

Keeping Healthy – Guidelines When Using Orientation & Mobility Techniques

Attention to Health

Many Orientation and Mobility (O&M) techniques used by individuals with vision impairment, legal blindness or deafblindness involve touching of canes, doors, handrails, walls and more in both public and private locations; and also at times require close person to person contact. The following guidelines, with attention to reducing the possibility of contacting and/or spreading bacteria, germs and viruses, offer suggestions for everyone's health and safety.

General Suggestions for Keeping Healthy:

Follow Manufacturer's Instructions for Cleaning and Sanitation of Surfaces

- Always follow the manufacturer recommendations for care, cleaning, sanitation, and maintenance information of regularly touched surfaces such as handrails, furniture, walls, door knobs, and more in private spaces.
- Contact customer service with any specific questions regarding which cleaning and sanitizing products are safe to use for the item or surface.

Handwashing

- Whenever possible, prior to and after use of Human Guide, Trailing, Protective Techniques, Cane or Adaptive Cane use and/or other orientation and mobility techniques, individual (and guide) should wash hands for 20 seconds, following the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines for proper hand washing.
- If soap and water is not readily available, hand sanitizer or hand sanitizing wipes with at least 60% alcohol should be used.

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Wear Gloves, Use Elbow if Practical/Possible in Public Spaces to Open Doors

- Especially when in public spaces if practical and/or possible, wear washable gloves for touching doors, buttons, handrails, etc.
- Be sure not to touch your face with the gloves and store in a separate small bag so as not to touch other belongings when out. Wash regularly after use.

Human Guide

Although cough etiquette suggests covering a cough or sneeze into the elbow/upper sleeve, it must be noted that individuals while using human guide are often gripping this same area (that many use to shield a cough or sneeze).

- Guide should be prepared with disposable tissues readily available, and whenever practical and possible, use the tissue to cover a sneeze or cough.
- Should a guide need to use the upper sleeve to cover a sneeze or cough, if practical/possible, a clothing change should be made, or an additional outer layer should then be worn by the guide to cover the upper sleeve in order to protect the individual who is touching this area while being guided.
- Disposable sleeves can also be worn to cover the upper arm. In order to remove the sleeve when needed and not self-contaminate or contaminate others, please:
 - Wearing nitrile/disposable gloves peel the sleeve away from the top, turning it inside out.
 - Roll the sleeve into a bundle and discard in garbage bin.
 - To remove gloves, grasp the outside edge near the wrist.
 - Peel the glove away from the hand, turning the glove inside out. Hold it in the opposite gloved hand.
 - Slide an ungloved finger under the wrist of the remaining glove, then peel it off from the inside, creating a “bag” for both used gloves. Discard in garbage bin.
- Extra attention must be paid to hand washing following CDC guidelines to wash for 20 seconds, or use of hand sanitizer or hand sanitizing wipes with at least 60% alcohol for both individual and guide.
- Extra attention and care must also be paid, especially if the guide, during the course of a day, guides multiple individuals.
- The individual who is being guided may also choose to wear washable gloves if practical/possible.

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Trailing

Trailing incorporates the use of surfaces such as handrails, tables and walls in order to orient and direct an individual's route. These surfaces should be cleaned prior to use.

- Follow cleaning instructions of the surface manufacturer and contact with any cleaning and sanitation questions.
- General cleaning guidelines include use of liquid soap, warm water and a clean soft cloth to wipe the trailing surface for at least 20 seconds in each area and dry thoroughly with a clean cloth.
- Alternatively wipe the surface with a Clorox, Lysol or similar disinfecting wipe for removing bacteria, germs and viruses with at least 60% alcohol, and let air dry.
- Trailing surfaces should be cleaned multiple times daily year-round, with extra cleaning as needed during cold and flu season.

Self-Protective Techniques

Many individuals hold an object (i.e. basket) or push a device (i.e. cart, wheelchair, walker, adaptive mobility device) in order to protect themselves when walking through open space in a familiar environment. These objects and handles should be cleaned prior to use.

- Follow cleaning instructions for the objects and handles of the devices from manufacturer(s) and contact with any cleaning and sanitation questions.
- General cleaning and sanitation guidelines are same as that for Trailing surfaces including use of warm water and soap and/or disinfecting wipes.
- Objects and handles should be cleaned multiple times daily year-round, with extra cleaning as needed during cold and flu season.
- When objects and devices are not being used, store in a clean location.

Folding Canes, Long Canes and Adaptive Mobility Devices

- Please see MCB/DDS Partnership “Focus” resource:

All Clean - Keeping Glasses, Canes, Visual Aids, Cell Phones and Devices Spotless and Sanitized

<https://www.focusonvisionandvisionloss.org/downloadable-resources--videos.html>

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Resources

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention Guidelines for Handwashing

- <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>

Disposable Gloves

- https://www.safetysupplyamerica.com/category/2155/food-safety/disposable-sleeves?qclid=EAlalQobChMIxrCV_fyp6AIVBG6GCh26YAJgEAAYASAAEqLc1_D_BwE

Donning and Removing of Personal Protective Equipment

- <https://www.infectioncontroltoday.com/personal-protective-equipment/donning-and-removing-ppe-infection-prevention>

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