

# Suggestions for Communication Access for the Consumer with Hearing Loss

This information is focused on assistive listening devices and systems. Please consult the end of the document for information on American Sign Language interpreters and Communication Access Real -time Transliteration (CART).

## Before going to an event: (theater, museum, performance, etc.)

1. Communication access is your civil right . Be prepared to offer documentation . It is available at this link: <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/laws-regs/mcdhh/ada-title-3-public-accommodations.html>
2. Research what is available at the location before you buy your ticket or go to the location.
3. Visit the web site and look for access icons and information on accommodations. Before you go, confirm everything!



TTY



Assistive  
Listening  
Systems



Closed  
Captioning



Open  
Captioning



FM Systems Available  
Infrared Receivers  
Available

4. At the location, check for signage that indicates what is available . (Same icons as in #3)
5. Use email addresses posted on web sites for inquiries.
6. Call or visit location to find out about communication access, special seating, and to identify on-site contact person if problems arise.
7. Become familiar with internet resources for community event listings such as the following:

Captionfish <http://www.captionfish.com/>

MoPix <http://ncam.wgbh.org/mopix/> (captioned movie listings)

MassDeafTerp [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Mass\\_Deaf-Terp/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Mass_Deaf-Terp/)

MCDHH online Resource Directory <http://www.mass.gov/mcdhh>

8. Visit the location in advance to try out the technology.
9. Purchase tickets for access directly from the organization.
10. Confirm that your seating allows you to benefit from the specific accommodations provided for you. Ask for seating where equipment functions best or that is located near interpreters.
11. Request that equipment be tested and that the batteries are charged prior to event. Request back up batteries. Ask if back up equipment is available.

## **When you arrive for the event:**

1. Arrive 20 to 30 minutes early.
2. Pick up your equipment and test it. Ask for seating where equipment functions best. Trouble shoot with staff if problems exist (dead battery, interference, devices not plugged in, etc) – OR – Locate interpreters and/or special seating.
3. Ask if any staff know ASL.
4. Ask to speak with manager, access coordinator, sound people, technical support, engineer on site – whoever is present who understands the equipment .

## **If equipment doesn't work:**

1. Report the malfunction to manager or designated staff.
2. Request that staff check the device. The consumer should limit “tinkering” with equipment, especially without a staff person present. There could be liability issues and the consumer could be blamed for damage. Combining the expertise of staff and the consumer can help with problem solving.
3. Check settings and power source.
4. Check your own hearing aid settings and batteries .

## **Follow up: (In the event of a denial of appropriate accommodations)**

1. First, a written complaint should be sent to the organization documenting the lack or denial of appropriate access.
2. Request a refund for the cost of the tickets if it is not offered.
3. If the organization does not respond to your complaint, contact the Commission on Disabilities and the ADA Coordinator, at the town hall, in the town where the organization is located. These can be found at the following links: <http://www.mass.gov/mod/MunicipalCommissionList.html> ,  
<http://www.mass.gov/mod/MunicipalADACoordinators.html>
4. If further action to obtain access is still required, write a formal letter to the US Department of Justice and copy the relevant state agency such as the Massachusetts Office on Disability, Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, and the Architectural Access Board. Filing a complaint with the Federal Government is a lengthy process. So, whenever possible, seek resolution through the previous steps listed above.

## **Follow up: (In the event of appropriate accommodations)**

1. Write a note acknowledging the job well done!
2. Share information with friends and agencies with an interest in accessible venues.
3. Provide information on newsletters and web sites that list accessible venues for advertisement.

## **CART and American Sign Language Interpreters:**

<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/consumer/disability-services/services-by-type/deaf-hh/cart/>

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