

## When hearing aids are not enough



Today's modern, well-fitted hearing instruments can, in most cases, improve a person's ability to hear.

However, they don't compensate for the background noise and reverberation in crowded public places – such as cinemas, airports or churches. Nor do they compensate for the distance a person is from the source of the sound – such as in a lecture theatre.

Increasing the volume of hearing instruments doesn't solve the problem, because that also increases the level of background noise.

This is where assistive listening systems help.

## Amplification & Clarity

Assistive listening systems eliminate the effects of distance, reverberation and background noise, providing amplification and clarity.

Various assistive listening systems are available to improve communication and participation in public facilities.

Each system has a transmitter that sends sound to a receiver wirelessly. There are three types of system:

### 1 Audio Loop

'Loops' are the most common listening system, often found in churches, cinemas, theatres and other public places.

The sound is picked up by a small device called a telecoil, which is part of the listener's personal hearing instrument.

When you are in a place where an audio loop has been installed, switch your hearing instrument to 'T' to hear the sound much more clearly and without background noise.

### 2 Infrared & 3 FM

Infrared and FM systems are used in classrooms, courts and multi-screen theatres. They require a special receiver to be worn by each person. This receiver may be worn as a set of headphones, or it may be connected to the listener's personal hearing instruments.

To obtain a receiver for use in a place where an infrared or FM assistive listening system has been installed, contact the customer service staff. At educational centres, contact the disability co-ordinator.

## Using a telecoil

Most Behind The Ear (BTE) and some In The Ear (ITE) hearing instruments include a telecoil that allows the user to access assistive listening systems.

The function switch or remote control on your hearing instrument may have some of these functions:

**M:** Hearing instrument switched on and microphone connected. Use this function for normal use.

**T:** Hearing instrument switched on and telecoil connected. Use this function where an Audio Loop has been installed, or when you talk on the phone. You will be able to pick up the sound with minimal disturbance from background noise.

**MT:** Hearing instrument switched on with microphone and telecoil working together. This gives you the best of both worlds.



## Hear There Everywhere

Listening Systems are increasingly provided in places such as:

- ✦ Airports
- ✦ Banks
- ✦ Churches
- ✦ Cinemas
- ✦ Concert Halls
- ✦ Convention Centres
- ✦ Court Rooms
- ✦ Government Departments
- ✦ Hospitals
- ✦ Libraries
- ✦ Meeting Halls
- ✦ Museums
- ✦ Rest Homes
- ✦ Sports Arenas
- ✦ Theatres
- ✦ Universities

## Supported by law

The Building Act 1991 requires that new or extensively renovated public buildings be accessible for hearing impaired people by having an assistive listening system installed. This includes:

- ✦ public buildings with space for at least 250 people
- ✦ all theatres, cinemas, public halls and
- ✦ assembly spaces in old peoples' homes occupied by more than 20 people.

If you know of a large public building that does *not* have an assistive listening system installed, and you would like to see this building made more accessible to hearing-impaired people, contact the National Foundation for the Deaf Inc. (address on next panel).

The Foundation may be able to encourage the owners or occupiers of the building to install an assistive listening system.



## Further Information

Detailed information is available in *Assistive Listening Systems – A Guide for Architects and Consultants*.

To obtain a copy, contact:

The Oticon Foundation in New Zealand  
142 Lambton Quay, Box 9128, Wellington  
Phone 0800 OTICON (684 266)  
Fax 0800 FAX OTICON (329 684)  
Email [info@oticon.org.nz](mailto:info@oticon.org.nz), Website [www.oticon.org.nz](http://www.oticon.org.nz)



This sign indicates that there are assistive listening systems installed.



For further information, and for other sources of available hearing help in your community, contact:

The National Foundation for the Deaf Inc.  
127 Vincent Street  
Box 5593, Wellesley Street, Auckland  
Phone (09) 307 2922  
Fax (09) 307 2923  
Email [enquiries@nfd.org.nz](mailto:enquiries@nfd.org.nz)  
Website [www.nfd.org.nz](http://www.nfd.org.nz)

# Sound Access

**an introduction to assistive  
listening systems**

*The  
National  
Foundation  
for the  
Deaf Inc.*

the oticon foundation