

Sighted Guide Techniques

Providing assistance as a sighted guide is always done in a respectful manner.

There are a number of general principles when performing as a sighted guide for someone who is blind or partially sighted:

- Ask the person if they would like assistance
- If assistance is requested, offer your arm by gently touching the person's hand with the back of your hand
- The person who is blind takes the sighted guide's arm just above the elbow and walks slightly behind the guide
- The person who is blind may choose to touch the shoulder of the sighted guide while walking slightly behind the guide
- The sighted guide walks slightly in front and indicates any changes in direction or terrain
- If the person who is blind or partially sighted is frail, they may ask to link arms
- When encountering stairs, curbs or any area with an abrupt change in incline, pause just before the transitional point and verbally indicate to the person you are guiding about the upcoming change. This allows the person who is blind or partially sighted to adjust their stride/step accordingly
- When entering elevators enter together. Once in, turn inward and around with the blind person, to face the door. The person may release their grip and then grip your arm when exiting the elevator
- If going through a narrow passage or hallway, move your arm back to indicate the need for them to fall in behind you into single file. You can also verbally indicate to the person. The person you are leading may extend their arm to provide some distance between you
- To become seated, lead the person to the chair and let knees gently brush the front of the chair. Or when you have reached the back of the chair guide the individual's hand to the back of the



chair and indicate whether it has arms or not. The person can then seat themselves

- When going through doors, signal for the person to fall in behind. Let them know if the door opens in or out and whether to the right and left
- Always provide a point of orientation to the person you are leading if you have to leave them alone at any point
- When guiding an individual into a car, guide them to the door and place their hand on the door handle. Opening of the door will indicate which direction the car is facing. The person may also want to put a hand on the top of the car to judge the height.

Remember, people who are blind or partially sighted are people who just may not see as well as others. They should be accorded the same respect and right to dignity as anyone else. Often, people who are blind or partially sighted require little assistance in being mobile or navigating daily life. Speak at a normal pace, in a normal voice and in normal terms. Do not assume they need assistance. If a person who is blind or partially sighted requires assistance, they will most likely ask.