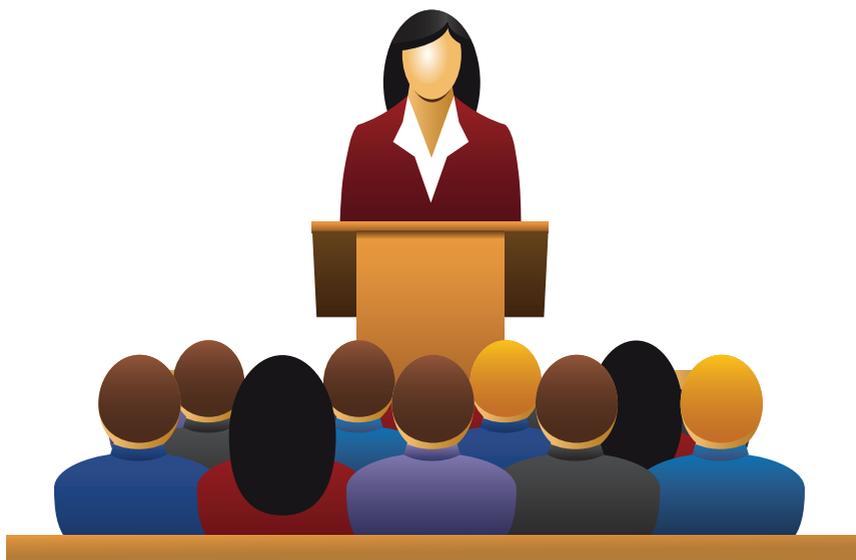




Accessible events guidelines and checklist for organisers, chairs, speakers and MCs

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If you would like to receive this publication in another format, please phone 1300 366 731 or contact the National Relay Service 13 36 77 if required.

This document is also available on the Internet at www.dhs.vic.gov.au/ds/disabilityact

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The following guide is designed to assist organisers improve the accessibility of events to increase the participation of people with a disability, including those with a vision impairment or hearing loss.

It aims to help you:

- Think about access and participation.
- Identify features that make it impossible or difficult for people with a disability to access or participate in an event.
- Understand what you can do to ensure the best possible access.
- Find further sources of advice, information and assistance.
- Be aware, in advance, of specific requirements people attending a meeting or event may have.
- Consider emergency procedures available at the venue.



Before distributing invitations, it is important to remember that access is not restricted to physical access to buildings; it includes access to written information and public announcements for people with a vision impairment or hearing loss.

The venue



As a starting point, only venues that allow people to enter, exit and move around the building with ease should be considered. The venue should offer accessible toilet facilities and, where possible, the event should be held on one floor only.

It is a good practice to check the venue in person before confirming a booking as many venue managers do not have a clear understanding of access features.

A particular issue for people with a hearing loss is background noise, including music and acoustics. This can be reduced by selecting a room with carpet and acoustic tiles on the ceiling and walls.



Checklist

	Yes	No
• <i>Have you visited the venue prior to sending invitations?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• <i>Is the venue accessible by public transport?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• <i>Have the attendees been informed about where the venue is, including any landmarks that may help them find it?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• <i>Have the attendees been informed about the venue itself, for example, the types of doorway entrances, ramps and lifts?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• <i>Are the venue's emergency procedures accessible?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• <i>Have attendees received written material in a preferred format prior to the event?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• <i>Is the venue a suitable size?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• <i>Is it adequately lit and well ventilated?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• <i>Is the room 'hearing friendly'?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• <i>Will you let the attendees know where the accessible toilets are?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The invitation



The invitation should always include a section asking if the attendee has any specific requirements, for example, seating, technical aids or hearing loops.

For example, the invitation could state:

'The venue is accessible for people with a physical disability and all handout materials will be available, where possible, in an accessible electronic format. Please use this form to let us know if you have any other requirements to enable you to participate fully.'



Checklist

- *Has the invitation included a section that asks if people have any specific requirements?*
- *Has a map with the venue location and directions been included with the invitation?*

Yes

No

Hearing loop



Also known as an induction loop or audio loop, this system creates an amplified signal that can be picked up by hearing aids, enabling people with a hearing impairment a greater opportunity to hear the speaker more clearly.

Support workers



Always ensure there are sufficient support workers or assistants at the event and let the attendees know someone will be able to assist them, and where they will be. If it is an outdoor event, vision-impaired attendees should be offered a description of the site and the best way to access it.

Checklist

- | | Yes | No |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| • <i>Are there sufficient support workers in attendance?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • <i>Will you advise attendees there will be people to assist them, and where to find them?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Issues for presenters, speakers and MCs to consider



There are other important points that presenters, speakers and chairs should consider:

- Speakers should always introduce themselves to attendees and when in smaller meetings go around the table and have other participants introduce themselves. The presenter should face the audience and keep their head up when speaking, as this allows the voice the best chance of being heard.
- Slow down speech a little and remember to use pauses between phrases and sentences to allow attendees with hearing loss a chance to process what they have heard and to keep up with what they hear.
- To assist with concentration, include regular short breaks in the agenda.
- Avoid looking up at PowerPoint screens when speaking as you will turn away from the microphone and the audience. Use either a roving microphone, or repeat the question when answering queries from the audience to make sure everyone hears both the question and answer.
- Limit the number of visuals and keep them simple with good colour contrast.



Checklist

- | | Yes | No |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| • <i>Have you arranged hearing loops?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • <i>Have you arranged amplified microphones and roving microphones?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • <i>Has all electronic equipment been checked to ensure it is in good working order?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • <i>Have you limited visuals?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • <i>Are the visuals easy to understand with good colour contrast?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • <i>Have you scheduled regular short breaks?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Catering



Some venues have a policy of only providing participants with a self-service buffet at lunchtime. A person with a mobility or vision impairment may find it difficult, or impossible, to carry or hold food from a buffet selection and to eat without having their plate supported on a table.

Flexible drinking straws should be available on request.



Checklist

- | | Yes | No |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| • <i>Have you considered serving food at a table rather than a buffet?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • <i>Are flexible drinking straws available if required?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • <i>Will you advise participants that support workers are available to assist with lunch if needed?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Other issues to consider

- If a guest speaker has a vision impairment, they may need assistance to face the audience for their presentation.
- Organise for jugs of water and glasses to be placed on speakers' tables.
- Ask how, or if, you can assist an attendee.
- Ask a vision-impaired attendee their preferred method in guiding.
- Address a vision-impaired attendee by name, and identify yourself.
- Never leave a vision-impaired attendee without telling them.
- For a person with a hearing loss, find out their preferred method of communication.



- If a guide dog is present, always address the guide dog user, not the dog.
- Never pat a guide dog in harness without permission from the guide dog user.
- Advise the guide dog user if there are other guide dogs at the event, and where they are.
- Advise the guide dog user if there is a dog run, and where it is located.
- Arrange for dog water bowls to be refilled throughout the function.

