

Suggestions for guiding

Guiding techniques are designed to enable a person with vision impairment to move through their environment safely and efficiently with the assistance of a guide. Not all people use these guiding techniques, so it is important to ask “Do you need help?” and if they do, to ask, “How may I help you?” This will allow the person to use the technique that suits them best.

Good communication is the key to being a good guide! A responsible guide will let the person know what is happening around them using precise language, avoid potential hazards and walk at a comfortable pace.

If you are not sure what to do, just ask!

Initial Contact and Grip

If guiding is required, the guide makes contact with the person by touching the back of the person’s hand with the back of their own hand. The person will hold the guide’s arm just above the elbow.



Position

The guide should hold their arm relaxed at their side. The person being guided should stand beside the guide, but one step back, keeping their arm close to their side.



Narrow Spaces

After telling the person of the narrow space, the guide moves their guiding arm to the small of their own back. The person will step behind in single file. It may be easier for the person to grip the guide’s wrist. Resume the normal walking position once through.



Changing Sides

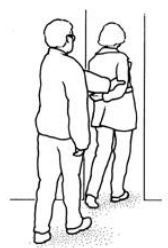
Sometimes it is necessary to change sides. After telling the person of the need to change sides, it may be safest to stop. The person will place their free hand on the guide’s back, releasing their original grip. The person then trails across the guide’s back until reaching the guide’s other arm.



Doors

Let the person know when approaching a closed door and explain which way it opens. Where possible, it will be easier to place the person on the same side as the door hinges.

The guide opens the door with their free hand. Walking forward, the guide grips the door handle. The person slides their free hand down the guide’s arm to locate the handle and closes the door.

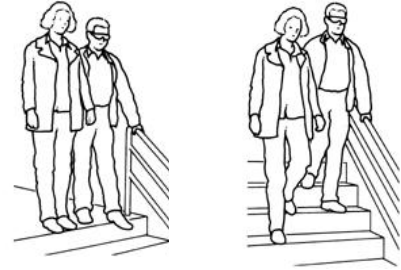


Stairs & Kerbs

Tell the person whether the kerb or stairs go up or down. If there is a handrail, you may need to change sides if the person wishes to use it.

The guide stops at the edge. The person moves forward to find the edge of the first step. When both are ready, the guide goes one step ahead. The guide walks at the pace most comfortable for the person they are guiding.

The guide lets the person know when they have reached the landing, the top or the bottom of the stairs.



Getting into a car

Ask the person if they need help with getting into the car. Explain which way the car is facing and find out where they would like to sit.

If help is needed, the guide places their hand on the door handle and the person runs their hand down the guide's arm to locate the handle. The person opens the door and may use their free hand to touch the edge of the car roof. This may help the person avoid bumping his or her head. Alternately, the guide may open the door and show the person the top of the door frame and the car roof.

Getting into a Chair

Let the person know about the chair, the position and type of chair and its relation to the surroundings (eg at a table) and tell them which part of the chair the person will contact first.

The guide places their guiding hand on the chair. The person slides their grip hand down the guide's arm onto the chair. With their other hand, the person can feel the chair and seat themselves

Giving Directions

Use accurate directions such as right or left; north, south, east or west; clock face positioning (e.g. your drink is at 10 o'clock"), or 'in front of' or 'behind'.

Our services are delivered free of charge to our client.

To refer someone to us, with their permission, please call your nearest Guide Dogs office.

www.guidedogsaustralia.com