

# Travel Suggestions



There are many useful tools to enhance independent travel skills in the home and community including: white cane, guide dog, sighted guide, or GPS. If you feel unsafe while traveling, the services of an Orientation and Mobility (O&M) Specialist are recommended.

## Scanning techniques

For some people it is helpful to alternate between looking ahead in the distance and looking down and immediately ahead. This scanning technique allows you to use important clues and anticipate dangers in the distance while maintaining position, accuracy of step, and safety of movement.

When you want to locate objects in the distance, try using a logical scanning technique. For example, when looking for a traffic signal, try following the crosswalk lines to the opposite curb; then follow the curb back and forth to find the poles up on the sidewalk. Follow these poles upward to see which one has the light. This scanning technique can be practiced first without an aid and later on with prescribed distance aids like a telescope or binoculars.

## Color and contrast

- Take special note of contrasting colors to help you delineate surface depth and purpose.
- Sidewalks appear light against the green grass.
- Curbs often appear as dark lines due to shadows, or they may be painted red and yellow to designate a bus zone.
- An approaching street will often be darker than the sidewalk because it is asphalt (blacktop).

## **Bus travel**

- If you have trouble identifying buses, try asking the driver. For example, “Does this bus go to Broadway & Pine?” This avoids confusion about why you didn’t “see” the bus number.
- As you board the bus, ask the driver to call out the bus stops in advance.
- If you are traveling a regular route, acquaint yourself with obvious landmarks several blocks ahead of your stop so you can independently identify your stop.
- Always wait for the bus to come to a full stop before standing up and walking to the exit door.
- You may also want to consider acquiring a Bus ID Kit, which indicates to the bus driver in large bold numbers which bus you are waiting for. The kit is available from either your local transit authority or through SightConnection’s O&M Specialist.

## **Traffic signals**

- If you have difficulty locating or seeing traffic signals, listen for the flow of parallel traffic on the street you are walking along. The traffic will surge forward when the light changes to green.
- Cross only with the first surge of parallel traffic to give you plenty of crossing time. It is safer to wait than to be caught in the middle of a light change.
- Be especially careful of traffic turning right at your corner.
- Be aware that buses are stopping for passengers and not just when the light changes.
- It is better to avoid crossing at crosswalks where there is no traffic control. It is far safer to walk the extra distance to a crosswalk with a traffic light or stop sign.

## **Asking for help**

You may need to ask for help when seeking visual information such as a street name or landmark. Simply explain to people that you do not see well or that you have a vision impairment, as this tends to result in more understanding responses. It also demonstrates your realistic command of the situation.

## **The white cane**

There are three types of canes available for purchase, the long white cane, the adjustable white support cane, and the identity cane. A white cane signals drivers and other pedestrians that the user is visually impaired. It is a great tool making others aware and increasing your level of safety. The long white canes are either collapsible or rigid and are available in different heights. The adjustable white support cane is useful for ID, but is also used for support and balance. It can be purchased without training, however, training is available. The identity cane is a small lightweight cane that folds up to 6" x 9" and is used for identification. Training must be provided for first time users.

## **Sighted guide**

If at times you feel more comfortable being guided by someone, hold your guide's arm just above the elbow so you are a step behind and to the side. This sighted guide technique allows you to take an active role in traveling while being guided. It also gives you opportunity to interpret and use guide-initiated cues and information you might otherwise miss from the environment.

If you or someone you know will benefit from additional information on travel suggestions please contact the SightConnection office.

## Our mission

“Enhancing the ability of people with vision loss to lead active, independent lives.”

## Programs and services

- Low vision rehabilitation
- Low vision clinic
- Instruction in independent living skills
- Professional counseling
- Safe travel and orientation training
- Education, information and referral services
- Assistive Technology resources
- Adaptive aids specialty store

## Agency and store contact information

### Address

9709 Third Ave NE #100  
Seattle, WA 98115-2027

### Phone

206-525-5556 v/tdd  
800-458-4888 toll free

### Fax

206-525-0422

### Email

info@SightConnection.org

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### Agency website

[www.SightConnection.org](http://www.SightConnection.org)

### Agency hours

Monday-Friday  
8:30 am-5:00 pm

### Store website

[www.SightConnection.com](http://www.SightConnection.com)

### Store hours

Monday-Friday  
9:00 am-5:00 pm



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