devices" during takeoff and landing.

- Bring your connectivity or other technology options to listen to music or watch a movie during flight.
- Airlines prohibit people who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing from sitting in exit row seats for safety reasons.

Tips for Traveling by Bus or Train

- If there are no visible stops (or even if there are), enlist the assistance of a nearby seatmate to alert you when you reach a certain stop. If you travel the same route frequently, count the number of stops for your own assurance.
- Tell a fellow traveler that you are Deaf or Hard of Hearing so you don't miss any travel information.
- Be visually aware of your surroundings, especially near tracks or intersections.

Tips for Traveling by Car

- If you happen to be the driver and you read lips, ask your passengers to wait until you stop or to pause often while they talk so you can focus on the road.
- Extra-wide or additional rearview mirrors can be installed in vehicles, making it easier to communicate with backseat passengers.
- Turn on light for better lipreading.
- Ask passengers to use an FM/DM system or other Assistive Technology (AT) in order to deliver the conversation directly to your ears. This lets you keep your eyes on the road all the time.

- Use a blue-tooth phone system for hands-free calling or, if the vehicle is equipped with a syncing system, pair your phone up with the vehicle and make or receive calls straight from your car.
- Invest in a multi-position GPS/Cellphone holder and put it where you can follow it without worrying about sound. The best place is on top of the dashboard next to the steering wheel. This eliminates the amount of time you take your eyes off the road. Be sure the GPS/navigation system you use switches to a night screen for safe night driving.

What other Resources are Available?

- All public telephones should now have a “blue grommet” attachment to the handset indicating it is compatible with telecoils in hearing devices. Some public phones have an amplifying headset, or you can purchase a pocket amplifier from your audiologist. Cell phones have solved many of these problems. All manufacturers have models that are compatible with hearing devices. See the *Assistive Technology* section of this toolkit for more information.
- Smartphones often have applications for travelling. Such programs or email programs can store reservation information. Some applications offer real-time alerts for changes in flight plans, and others have maps that can provide directions.

What other Devices are Helpful?

- Telephone amplifiers and induction (magnetic) couplers can be attached to public or hotel phones and can help increase the volume of the telephone. Induction couplers also make the telephone compatible with the telecoil on your hearing devices. Telephone manufacturers produce handsets such as the G6 and G66, which plug easily into any modular telephone. Using your own compatible cell phone, however, not only eliminates these problems, but is also less expensive.
- Portable wake-up alarms can be used to flash a light or vibrate a bed or pillow. A cell phone can also work as a vibrating alarm.

How should Hearing Devices be Handled when Traveling?

- Hearing devices will not set off the alarms during security screening at airports. Keeping the hearing devices on will allow you to communicate with the security officers during screening, if necessary.
- When walking through the metal detector, you may hear distorted sound.
- Be sure to pack extra batteries and equipment like tubing, earhooks and cleaning tools. These may be difficult to obtain in some places.
- Consider taking a dehumidifier to prevent moisture problems, especially if your destination has a warm, humid climate.
- To prevent loss, avoid storing your hearing device equipment in checked luggage. Keep an extra set of batteries in a separate piece of luggage.
- Bring a copy of your hearing device settings or maps if you will be gone for a long time. Carry the phone number of your audiologist and manufacturer's customer care/service line.

Lodging

- Inform the receptionist at the front desk that you are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. This is very important in case of emergency. Consider giving them permission to enter your room.
- If traveling with someone else, give them one of your room keys.
- Certain major hotel chains now provide visual alerting devices that flash when the telephone rings or fire alarm sounds. Contact the hotel in advance to make the necessary arrangements. Also consider bringing your own alarm/equipment.
- Portable infrared systems can be used with hotel televisions and radios. These transmit sound via invisible infrared light to a listener's receiver.
- Most hotels and motels in the United States are required to accommodate Deaf or Hard of Hearing persons with American with

Disabilities Act (ADA) Kits that contain the necessary devices to alert in the event of an emergency, an incoming phone call, morning wake up, knock on the door, etc. They are also required to have a TTY phone at the front desk for Deaf or Hard of Hearing guests. Ask for the “ADA Kit” when making your reservation or when checking in.

- Many hotels now make use of universal television remotes that allow you to turn on captions.
- When traveling internationally, you will need an outlet converter to charge your rechargeable batteries for your hearing devices or assistive technology.

Additional Tips for Better Travel Enjoyment

- If you’re planning to participate in guided tours, presentations, workshops, concerts, comedy shows, etc., always call ahead before booking to arrange for assistive listening devices, real-time captioning, or sign language interpretation. Make sure you are aware of all laws regarding communication access in whatever city/country you are visiting.
- Be innovative when services are not required to be provided. Enlist the assistance of an interpreting service if necessary.
- Be active in advocating for proper preparation and accommodation tools for Deaf or Hard of Hearing travelers wherever you go. Don’t be afraid to share your own tips and tricks to help future travelers feel safer and enjoy their trip more.
- Contact local organizations to inquire after an address to a possible counterpart agency at your destination. [Mobility International](#) has a list. This way you can find out what laws are in place for that country as well as TTY and interpretation services.

Additional Resources

Now that you've learned some tips to travel, here is a small sample of apps and resources to enhance your traveling experiences:

Apps for Deaf or Hard of Hearing travelers (and otherwise)

[Clear Captions](#) is a phone app that lets you make captioned phone calls right from your phone. Captions can be slow - much like using a relay operator - so make sure you let the other party know what's going on. Note that this app only works in the United States. At the time of this writing, there is no known captioned call app that works internationally. There are other captioned call apps, so take the time to browse and research to find the one most compatible for your needs.

[Google Translate](#) is a useful tool that provides speech to text and text to speech translations between languages, eliminating the language barrier.

[Otosenesense](#) is a new app developed specifically for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community. It works by using flashing screens and vibration to alert to sounds like smoke alarms, audio alerts, etc. It's a good solution for international travel and other places that aren't required to have ADA Kits, as well as for those times when you can't wear your hearing devices.

Students on the Go, Safely and Independently – a Travel Training Manual

Gallaudet University Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Centre has a travel training manual called *Students on the Go*. You may want to review the manual as a family or incorporate it into your child's IPP.

The training manual is intended to train students for safe and independent travel on public transportation. Children may receive training at any age, though it occurs typically between 12-14 years of age, depending on their maturity level and ability to act responsibly. The manual provides a guide to processes and steps to determine if a student is ready for independent travel. Factors to

consider are an awareness of personal space, an awareness of the environment, and the ability to recognize and respond to danger.

A copy can be requested from the Alberta Hands and Voices Lending Library.

Adapted from:

-Deaf and Hard of Hearing Travel Ideas, GoTrekkin

-[Tina Childress, Travel Tips for People with Hearing Loss](#)

-[Travel Tips for the Hearing Impaired, American Academy of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery](#)

Instructions

1 - Print This Page.

2 - Using a Pen, fill in your important medical and contact information on this form.

3 - Cut on Dotted Line →



EMERGENCY MEDICAL IDENTIFICATION CARD	
In an emergency where I am unconscious or unable to communicate, please read both sides of this card to know who to contact and the special care I must have.	
This card was filled in on _____ (date)	
PERSONAL INFORMATION	
NAME _____	
ADDRESS _____	
CITY _____	PROVINCE _____ POSTAL CODE _____
TELEPHONE _____	FAITH _____
NOTIFY IN EMERGENCY	
My Doctor: NAME _____	
CITY _____	PHONE# _____
Also, Please Notify: NAME _____	
CITY _____	PHONE# _____
(SEE OTHER SIDE)	
MEDICAL INFORMATION	
PRESENT MEDICAL PROBLEMS: _____	
ALLERGIES: _____	
MEDICATIONS TAKEN REGULARLY: _____	
OTHER INFORMATION: _____	
DATE OF LAST IMMUNIZATIONS:	DIPHTHERIA: _____
TETANUS: _____	SWALLPOX: _____
TYPHOID: _____	OTHER: _____
MedIDs.com	
www.MedIDs.com	

4 - Fold on This Line →

5 - Place your new Pocket Medical Card in your wallet or purse to have your important medical and contact information with you at all times.

MedIDs.com

www.MedIDs.com