



For Welcoming People with Hearing Difficulties

<<Foreword to Issuance of this Manual>>

With the advent of an aging society, **the creation of an environment that enables all people**, including seniors and people with disabilities – whose market segments are projected to grow in the future – **to enjoy traveling safely, securely and comfortably** is an important point in expanding the tourism industry in Okinawa. This manual was prepared to offer fundamentals for welcoming seniors and people with disabilities, in particular. We hope that you will use this manual when attending to seniors and people with disabilities in particular, which will **promote the creation of an environment in which all people can enjoy traveling with peace of mind**.

1. Four “Barriers”

It is said that **four “barriers”** exist in the lives of seniors or people with disabilities when they go out, travel, or engage in social activities. When considering how to welcome them, it is necessary to understand the presence of these “barriers” and remove obstacles.

- Physical barriers:** Barriers caused physically in roads, buildings, homes, stations, etc.
- Cultural and Information Barriers:** Barriers caused by the failure to provide information essential for daily life and transportation.
- Institutional Barriers:** Barriers caused mainly by institutional restraints when people receive education, find employment, and lead self-reliant lives in their community.
- Barriers in Consciousness:** Barriers caused by discrimination or prejudice against people with disabilities, or misunderstanding due to lack of understanding of them.

2. Attitude Toward and Key Points to Attending to Guests

- Respect each person’s dignity.**
Respecting the dignity of seniors and people with disabilities is the basis of attending to them. They do not need any special treatment. You should attend to them in the same way as you do with other people. Instead of talking to the companion or caregiver, communicate with seniors or people with disabilities directly.
- Understand correctly and respond to necessary assistance.**
Each person has different levels of mental and physical functions and disability, and need different support. Avoid being judgmental but ask them to fully understand what kind of support they need. Avoid forcing support on them, but it is important to talk to proactively and communicate with them, to understand their needs. Make sure to grasp what they need and respond appropriately.
- Leave what they can do by themselves to them and avoid doing things you may not be capable of.**
Even if people are old or have disabilities, they may not need all kinds of support. Respect their autonomous actions and watch over them when they do not need support. If you do not think that you can handle the situation on your own, avoid taking chances and ask people around you for cooperation.
- Provide information on facilities and equipment.**
People know the best the degree of their physical and mental conditions and disability, as well as necessary support. Whereas it is important to understand and respond to needs, it is also important to provide detailed information so that seniors and people with disabilities can make their own decisions.

If you do not know what to do when attending to people, talk to them by using two “magic words.”
 *When you first meet: **“Is there something I can help you with?”**
 * When you do not know what to do when attending them: **“How do you usually handle this?”**

3. Characteristics of People with Hearing Difficulties

[Characteristics of the difficulties]

- ◆ How much can be heard varies depending on the person with the hearing difficulties. Some cannot hear at all, some can hear with only one ear, whereas others cannot hear high-pitched sounds, and still others wear a hearing aid to support hearing.
- ◆ Some people with hearing difficulties go out with a hearing guide dog.
- ◆ Some people may have difficulty in pronouncing words correctly due to their hearing difficulties.

[Inconveniences in daily life]

- ◆ Since it is difficult to judge by appearance, people with such difficulties may have trouble having other people recognize their situation, which can cause misunderstanding and inconvenience.
Example: When people greet or talk to people with hearing difficulties, the person doing the greeting may not receive a response and then feel ignored.
- ◆ People with hearing difficulties have difficulty in recognizing information through voices or chimes and other sounds.
It is important to convey information in visual form, such as letters and illustrations, to people with hearing difficulties.
- ◆ People with hearing difficulties have difficulty in verbal communication. Even people with a hearing aid cannot necessarily hear everything.
- ◆ People with hearing difficulties may find it hard to communicate without seeing the facial expression of the people they are talking to, such as when talking over a counter or to a person wearing a face mask.

[ABCs of communication]

- ◆ **Talk to people with hearing difficulties in a position that allows you to be in their sight.**
- ◆ Make it a rule to get into their sight and **make eye contact**. Avoid talking to them from behind or touching them without warning. Choose a communication method that best suits the needs of people with hearing difficulties.
- ◆ Confirm communication methods, such as spoken language, communication in writing, body language, gestures, and writing in the air.
When you communicate in writing or other similar methods, focus on the points and keep it concise.

Some people with hearing difficulties can understand conversations to a certain degree by lip-reading. **Talk with attentive eye contact**. Additionally, **use writing or gestures** and check whether you are correctly understood.

[Introduction of various signs related to hearing difficulties]

Displaying them at the counter will make users feel comfortable.

Ear Sign



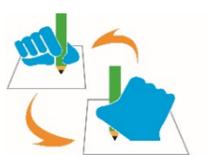
(General incorporated association) All Japan Association of Hard of Hearing and Late-Deafened People
<https://www.zennancho.or.jp/>

Sign Language Sign



(General incorporated foundation) Japanese Federation of the Deaf <http://www.jfd.or.jp/>

Communication-in-Writing Sign



[Hearing Dogs (assistance dogs for people with physical disabilities)]

Some people with hearing difficulties go out with a hearing dog.

- ◆ Among assistance dogs for people with physical disabilities (guide dogs, service dogs, and hearing dogs), the “hearing dog” informs people with hearing difficulties of the existence of necessary sound and takes them to where the sound is coming from.
- ◆ Even if people are with an assistance dog, speak to them and ask whether they need support.
- ◆ Inform people with an assistance dog if their dog causes trouble to people around them, such as where the dog is sitting.
- ◆ When you are asked where the dog may defecate, confirm the preferred place and guide them there.
- ◆ Since there are people who are allergic to dogs and people who do not like dogs, ask people around if it is alright before taking a seat.



4. Points and Responses when Attending to Guests

① Learn and inform people of the current status of the facility

- ◆ Check facility information in detail, such as **the status of routes and whether there are steps or bumps.**
- ◆ When providing information, **offer as much detailed information as possible** to ensure people with hearing difficulties can decide whether they can use the facility.
- ◆ If there are barrier-free related equipment and devices in the facility, also provide information on the **type and number of the devices and how to borrow them.**

② Learn and inform people of the current status of facilities in the vicinity

- ◆ Check detailed information on barriers and barrier-free status of various facilities in the vicinity related to regional tourism, such as tourist attractions, accommodations, commercial buildings, public services and other places, and **offer information on the barrier-free status in the region.**
- ◆ It is helpful when attending to guests if you confirm as much information as possible about services that are available in facilities in the neighborhood, such as the dispatch of care-givers and helpers.
- ◆ It is important to **check information on access to the accommodation** when arriving from railway stations or airports.
- ◆ Regarding information on access and traffic, provide detailed information, such as the barrier-free status in stations and airports, distance and travel times from stations and airports, in addition to offering a map. **(Also, check information distributed by transportation companies.)**

③ Considerations in communication

- ◆ **Firstly, explain the barrier-free situation**, such as services and routes in the facility to guests who use the facility.
- ◆ For information on the facility, prepare brochures, etc., that **present visual information.**
- ◆ Some people are not good at taking in lots of information in a short period of time, so avoid using technical terms, jargon or abbreviations and **lay out information slowly, clearly and concisely in a way to ensure it can be understood.**
- ◆ It can be assumed that some guests will miss explanations, fail to ascertain information, or find it difficult to get their bearings. Therefore, pay special attention and **hand them a memo about important information.**
- ◆ **Speak while checking** whether your information is being conveyed properly.
- ◆ People with hearing difficulties may feel tired after “concentrating on watching you” while trying to follow your explanation. Be attentive and take a short break.
- ◆ When you speak, **make sure to maintain eye contact at all times.**
- ◆ There are many terms and words that are easier to understand if using body language. **Speak with your body and use hand gestures.**
- ◆ While giving due consideration to privacy to the extent necessary, confirm **whether guests have necessary information, and accurately understand and respond to the situation.**
Do not become complacent that guests have understood information without confirming with them.
- ◆ Some people may try to understand your speech by lip-reading. Take off your face mask when you speak.
- ◆ When you receive a payment, special attention should be paid to the conditions of guests, such as indicating the amount of money clearly in such manners as “pointing at the column that shows the amount” and “writing and presenting the amount on a separate sheet.”

④ Considerations in Attending to Guests

- ◆ When people with hearing difficulties make an inquiry in advance, they often use email or fax. Send your replies by email or fax.
- ◆ **Take guests to their seats while speaking to them through a writing board for communication, lipreading, etc.**
- ◆ Carry a pen and notebook for communication-in-writing at all times just in case.
The mail function of mobile phones is also often used, so make the best of it.
- ◆ When communicating in writing, it will take time if you try to write your speech word by word. **Write as concisely as possible.**
- ◆ When calling or attracting the attention of people with hearing difficulties, tap the desk with your fingers.
Get their attention through the vibration.
- ◆ When dining, make sure to avoid mistakes by hand gestures, such as **pointing to the dish they want.**

⑤ Considerations in guestrooms

- ◆ As people with hearing difficulties find it hard to communicate through internal phones, **establish a system that enables just a call to the front desk to send a staffer to their room, and inform them of that system when introducing the facility.**
- ◆ Some people cannot understand information just through verbal explanation, so prepare memos or materials that explain how to use equipment or devices.
- ◆ The television is a valuable source of information, so people with hearing disabilities **need to view it with subtitles.**
Check for the availability of the subtitle button beforehand and, if there is a request from a person with hearing disabilities, special attention needs to be paid to loan them such a remote control that is compatible with the TV.
Check how to view subtitled TV programs beforehand in case you are asked.



⑥ Considerations in case of emergency

- ◆ As people with hearing difficulties cannot catch announcements or emergency alarms in the facility to call for evacuation in a disaster, they may miss out on urgent information.
It is required to establish contact information and make arrangements in advance, such as **asking them not to use the door chain in their room.**
- ◆ **Confirm with guests beforehand whether they need assistance in evacuation, how to assist, how to contact, etc.,** in case of an earthquake or fire.
- ◆ Unless guests give a room preference, **choose guestrooms that enable the guests to exit easily in case of emergency.**
- ◆ In the event of an emergency, such as an earthquake or a fire, the spread of information and evacuation tend to be delayed. Therefore, it is important to make **assumptions, preparations, and have mental preparedness in advance.**
- ◆ Check how to assist guests and the division of roles among staff during evacuation drills and similar occasions. It is important to **consider how to deal with emergencies on a daily basis.**

⑦ Prepare useful tools

- ◆ Prepare necessary equipment to the extent possible for accommodation.

[Examples of barrier-free equipment and tools]

- Board for communication-in-writing
- Flash bell *
- UD talk *, etc.

* A “Flash bell” is a device that responds to the chime of a room or the ring tone of a phone and notifies the user with light. It converts audio information into visual information.

* “UD Talk” is an “app for supporting communications and visualizing conversations.” When you talk to a smartphone your voice is transformed into text to facilitate communication with people with hearing difficulties.



⑧ Help desk

- ◆ If you have any questions or problems with attending to seniors or people with disabilities, read this manual. If you are still not sure of what to do, **contact the “Tourist Information Center for People with Disabilities and Seniors.”**
- ◆ The Tourist Information Center for People with Disabilities and Seniors is a help desk, located in the Naha Airport, Kokusai Street, and Naha Bus Terminal, to support seniors and people with disabilities. The center offers information on barrier-free facilities in Okinawa, such as where wheelchair-accessible facilities are located, to help ease the anxiety of travelers before and during travel.

[Tourist Information Center for People with Disabilities and Seniors]

- Tel: 098-858-7760
- Naha Airport: Arrival lobby on the 1st floor of Naha Airport Domestic Passenger Terminal, 150 Kagamizu, Naha City, Okinawa 901 0142

<<References>>

- Manual for Welcoming Seniors and People with Disabilities**
Issued by: Japan Tourism Agency, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (March 2018)
Refer to: https://www.mlit.go.jp/kankocho/news06_000352.html
- Barrier-Free Tourism Manual by Industry --Toward Becoming a Fun-Filled and Amicable Tourist Destination for Everyone--**
Issued by: Tourism Promotion Division, Department of Culture, Tourism and Sports, Okinawa Prefectural Government (March 2016) Refer to: <http://okibf.jp/pref/manual/>