



This is the International Sign for Hearing Loops

Helpful Tips

Family and friends typically inform facility leaders that a person has a hearing loss. People with hearing loss are reluctant to ask for hearing assistance. Approach the individual in a friendly manner explaining that your facility has a hearing loop. Explain that your facility welcomes everyone and seeks to be inclusive.

Become a helpful advocate: Explain that the program today is going to be interesting and exciting. State that you hope everyone is able to hear and enjoy the sermon, presenter, entertainment or program. This is why your facility installed a hearing loop.

Special Advocates: Direct them to a specially trained individual for help if desired. Most facilities have hearing **advocates** that are happy to help.

Brochure: Offer to give the person with hearing loss a brochure and encourage them to ask questions the next time they return.

Caring Persistence: You may need to offer hearing assistance help several times. “No” doesn’t necessarily mean that an individual will never inquire about hearing assistance. Being persistent in a friendly manner indicates that you care about the well being of the person with hearing loss and that your facility wants to help.

Announcement: A presenter or MC should always explain that the room has a loop, point out where the Loop Listeners are dispensed and introduce the special advocate who can offer personal help.

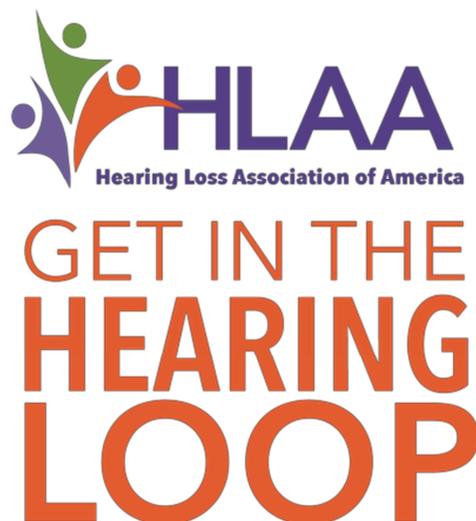
Hearing Aids alone are not enough: Did you know hearing aid microphones have a maximum distance of six-feet? This may work well in a small group or intimate setting but is always a problem in bigger rooms. This is especially true when the acoustics are poor or there is background noise. Many people will say their hearing aids work well enough without ever trying a loop. Once they do hear audio through a loop, they become very excited and will often share their experience with others.

Denial: People often are in denial as hearing loss can be very gradual. Some people feel that they will be viewed differently if they reveal their hearing loss. While hearing loss is common for those over the age of 60 it is an invisible disability that can affect anyone. Handle the situation with caring empathy and tell the individual to let you know if they wish to learn more about hearing loops in the future.

Personal Space: Dexterity declines as people age. Some people may need help with Loop Listener ear speakers, headphones, etc. (as they don't wear hearing aids). If you sense help is needed, ASK before you touch someone as you are invading their personal space. **Be sensitive regarding gender.** Example: A male is trying to help a female senior citizen with her Loop Listener. Ask the person with hearing loss if they prefer a woman nearby who could help position an ear speaker or headphones. This will enhance the comfort level for everyone.

Be Diligent: Facilities that use the blue hearing loop sign on a web site, social media, e-mails, and printed materials will always be viewed favorably. Cultivating a culture of reaching out to those who suffer from hearing loss yields benefits for all.

Watch for Visitors: Facilities such as churches will always attract visitors within 45 to 60 days of installing a hearing loop. Businesses who install loops at checkouts and customer service counters will always attract loyal customers with hearing loss.



What is a Hearing Loop?

Hearing loops deliver intelligible, distortion-free speech and sound wirelessly to T-coil equipped hearing aids and cochlear implants by using a safe magnetic field. This type of hearing assistance is the BEST solution in places where distance, ambient noise and challenging acoustics otherwise make listening and understanding with hearing aids and cochlear implants virtually impossible. **Hearing loops greatly diminish or eliminate background noise entirely!** Your hearing aids become your wireless hearing assistance delivering customized audio directly into your hearing aids. Hear everything clearly without background noise!

How Does a Hearing Loop Work?

Hearing loops consist of a special amplifier and a hidden copper wire that transmits sound via a magnetic field. The hidden loop wire creates a “looped zone” in any size venue from a large auditorium to a taxi. The loop wire sends the magnetic signal to any hearing aid equipped with a telecoil within the looped area. A telecoil, or t-coil, is a small, inexpensive coil of wire inside a hearing aid that allows it to become a wireless receiver of audio. The sign shown on the right indicates a room or venue has a hearing loop. Hearing aids work with loops certified to meet IEC Standard 60118-4 anywhere around the globe.



How a Hearing Loop Works

1 A sound source such as a microphone feeds sound into an amplifier.

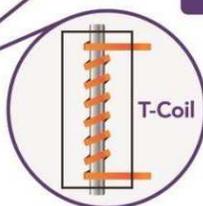
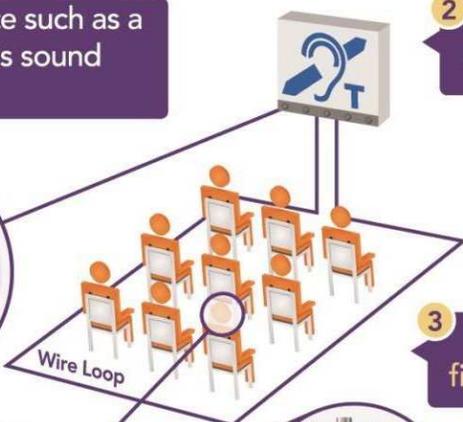
2 The amplifier sends a current to a wire loop that surrounds the room.

 This symbol lets people know that a room is looped, so they can switch their hearing aids to telecoil (or "T") mode.

3 The current generates a magnetic field, which emanates from the loop.

4 Tiny wire t-coils built into most hearing aids pick up the magnetic signal.

5 The hearing aid converts the signal into sound customized for the listener's individual pattern of hearing loss.



Hearing Aid

Did you know that 1 in 5 Americans suffer from hearing loss?

Hearing loss is an “invisible disability” and most people are reluctant to discuss their hearing loss. In fact, many who suffer from hearing loss go to great lengths to conceal their invisible disability. Facilities with hearing loops should make an effort to reach out and encourage people to use the hearing loop. Hearing loop signage alone will not be enough to encourage people to try a hearing loop. Friendly empathetic personal communication is the key to increased use of a looped facility.

“Most hearing aid models—more than 70 percent—either come with a telecoil or offer it as an option (all cochlear implant processors made today have a telecoil). When buying a hearing aid, consumers should always ask that a telecoil be included and that the audiologist or dispenser activates the telecoil program at the time of fitting. The consumer should also master the simple procedure for turning on the correct hearing aid or cochlear program to use the telecoil when needed.” [Courtesy of: Hearing Loss Association of America](#)

Commonly Asked Questions:

Does my hearing aid have a T-coil?

Most people do not know if their hearing aid is equipped with a T-coil. Most **BTE** (behind the ear) and **RIC** (receiver in the canal) hearing aids come equipped with a telecoil, or “T-coil”. Well over 70%. Call your audiologist or hearing aid provider to learn if your hearing aids have a T-coil. Many hearing aids can be retrofitted with a T-coil for a modest price.

How do I turn on my T-coil?

Your audiologist or hearing aid provider will “activate” or “turn on” your T-coil and customize the settings for your unique listening needs. **To use:** Select the hearing aid program with the button or switch on your hearing aid. Some people use their cell phone to turn the T-coil on/off.

What is Bluetooth? What does this have to do with hearing aids?

Hearing aids that connect to smartphones via Bluetooth allow the user to stream calls and music directly from a cell phone or tablet to their hearing aids, amplifying sound and cutting out background noise. Bluetooth can also be used to control programs in a hearing aid.

What is a Loop Listener?

Loop Listeners are typically provided by a venue and allow people who **do not** wear hearing aids listen to clear intelligible audio from the hearing loop. A Loop Listener is a T-coil in a box with a volume control. A lanyard worn around the neck is attached to the Loop Listener to keep the T-coil in a vertical orientation.

Accessories to hear plug into Loop Listener:

- ✓ Earbuds that have the standard mini plug as used with i-Pods, MP3 players and cell phones can be used.
- ✓ Ear speakers are popular and rest outside the ear on the upper and lower earlobes.
- ✓ Lightweight headphones can be used.

Note: Many people prefer to own their own listening accessory for **sanitary reasons**. Ask your facility about how people can purchase their own listening accessories such as earbuds, ear speakers or lightweight headphones.

Will my hearing aids work with loops anywhere?

The signs shown on the right indicate a room or venue has a hearing loop. Hearing aids work with loops certified to meet IEC Standard 60118-4 anywhere around the globe. Wisconsin has 710 hearing loops as of February 2019 with most located on the eastern side of the state.



HEARING LOOP INSTALLED
Switch hearing aid to T-coil



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Interested in joining or starting an HLAA Chapter?

Contact HLAA or "My Hearing Loop."