CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS · 2011

Accessibility in State Park Interpretive Programs and Facilities

Sixth Edition

All Visitors Welcome

Accessibility in State Parks
Interpretive Programs and Facilities

Sixth Edition

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Preface to the 6th Edition

Welcome to the sixth edition of *All Visitors Welcome: Accessibility in State Park Interpretive Programs and Facilities*. This book has been designed as a handy reference to help park staff plan and deliver public programs that provide improved accessibility for all visitors. The three purposes of this handbook are:

1) to educate park staff about the most common disabilities—thereby improving their understanding of, and their ability to effectively communicate with—the entire audience;
2) to provide suggestions for making existing park interpretive programs more accessible to people with disabilities, so they can participate in and enjoy them together with their families and friends; and
3) to inform park staff of state and federal facility access requirements, along with additional suggestions applicable to park interpretive facilities.

Since the first edition was published in 1994, the field of accessibility has experienced many changes. As new laws are passed and terminology changes, California State Parks' Interpretation and Education Division updates and revises *All Visitors Welcome* to provide the field with the most current information. This helps ensure that our parks will continue to be welcoming and accessible for all visitors.

Each time this handbook is updated; it must also be reviewed by the Accessibility Section of the Acquisition and Development Division. For this sixth edition, we thank Wendy Martin and Jason Spann of the Accessibility Section for their extensive input.

What's new in this edition:

- The term Intellectually Disabled is increasingly being used to describe those who were previously referred to as "Mentally Retarded." This shift in terminology more accurately describes the condition, is less offensive, and is more commonly accepted by all stakeholders in America and in other countries, and many other reasons.
- This edition includes the addition of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and heart conditions to the section on mobility impairments, as they affect a person's mobility to the same degree as the other common disabling conditions described in the same section.
- In September 2010, the United States Department of Justice (USDOJ) adopted new standards. The new standards, known as the 2010 ADA Standards, are a combination of Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) and Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS). Mandatory compliance with the new standards is not required until March 2012. However, in most cases the Department is obligated to use these most recently revised standards immediately. For more information, see: Tucker Consent Decree (http://www.dralegal.org/cases/public_entities/tucker_v_ca_parks(1-26-06).php) and the ADA 2010 Revised Requirements (http://www.ada.gov/revised_effective_dates-2010.htm)

- The passage of the 21st Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010 now requires movie theaters to provide audio descriptive services. This requirement may be extended to other venues in the future. Therefore, to keep cost and technical requirements at a minimum, the Department encourages staff and partners of California State Parks to incorporate audio description when planning or creating visual media.

Acknowledgements

A very special thanks to Donna Pozzi and Mary Helmich for giving me the opportunity to research and write this handbook and for painstakingly editing all of my work.

I would also like to thank the California Department of Parks and Recreation field staff who responded with their interpretive ideas and examples to the survey sent out in January 1994. In alphabetical order by district, they are:

Angeles District: Theresa Armas; **Bay Area District:** Leander Tamoria; **Calaveras District:** Craig Burke, Chuck Grennell, Mel Kutsch, Rita Nunes, and Mary Willson; **Colorado Desert District:** Ken Smith and Homer Townsend; **Four Rivers District:** Bonnie Morse-West, Leon Smith, and Mary Stokes; **Gold Rush District**: Stacey French, Elsie Gillespie, Wendy Hawksworth, Rosanne McHenry, Leona McLean, Dave Nelson, Ray Patton, Laura Richard, Tom Tanner, Mike Tucker, and Pat Turse; **Marin District:** Nan Haynes, Randy Hogue, Angela Nowicki, and Patrick L. Robards; **Monterey District:** Esther Goodhue, Nedra Martinez, and Enrique Morales; **North Coast Redwoods District**: Barbara R. Conrad, John Jennings, Gary W. McLaughlin, Richard Wendt, Alan Wilkinson, and William L. Wisehart; **Northern Buttes District:** Tim Davis, Gerig Loomis, and Steve Moore; **Orange Coast District:** Mike Eaton and Rick Reisenhofer; **Russian River/Mendocino District:** Rick Royer; **San Joaquin District:** Yvette DeView, Mel Harada, Phillip Hill, Maury Morningstar, Joe V. Ramos, and Vincent Sereno; **San Luis Obispo Coast District:** Diane McGrath; **San Simeon District:** Shannon Harmon and Terri Osborn; **Santa Cruz District:** Jodi Apelt and Elizabeth Hammack; **Sierra District:** Janet Carle and Shirley Mraz.

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California Department of Parks and Recreation: Kenneth Jones, Park Stewardship; Theodore Crane, Park Services Division; Ray Ann Watson, Human Resources Office; Karen Collins, Marketing and Public Affairs; Cherilyn E. Widell, Office of Historic Preservation; Clifford Glidden, Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Division; Keith Demetrak, Planning, Acquisition and Local Services; Patricia Morris, Park Services Division; Valerie Bradshaw, Park Services Division; Philip Carey, Environmental Design Division; Emerson D. Mills, Environmental Design Division; Steve Radosevich, Northern Service Center; Larry Martz, Marketing and Public Affairs; Patricia Turse, Gold Rush District; Karen Beery, San Simeon District; Bob Lennan, San Simeon District; Shannon Harmon, San Simeon District; Jerry Howe, San Simeon District; Phillip F. Fish, Calaveras District

Other Agencies and Organizations: Charles Horel, California Department of Forestry; Robert Garrison, California Department of Fish and Game; Susan Peterson and Alice McGill, Nor Cal Center on Deafness; Eric Murray, Alta California Regional Center; Don O'Hare, Sacramento Society for the Blind.

—Erika Porter, 1994

Introduction

For more than a century, millions of visitors have come to California's state parks to enjoy this state's diverse natural and cultural resources. Many come to participate in our parks' educational and recreational programs—even though they may have difficulty understanding what is said, seeing what is discussed, and accessing the facilities. Unfortunately, thousands more have missed viewing scenic areas or experiencing cultural and historical sites because they feared, often justifiably, that such areas or facilities would be inaccessible to them.

The policy of the California Department of Parks and Recreation is to meet the recreational needs of all the people of California. The Department should provide an accessible environment where all visitors to the State Park System are given the opportunity to understand, appreciate, and participate in the state's cultural, historical, and natural heritage. Parks that offer visitors physical access to interpretive facilities and resources cannot be considered totally accessible unless the staff can also effectively communicate with visitors who have disabilities. Access to both facilities and programs is equally important.

In 1990 the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) became law. It directed that people with disabilities must be allowed to participate in regular programs and could not be discriminated against or treated separately because of their disabilities. In compliance with this law, state parks may not refuse to allow a person to participate in a service, program, or activity simply because the individual has a disability. Programs and services must occur in an integrated setting, unless separate or different measures are necessary to ensure equal opportunity. If a separate program is offered, individuals may still choose to participate in the standard program. Also, state parks must furnish auxiliary aids and services upon request. Although not considered disabled, persons with limited English proficiency and older adults are discussed in this handbook because they too can benefit from simple modifications or additions to interpretive programs and facilities.

It is important to keep in mind that the Department must view each program (including site access) in its entirety and make every reasonable attempt to ensure each program is readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities. Where the burden to create accessibility would fundamentally alter the nature of a program, the decision for non-compliance must be made by the head of the public entity. Non-compliance decisions must be accompanied by an on-file written statement of the reasons for reaching that conclusion. California State Parks must then create a suitable alternative that will nevertheless ensure that individuals with disabilities receive the benefits or services provided (film, slide show or photographs, for example). When making a decision for non-compliance, or when selecting a suitable alternative, consultation with a District Accessibility Resource Group (DARG) is recommended.

Please take the time to review and understand this handbook's recommendations and use them at every opportunity. As a volunteer, seasonal, or permanent employee, making interpretive programs and facilities accessible is your responsibility. Through your efforts, all visitors will be welcome and given the opportunity to have an enjoyable and satisfying park experience.

How to Use This Book

In order to derive the most benefit from the information presented in this book:

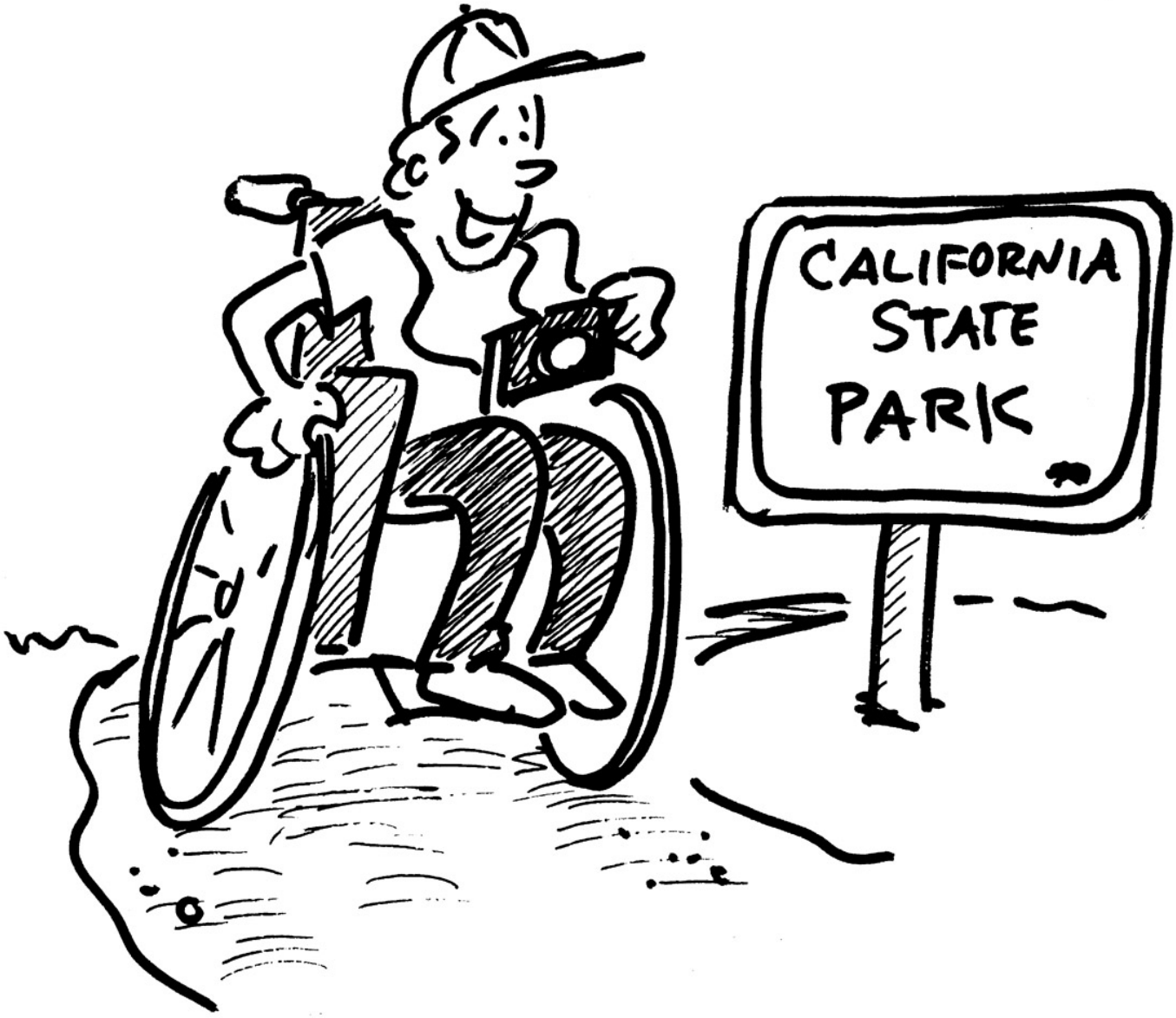
- Read the *Types of Disabilities* section to become more familiar with the most common disabilities.
- When planning a specific program, review the suggestions offered in the Interpretive Programs section.
- Refer to the *Interpretive Facilities* section to evaluate and improve access to the program's site.

For example, when preparing a campfire program, first review the *Types of Disabilities* section, then read about Campfire Programs, and familiarize yourself with the suggestions offered. In addition, read the section in *Interpretive Facilities* on Amphitheaters and Campfire Centers. Understand and evaluate the level of accessibility of the area, and, where possible, make necessary adjustments.

Suggestions are often repeated throughout the *Types of Disabilities* and Interpretive Programs sections because they may apply to more than one type of disability or program. The *Tips and Techniques Tables* beginning on page 155 show which suggestions are useful for different types of disabilities.

The following abbreviations are used throughout this handbook:
ADA - Americans with Disabilities Act
2010 ADA Standards - United States Department of Justice 2010 ADA Standards
CSPAG - California State Parks Accessibility Guidelines
CA - California State Accessibility Standards
DOJ- Department of Justice

Types of Disabilities



Overview

An “individual with a disability” is defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act as a person who:

- Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a “major life activity;” or
- Has a record of such an impairment; or
- Is regarded as having such an impairment.

The following pages identify and describe the more prevalent disabilities in society today. These are developmental disabilities (including cerebral palsy, intellectual disability, epilepsy and autism), hearing impairments, learning disabilities, mobility impairments, and visual impairments. The definition and common characteristics of each disability are described in this section, along with tips or “etiquette” on what to do when you meet a person with a specific disability.

Two additional headings in this section describe people with limited English proficiency and older adults. Although these audiences are not considered disabilities, they are included in this handbook because they constitute a large number of park visitors who may benefit from simple modifications or additions to interpretive programs and facilities.

A Few Words About Terminology

The term “handicapped” is no longer appropriate. Today, “person with a disability” is more widely used. This phrasing reflects a positive approach by putting people first instead of the disability. It is preferable to avoid reference to disability altogether; refer to a person by name, “Mr. Jones” or by a general description that we might use for anyone: “woman in the blue dress.” Where reference to a disability is necessary, other more positive examples include “woman who uses a walker,” “boy who has epilepsy,” “man with Down syndrome.” It is important to remember that people with disabilities are individuals who do not all act, think or move alike. Therefore, do not use group references such as “the disabled,” or “the intellectually disabled.” Do not use words that are degrading, such as crippled, defect, wheelchair-bound, retard, confined to a wheelchair, invalid, victim of, or suffering from.

Although generally unintended, terms such as “handicapped” and “disabled person” convey a label of less than equal. Although one’s approach to accomplishing tasks may vary, the goal of leading an enjoyable and productive life is universal. “Handicapped” and “disabled” are more appropriately reserved for, respectively, competitive games and non-functioning machinery. Use of these terms to mark parking and building entrances is no longer authorized by code. While existing signage with these terms remains posted in some locations, accessible building entries and parking spaces are now identified by signage with the term “accessible” and the International Symbol of Accessibility.

Many physical barriers are caused by attitudinal barriers resulting from misconceptions and unfamiliarity. The following sections define and describe some of the more common

disabilities. The intent is to increase knowledge and understanding of these disabilities so park staff can more effectively communicate with diverse audiences. A danger inherent in this approach is that once a person learns more about a particular disability, he or she may mistakenly tend to label and categorize individuals by their characteristics after observing and identifying their disabilities.

When a person is “group-labeled,” many expect that his or her actions must conform to the perceived image of that group. People’s personalities are not consumed by their disabilities. A disability is only one aspect—usually not the dominant one—of each individual. Everyone wants to be treated as a person with unique feelings, thoughts, experiences, and abilities. Remember to treat each park visitor as an individual.

Developmental Disabilities

The term “developmental disability” is used to describe those conditions that affect, or appear to affect, the mental and/or physical development of individuals. Disabilities included in this category are intellectual disabilities, cerebral palsy, autism, epilepsy, and, in some cases, head traumas.

In order to be considered a developmental disability, an individual’s condition must manifest before the age of 18, continue indefinitely, and represent a significant limitation for the individual.

Criterion One: The disability must originate sometime before 18 years of age.
Developmental disabilities are caused by trauma to the developing brain and nervous system. Examples of such trauma include:

- Childhood accidents and trauma (falls, near-drownings, burns, and child abuse);
- Genetic disorders (Down syndrome, Tay-Sachs disease);
- Toxic substance and drug poisoning (while the mother was pregnant or through ingestion during childhood);
- High-risk conditions in women and infants (these include pregnancy under the age of 15 or over age 35, infectious diseases during pregnancy, and delivery of very large or very small infants);
- Lead poisoning; and
- Metabolic disorders.

In many cases, it is difficult to determine the exact cause of the damage or the time the damage occurred.

The second criterion indicates that the condition will continue indefinitely or can be expected to continue indefinitely. An individual may become more independent or acquire new learning skills and behaviors, but the condition is still present nevertheless.

Finally, a developmental disability constitutes a severe impairment in the individual's ability to function in daily life. Life activities that may be affected are communication, learning, mobility, self-care, self-direction, economic self-sufficiency, and the capacity for independent living.

According to the California Department of Developmental Services, intellectual disability, epilepsy, and cerebral palsy are the most common of the developmental disabilities. Roughly 88 percent of people with a developmental disability have been diagnosed as having an intellectual disability, 26 percent have epilepsy, 24 percent have cerebral palsy, and less than 5 percent have autism. Obviously there is overlap among these disabilities. For example, a person diagnosed with autism may also have an intellectual disability; however, that does not mean that all people with an intellectual disability are autistic.

Autism

This relatively rare disorder is characterized by extreme withdrawal, absence of speech, lack of responsiveness to other people, repetitive motor behaviors, and abnormal responses to sensations. If you are providing a program for visitors who are autistic, it would be helpful to refer to the sections on learning disabilities and intellectual disabilities.

Epilepsy

Abnormal brain activity results in a seizure condition. Seizures may last from several seconds to several minutes. Depending on the type of seizure, the individual may or may not lose consciousness. Signs that a person is having a seizure range from staring into space to whole-body convulsions. Seizures are often controlled through the use of medications; however, it is important to be familiar with first aid procedures for seizures. Epilepsy alone does not inhibit communication; however, if combined with another disability, communication may be affected. Refer to those sections that may apply.

Cerebral Palsy

Cerebral palsy is a group of movement disorders that results from damage to the brain. "Cerebral" refers to the brain. "Palsy" refers to paralysis which accounts for the lack of muscle control associated with this disability. It is caused by damage to the brain occurring before, during, or shortly after birth. Causes of brain damage may include, but are not limited to mother's illness during pregnancy (such as German measles), Rh incompatibility (a blood conflict between mother and fetus), Lesch-Nyhan disease (a rare genetic defect), or fetal oxygen deprivation during pregnancy or delivery. Cerebral palsy may also occur early in life (before age 5) due to an accidental head injury or an illness such as meningitis, lead poisoning, or child abuse (repeated beatings or shaking).

Cerebral palsy can be mild; for example, a slight limp. It can also be severe with the total inability to control body movements. The five types of cerebral palsy: each displays

different symptoms, and each type is determined by where the damage occurred in the brain. It is possible for people to have a combination of these.

- Spastic - tense, contracted muscles—the most common type of cerebral palsy
- Athetoid - constant, uncontrolled motion of arms, legs, head, and eyes
- Ataxic - poor sense of balance, often causing falls and stumbles
- Rigidity - tight muscles and inability to move them
- Tremor - uncontrollable shaking, interfering with coordination

These symptoms vary from person to person, can be mild to severe, and may change over time in the same person. Individuals with cerebral palsy may also have another disability such as a hearing impairment, visual impairment, learning disability, or intellectual disability. Refer to other sections in this handbook for further information on these disabilities. **For program suggestions for people with cerebral palsy, refer to the tips for mobility impairments throughout the handbook.**

Many individuals with cerebral palsy have some degree of speech impairment, ranging from difficulty in expressing themselves, to trouble with speaking, to no speech at all. **There is no connection between the individual's speaking capabilities and the ability to understand**. Some people who cannot speak can understand everything they hear. For those with severe speaking difficulties, alternate forms of communication may be used. Such methods include simple gestures that demonstrate the person's needs and wants, communication boards or communication books containing words and symbols that can be pointed to by hand, and portable computers that are programmed with a comprehensive vocabulary that can be printed out or articulated by synthesized speech.

Cerebral Palsy Etiquette

- Communicate directly with a visitor with cerebral palsy. Do not speak through a third person.
- Offer assistance if it appears to be needed. If your offer is declined, do not insist. If your offer is accepted, ask how you can best help.
- Never take mobility aids away from individuals with a disability. Allow them to keep their crutches, walkers, canes, etc., close to themselves.
- If you have difficulty understanding a visitor who has a speech impairment, do not be afraid to ask them to repeat what they said. If you still do not understand, repeat the information you did understand, and ask them to repeat again.
- People with cerebral palsy may also have another disability. Refer to those sections that may apply.

Intellectual Disability

The American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities currently defines an intellectual disability as: “a disability characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills. This disability originates before the age of 18.”

Hundreds of biological and clinical causes of intellectual disability exist; however a cause cannot be identified for 75 percent of intellectual disability cases.

The majority of people with intellectual disabilities have ***mild*** disabilities. These people generally develop sufficient academic, social, and communication skills to live and work independently. By the time they reach adulthood, many individuals have successfully blended in with the general public with minimal or no supports.

Individuals who have ***moderate*** intellectual disability generally develop self-care skills but have more difficulty developing academic, social, and job-related skills. Many individuals do have jobs, typically in sheltered employment situations. They may live independently or in supervised group homes.

Individuals who have ***severe*** to ***profound*** intellectual disabilities are the most severely disabled. These individuals may have very limited communication and self-care skills. Often, they need to live in a highly controlled environment. The capacity for learning is there, usually for simple repetitive tasks.

Remember that individuals with intellectual disabilities have varying abilities and limitations. **Do not assume that an individual cannot perform a specific task or cannot participate in a discussion. Always attempt to include all visitors** in your tour or activities. If they decide they do not want to participate, they won’t. Some individuals have low self-esteem, a result of consistently being told that they are wrong or their answers are inappropriate. These individuals may be reluctant to try new or challenging activities for fear of failing. However, if they can be successfully guided through a somewhat challenging task, they may be inclined to keep trying more difficult activities.

Intellectual Disability Etiquette

- Address and treat adults with intellectual disabilities as adults.
- Communicate directly with the individual with an intellectual disability and not through a third person.
- Some individuals with intellectual disabilities may have speech impairments. If you have difficulty understanding visitors, do not be afraid to tell them and ask them to repeat themselves.
- When giving directions or instructions, speak slowly and clearly. Keep your sentences short.
- People with intellectual disabilities may have another disability. Refer to those sections that may apply.

Hearing Impairments

Hearing impairments vary greatly from mild hearing loss to profound deafness. The term “hard-of-hearing” describes those who have mild to moderate hearing loss. Mild hearing loss includes those who are able to hear everything except very high-pitched sounds. Moderate hearing loss describes people unable to hear a conversation without amplification. “Deaf” includes people with severe to profound hearing loss, who are unable to hear anything but the loudest sounds, such as a jet airplane.

Hearing loss can occur before birth (congenital) or anytime after birth (adventitious). Factors that contribute to hearing impairments include injury, medication, illness, aging, sudden or prolonged exposure to loud noise, and genetic factors.

People with hearing impairments are generally dependent on visual cues for communication. The degree of dependence is based on the severity of the hearing loss and whether or not they wear a hearing aid. Speech-reading, formerly known as lip-reading, involves watching lip movements, facial expressions, eye movements, and body gestures. These visual cues assist individuals with hearing impairments in understanding what is being said and in what context. Some people with hearing impairments are excellent speech-readers; however, the majority are not. According to Nancy Sheetz, author of *Orientation to Deafness*, nearly 50 percent of speech sounds are not visibly detectable; for example, i, e, g, h, a, and k. Some sounds look the same when they are spoken, as is the case with p, b, and m. To better understand this, try watching yourself in the mirror as you talk to see just how many words are hard to decipher. For individuals who are hard-of-hearing, speech-reading assists their comprehension of sounds they do hear.

Many people with hearing impairments communicate by reading and writing. Individuals who were exposed to language before their hearing loss usually are more proficient in reading, while those who were born deaf and who do not have a language base to draw from rarely become skilled in reading. Refer to the *Publications Guidelines* section on page 167 when producing written materials for interpretive programs. ***It is important to remember that levels of intelligence are not related to reading abilities.***

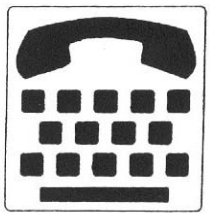
According to the Americans with Disabilities Act, a public entity must provide appropriate auxiliary aids and services to ensure that communication with individuals who have a disability is as effective as communication with others without visible indications of a disability. Auxiliary aids and services for people with hearing impairments include assistive listening devices, qualified interpreters, video captioning decoders, and telecommunications devices for deaf persons (TTY and TDD).

Various forms of amplification may be used to compensate for some hearing loss; however, for profound deafness, amplification is not helpful. Less than five percent of individuals with hearing impairments use a hearing aid. The majority of visitors with hearing impairments can benefit from provided assistive listening devices. The devices may or may not be used in conjunction with a hearing aid. Refer to the *Assistive Listening Systems* section on page 17 for more information.

People who are hard-of-hearing or who are educated in the “oral” method may request an oral interpreter. Oral interpretation is an art that involves inaudibly mouthing the words as they are presented by a speaker. Oral interpreters are able to communicate the visibly indistinguishable sounds previously mentioned.

People who are deaf may communicate with sign language. American Sign Language (ASL) is a visual-gestural language with its own vocabulary and syntax. Another type of sign language is Signed Exact English. The interpreter signs words exactly as they are spoken. Sign language interpreters may be hired to communicate to park visitors. However, they are legally required only when requested in advance. Special events planners may also want to consider hiring a sign language interpreter when anticipated attendance is high. For more information, refer to the *Special Events* section on page 121. When working with a qualified interpreter, there are some general rules to follow, see *Working with an Oral or Sign Language Interpreter* section on page 15.

A teletypewriter (TTY), or telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), is a unit consisting of a typewriter-like keyboard and a coupler that hooks up to a standard telephone and converts it into a visual communication system. A TTY only communicates with other TTYs. The sender types a message on the keypad, and the letters are converted into high-pitched beeping sounds, which are then transmitted through the telephone line. The receiver’s TTY converts the signal back to letters that are then displayed on the screen. ***Facilities providing a TTY should display a sign containing the International TTY Symbol (shown here), along with directions to the TTY location.***



The telephone company offers a relay service for TTY users to call any telephone within the United States. It also allows a person without a TTY to call a TTY user. Call the California Relay Service at 711 for more information.

Hearing Impairments Etiquette

- Make sure you have the visitors' attention before beginning to speak. You may need to lightly tap them on the shoulder or wave to get their attention.
- Have pencils and paper handy to communicate with visitors who are hearing impaired.
- Speak directly to visitors with hearing impairments. Do not talk through a third person.
- When talking one-on-one with a visitor who is hearing impaired, maintain eye contact. If you turn away, speech-reading becomes difficult, or they may think the conversation is over.
- Speak clearly and in a normal volume unless you are asked to speak louder. Do not "mouth" your words, as this makes speech-reading difficult.
- Do not worry about using words like "hear" or "listen" around people with hearing impairments.
- Use sign language if possible. Visitors will usually appreciate your attempts to communicate with them. However, it is not appropriate to request a family member to provide sign language interpretation. A certified professional must be hired when an interpreter has been requested in advance,
- Be aware that some visitors with hearing impairments may have a hearing guide dog accompanying them. These dogs are trained to alert their owners to sounds and situations. Hearing dogs are legal service animals and are allowed in park areas and facilities.
- Find out how you can best assist each individual. As with all disabilities, there is a wide variation of abilities and limitations. .

Working with an Oral or Sign Language Interpreter

Arrange for a qualified oral or sign language interpreter, when one is requested in advance by a visitor. Listed in the *Resource Directory* section, page 174, are organizations which offer services to people who are hearing impaired.

- Meet with the interpreter ahead of time to discuss the content of the tour.
- When presenting a program, allow the interpreter to stand up front and to the side of you.
- When moving from exhibit to exhibit, allow the interpreter enough time to return to this

position before you begin to speak. Also, be sure to allow enough time for visitors to look at the exhibits after you finish talking. Remember, they were watching the sign language interpreter as you spoke about the exhibit.

- Have the interpreter stand in front of a solid background, under good light, in a place that provides an unobstructed view for the audience.
- Route your tour through areas with good lighting.
- Do not talk while you are walking. This creates difficulty for the interpreter.
- Place yourself so the object you are discussing is between you and the interpreter.
- Do not walk in front of the interpreter or make big movements, as this may distract visitors from watching the interpreter.
- Speak clearly and loudly enough so the interpreter can understand you. Do not turn away from the interpreter while speaking, as your voice may become inaudible to the interpreter.
- Talk directly to visitors with hearing impairments. The visitor may watch the sign language or oral interpreter as you speak, but you should continue looking at the person to whom you are speaking.
- An interpreter can usually keep up with your normal speaking pace. Specific names and words that do not have signs must be finger-spelled. This may cause some delay, so be aware of the interpreter as you talk. You may be requested to spell difficult words or names out loud.
- Ask the interpreter to alert you if your presentation is not being understood by your audience.
- During slide presentations, allow sufficient time for visitors to look at the slides after watching the interpreter. A spotlight on the interpreter will also be necessary in a darkened room.
- When hiring an interpreter, it is important to discuss fees and schedule breaks. Also, if the tour is expected to last for more than two hours, two interpreters should be hired to work in rotation.

Tips for Making Speech-Reading Easier

- Be patient and select an area of relative quiet and with few distractions.
- Be sure your mouth can be seen. Keep hands away from your face. Men with mustaches or beards may have difficulty being understood by visitors who are speech-reading.
- Get the visitor’s attention.
- Face the visitor directly and do not turn away while speaking.
- Your face should be adequately lighted. When outdoors, stand with your face towards the sun so the sun is in your eyes, not theirs.
- Speak normally, at a moderate pace.
- Re-phrase if you are not understood.
- Draw a picture, write or use pantomime to communicate your message.

Assistive Listening Systems

Assistive listening systems allow visitors with limited hearing to more fully participate in interpretive programs. See below for descriptions of the different types of systems available. Because most staff and volunteers will have limited, if any, familiarity with assistive listening systems, parks and/or districts are encouraged to establish regular training and maintenance programs. Additionally, it should be stressed that assistive listening systems are fragile and expensive and need to be treated with care (because these systems have the appearance of a portable radio, staff and volunteers may mistakenly assume they are in the same price range). Signage indicating the availability of an assistive listening system is required. An appropriate message should be displayed with the International Symbol of Access for Hearing Loss, shown here.

Portable FM Wireless System

This system is designed to be used alone or together with a hearing aid. The signal is sent directly from the sound source to the listener's ear, so there is minimal background interference. The device requires the speaker to wear a microphone/transmitter unit about 2" x 4", and the listener to wear a receiver/amplifier unit of the same size.
Advantages: Portable, variable for a large range of hearing losses.
Disadvantages: Equipment is fragile and expensive.
Possible Applications: Indoor and outdoor tours and facilities, campfire programs, and one-on-one interaction.

Audio Induction Loop System

A microphone is connected to an amplifier's audio input, and a signal is then fed into a coil of wire placed around the perimeter of an indoor seating area. Listeners within the encircled area may pick up this signal if they are wearing a hearing aid equipped with a telecoil switch (represented by a "T" on the hearing aid). Listeners without hearing aids may use a receiver with a built-in telecoil device.
Advantages: Low cost, low maintenance, easy to use, unobtrusive, possible to adapt to existing systems
Disadvantages: Signal travels into nearby rooms, susceptible to electrical interference, limited portability, variable signal strength
Possible Applications: Audio-visual areas, visitor centers, museums, amphitheaters and other indoor facilities.

AM System

This is a wireless system that uses a selected AM radio frequency to broadcast signals to receiver devices and personal AM radios tuned to that frequency.
Advantages: Portable, inexpensive
Disadvantages: Subject to interference, limited range
Possible Applications: Indoor and outdoor facilities.

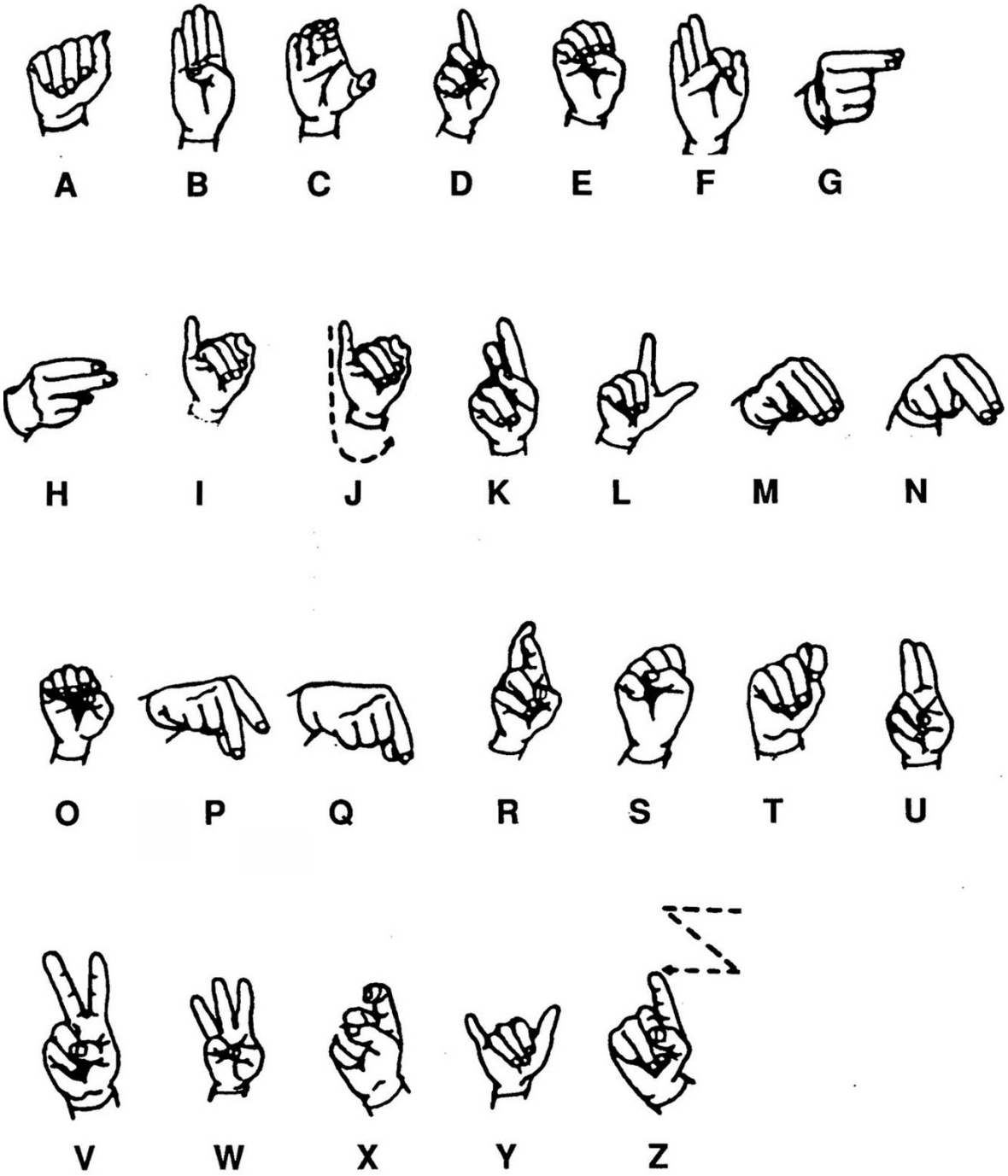
Infrared System

A panel of emitters flood the seating area with harmless, invisible, infrared light rays which transmit signals. Listeners use receivers that pick up the signal and convert it into sound.
Advantages: Easy to use, moderate cost, easily adaptable to the existing sound system, ensures privacy.
Disadvantages: Must be in line-of-sight of the transmitter, ineffective outdoors, limited portability, requires installation.
Possible Applications: Audio-visual areas, visitor centers, museums, and other indoor facilities.

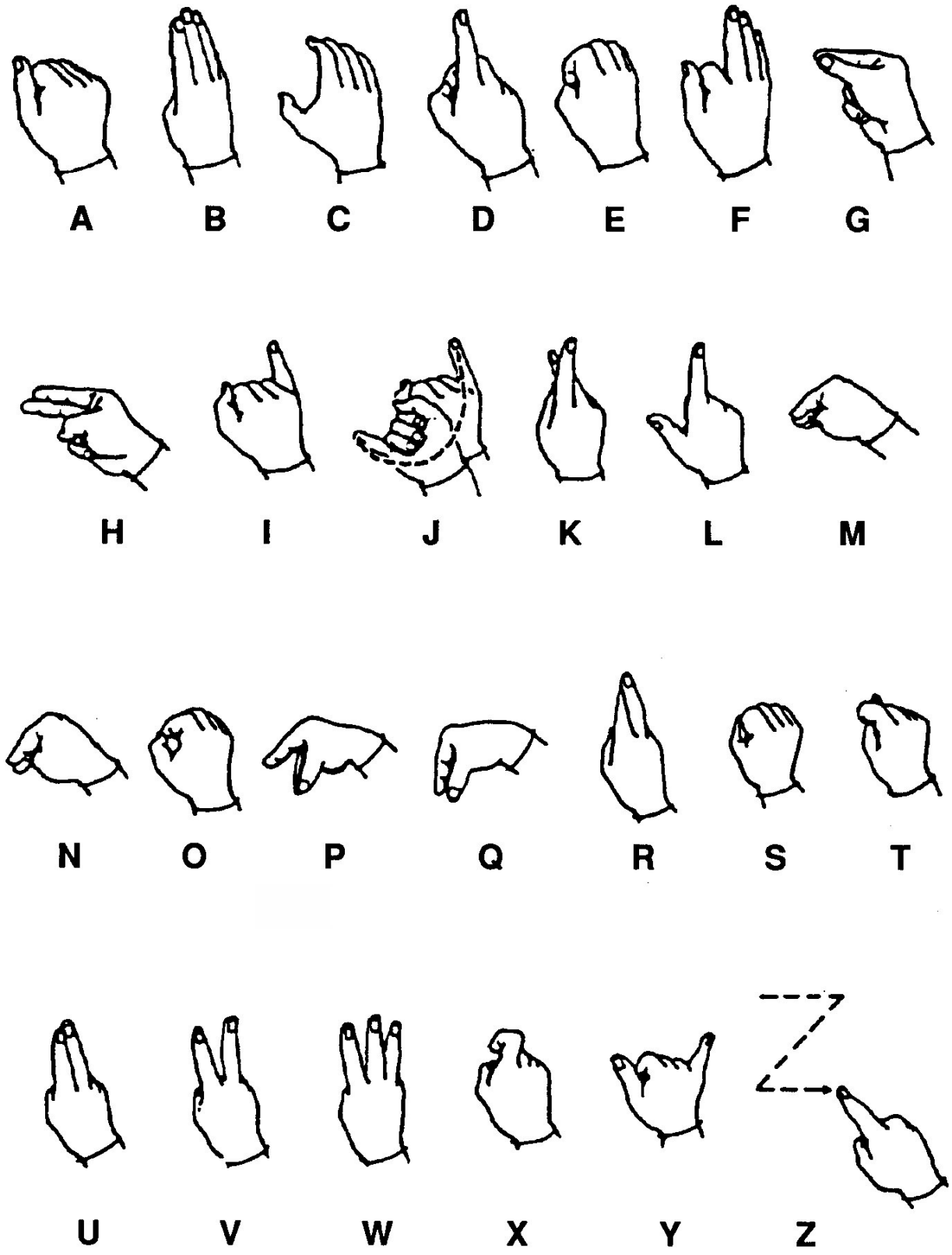
Hardwire System

This system connects the listener directly to the sound source. A device with a volume control and an earpiece is permanently mounted at the designated area. More than one earpiece may be connected.
Advantages: Inexpensive, low maintenance, no interference.
Disadvantages: Not portable, available to one listener or a small group of listeners at a time.
Possible Applications: Exhibits, self-guided trails.

The Manual Alphabet as Seen by the Receiver



The Manual Alphabet as Seen by the Sender



Learning Disabilities

A Learning Disability, as defined by the National Center for Learning Disabilities, is **"a neurological disorder that interferes with a person's ability to store, process, or produce information, and creates a "gap" between one's ability and performance**. Learning disabilities can affect one's ability to read, write, speak, or compute math, and can impede social skills. Learning disabilities can affect one or more areas of development. Individuals with learning disabilities can have marked difficulties on certain types of tasks while excelling at others . . . Learning disabilities are **NOT** the same as the following disabilities: intellectual disability, autism, deafness, blindness, and behavioral disorders. Nor are learning disabilities the result of economic disadvantage, environmental factors, or cultural differences."

A person with a learning disability shows a significant discrepancy between learning potential and actual learning achievement. This lower achievement is caused by perception or memory disorders. Such problems include failing to see how two objects are alike or different, hearing or reading words or letters out of sequence (for example, seeing "was" instead of "saw"), or not being able to remember half of a sentence just spoken. Dyslexia is one example of a learning disability. The characteristics of dyslexia may include severe difficulty in remembering a printed word or symbol, improper letter sequencing or reversal of letters, unusual spelling errors, and illegible handwriting.

Individuals with learning disabilities can learn; however, they need to be taught in a variety of ways that allows them to use their abilities to compensate for their weaknesses. This is one reason why it is important to incorporate hands-on activities or objects that may be touched into a tour.

Because there is no distinct visual cue, learning disabilities are often referred to as the "invisible disabilities." Although the signs of a learning disability are not obvious, there may be some visual clues. Many different characteristics are possible. They may appear alone, or in conjunction with another, and in varying degrees. Here are a few of the more common characteristics:

Hyperactivity: A hyperactive individual may have difficulty staying in one place and may not attend to one task for any length of time.
Hypoactivity: Hypoactivity is the opposite of hyperactivity. An individual will act slowly and will be difficult to motivate. Often, he or she will appear uninterested in the tour or activity.
Memory Disorder: An individual may have either auditory or visual short-term memory disorders. This individual may have difficulty answering questions on material he or she just heard or saw.
Over-Attention: This individual may stare for long periods of time at one object.
Perceptual Difficulties: This describes individuals who have poor sensory perception, even though their sensory organs are functioning correctly. Information coming in audibly, visually, or tactually may be garbled, and the person may hear or see letters or words out of order or cannot differentiate between two textures. People with this disorder may have difficulty following an interpretive talk, locating a specific object in a collection, or feeling the difference between polished marble and volcanic rock.
Poor Coordination: This individual shows awkwardness and has spatial problems, as well as fine-motor and gross-motor problems. He or she may have difficulty navigating through cluttered areas; using scissors, pencils, and small objects; or making large movements such as catching a ball.
Withdrawn Behavior: This individual seldom interacts with others. Unlike people who are shy and may have one or two friends, this person avoids any involvement with others.

The exact percentage of the population with a learning disability is unknown; however, it is estimated by the Learning Disabilities Association of California that the figure could be about 5 percent of school-age children. There is no estimate for adults. People with learning disabilities are thought of as "lazy," "not listening," or "not trying hard enough." Not understanding their own problem, many people drop out of school because they cannot keep up or they are convinced that they are stupid. **Actually, learning disabilities are not related to IQ.** The majority of people with learning disabilities have average or above-average IQ scores. Some very intelligent people in our history had learning disabilities—Thomas Edison, Albert Einstein, and Winston Churchill, to name a few.

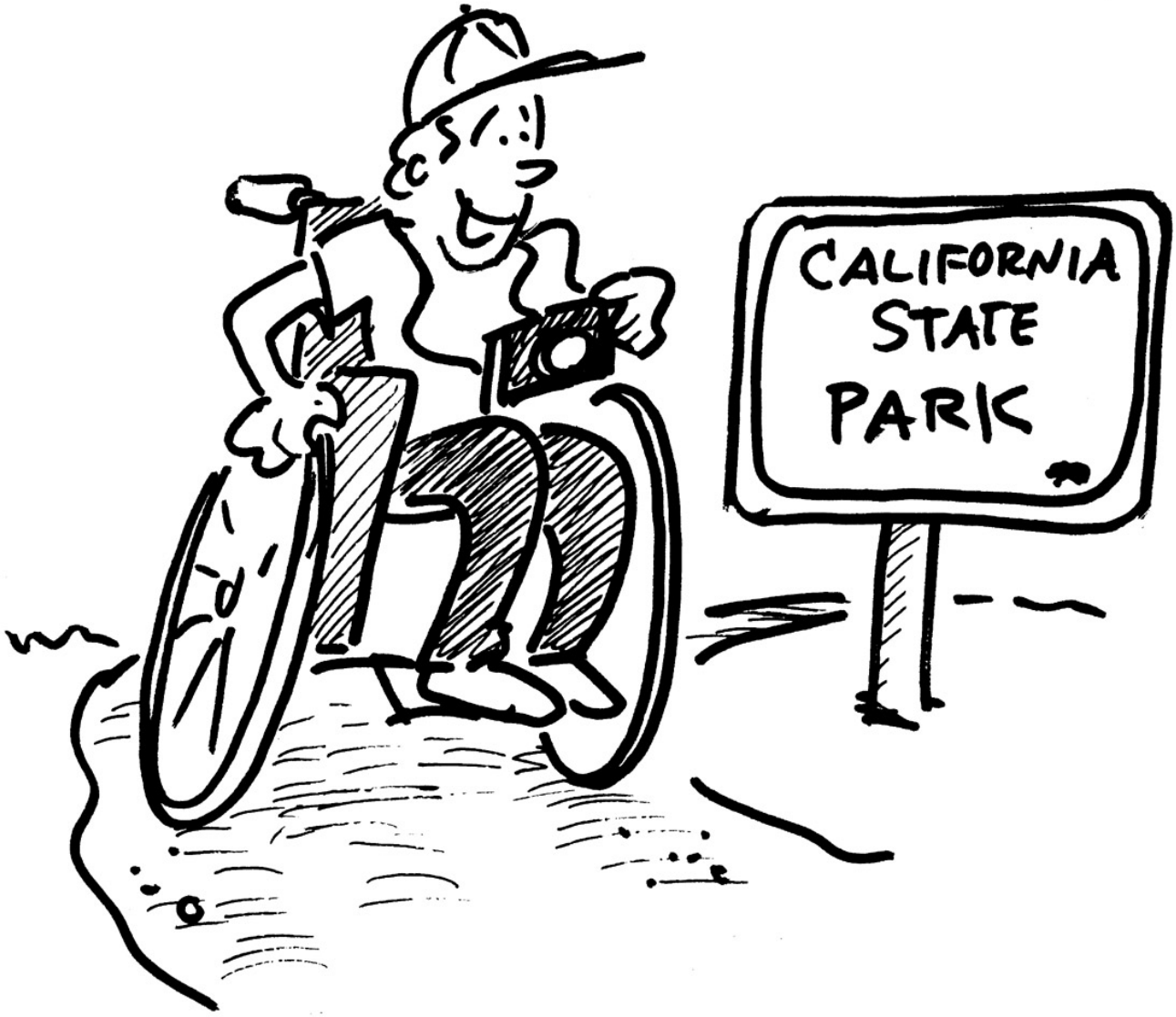
Learning Disabilities Etiquette

- If you are notified in advance that one or more persons with a learning disability will be on your tour, find out what kinds of characteristics are represented, if any, and how you can best assist them.

- When giving directions, make sure you give them from the visitors' point of view. For example, do not say, "The restroom is to my right"; instead, say, "The restroom is to your left." It may also be helpful to point in the direction to which you are referring, or draw out a map.
- Directions or information should be provided step-by-step. Be sure the information is fully understood. If necessary, repeat information using different words, or a draw a map or diagram.
- Some visitors with learning disabilities may have speech impairments. If you have difficulty understanding what they are saying, do not be afraid to ask them to repeat it. If you still do not understand, repeat the information you did understand, and ask them to repeat again.
- Be aware that an individual with a learning disability may stare at you or stand close to you when you speak. This individual may be displaying over-attentiveness or may be trying to block out competing noises.
- If inappropriate behavior is displayed, the problem should not be ignored but instead discussed calmly. Accusations may only cause stress and make the situation worse.

Mobility Impairments

The term “mobility impairments” is used to describe numerous disabling conditions which affect movement and ambulation. Conditions range from chronic pain to quadriplegia. Mobility impairments may be caused by accidents, other traumatic events, or chronic events such as disease or a condition that proceeds slowly from birth. A mobility impairment may occur before, during, or after birth.



Listed below are some examples of common disabling conditions that create mobility impairment. Please note—it is always important to be aware of emergency procedures in case of a health emergency:

- **Arthritis** – Millions of Americans are affected by this condition, caused by inflammation of the joints. Many different types of arthritis exist, with symptoms ranging from swelling, pain, and stiffness to permanent changes in joint shape.
- **Cerebral Palsy** – "Cerebral" refers to the brain. "Palsy" refers to paralysis which accounts for the lack of muscle control associated with this disability. Cerebral palsy is caused by damage to the brain occurring before, during, or after birth, up until the age of five. Effects of this disability range from difficulty grasping objects to total inability to control body movements. Cerebral palsy is considered a developmental disability, and more information is provided in the Cerebral Palsy section, beginning on page 15.
- **Multiple Sclerosis** – MS, as it is commonly called, is a disease of the brain and spinal cord. Myelin, a coating on the nerve fibers that assists in the transmission of nerve impulses, is randomly destroyed—resulting in interruptions of messages being sent between the brain and the rest of the body. MS tends to affect control of movement, sight, and sensation. Symptoms will vary from person to person but may include weakness or numbness in the lower limbs, blurred vision or temporary blindness, and slurred speech.
- **Muscular Dystrophy** – Muscular dystrophy is a genetic disease which causes an individual's (usually a child or adolescent) muscles to degenerate. As the disease advances, the individual loses more muscle capabilities and will eventually require a wheelchair to aid in mobility.
- **Spinal Cord Injury** – Spinal cord injuries may cause total or partial loss of sensation and muscle control, muscle spasms, and/or lack of control over other bodily functions. The location on the spinal cord where the injury occurs determines the type and severity of the disability. If the spinal cord is damaged around the neck area, then the entire spinal cord is affected, and quadriplegia (paralysis in both arms and legs) can result. When the injury is located in the chest area or below, then paraplegia (paralysis in lower body) can result.
- **Stroke** – A stroke is caused by a sudden loss of circulation in one or more of the blood vessels supplying the brain. This loss may be due to a blood clot blocking the brain artery or a cerebral hemorrhage (ruptured artery). A stroke may only affect one side of the body. For example, if the left side of the brain is damaged, then the right side of the body is affected. A stroke can result in death. However, some people can fully recover from a stroke; others may lose muscle control over some of their body while others may experience total paralysis on one entire side of their body. Additional effects of a stroke may involve memory, speech, and sensory functions.
- **Heart Conditions** – Heart conditions may have many effects on a person's physical ability—ranging from lightheadedness, abnormal heartbeat, fatigue, and shortness of breath to chest pain, labored breathing, palpitations and serious health problems. People of all ages can be affected by heart conditions; some can occur from birth and others may occur as a result of age and health. Examples of heart conditions include arrhythmia, high cholesterol, congenital defects, heart attacks, heart failure, high blood pressure, and strokes (- American Heart Association)

- **Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)**- COPD is a chronic lung disease that frequently causes difficulty breathing, often caused by smoking. The symptoms are typically characterized by those similar to chronic bronchitis and emphysema limiting a person's air intake into the lungs. (- WebMD COPD overview))

Misconceptions

Years of special institutions and separate facilities have formed generalities and placed stereotypes on people with disabilities. Here are some common misunderstandings and informative facts about people with mobility impairments.

False: All people who use wheelchairs are chronically ill or contagious.
True: Wheelchairs may be used for a variety of reasons. The majority of people who utilize a wheelchair use it as a mobility aid, which allows them independence and freedom to move around.

False: All people who use a wheelchair are bound to it for life.
True: Some individuals do use a wheelchair for life; however, for many individuals, a wheelchair is a convenience. People's capabilities vary, and many people use a wheelchair to conserve energy or use it to move around more quickly.

False: Never use words like "running" or "walking" around people with mobility impairments.
True: Do not worry about using these words; they are a part of everyone's vocabulary.

Mobility Impairments Etiquette

- Offer assistance to visitors with mobility impairments, if it appears to be needed. Assist only if your offer is accepted, and ask how you can best help. Never pick up or carry a person with a mobility impairment unless they have requested it and you have had specific training on how to do so, except in cases of emergency. Make sure all other options have been exhausted.
- Speak directly to visitors with mobility impairments — not through another person.
- Do not lean into or hang on a visitor's wheelchair or other mobility aid. These are considered part of their body space.
- When speaking for more than a few minutes with individuals using wheelchairs, consider kneeling or sitting down so they do not have to look up at you.
- Do not worry about using words like "run" or "walk" around people with mobility impairments. These words are used by everyone.
- Do not take mobility aids away from the users unless they request it. Having their mobility aids nearby makes individuals feel more independent and secure. This includes people using crutches.
- Slippery or uneven surfaces may pose problems for people walking with assistive devices. If a wheelchair is available, offer it to them. If not, offer assistance or show them an alternate route.
- Do not make general assumptions about the abilities or limitations of an individual with a mobility impairment. Let the individual decide what he or she can and cannot do.

- Some individuals in wheelchairs may have a service animal accompanying them to the park. Service animals have been trained to assist individuals in many tasks, including reaching objects, pulling a wheelchair, seeing peripherally, providing protection or rescue, retrieving objects such as medications or the telephone, helping to balance or stabilize the owners, and/or other services. Service animals are allowed in park areas and facilities.
- Refer to the *Interpretive Facilities* section, beginning on page 125, and the *California State Parks Accessibility Guidelines* for information on wheelchair accessibility requirements. For additional information on accessibility guidelines, refer to The *USDOJ 2010 ADA Standards* and *California State Accessibility Standards*; Title 24 (CA). Copies of these documents can be found at your local library, online, or by calling the U.S. Department of Justice or the California Office of the State Architect.

Visual Impairments

The term “visual impairment” is used to describe many degrees of vision loss, including low vision, legally blind, and totally blind. The definitions of what constitutes “low vision” vary, but generally low vision is defined as an uncorrectable visual impairment that interferes with a person’s ability to perform everyday activities, or as having 20/70 acuity in the best eye, with correction. (With 20/70 acuity, one would see at 20 feet what a normal sighted person sees at 70 feet.) The term “legally blind” encompasses individuals whose central visual acuity does not exceed 20/200 in the better eye with corrective lenses or whose visual field is less than an angle of 20 degrees. The individual with 20/200 sees at 20 feet what a normal sighted person sees at 200 feet. “Total blindness” is the complete absence of vision and light perception.

Visual impairments are caused by injury or disease or are congenital. Congenital blindness occurs at birth or within the first five years of life. An individual who is congenitally blind does not have visual memory and therefore does not learn by visual image or picture. This individual relies on his or her remaining senses for orientation. Adventitious or accidental blindness is that which has occurred after the age of five. This individual may use the visual memory of his or her environment and of objects for orientation.

There are many variations of visual impairments; individuals have their own abilities and limitations. Some persons may be able to see an object clearly, but only if it is very close to them. Others may have central vision and see only a narrow field, as if they were in a tunnel. Some may have only peripheral or side vision, and cannot see in front of them; while others may see the entire field, but only shadows of objects. Visitors with visual impairments may need bright, even light to see; however, for others, too much glare from a bright light may hurt their eyes. For example, people with cataracts are sensitive to glare and strong light. This wide range of visual abilities stresses the importance of treating people with visual impairments as individuals with individual needs. **It is always best to ask the visitors how you can assist them.**

Many people with visual impairments use low vision devices or mobility aids to assist them to live independently. Low vision devices include pocket magnifiers, flashlight magnifiers, and monocular telescopes. Mobility aids include canes, sighted guides, or guide dogs. You may at some point be called on to guide a visitor with a visual impairment. It would be helpful to be familiar with *The Sighted Guide Technique,* explained on page 35.

Visual Impairments Etiquette

- When greeting people with visual impairments, talk in a normal voice; it is not necessary to shout.
- Look directly at visitors when speaking to them; do not talk through an intermediary. Whenever possible, try not to turn away while you are talking to them, as this may cause disorientation.
- Do not be afraid to ask, “May I help you?” You may want to lightly touch the individual on the shoulder as you begin speaking, so he or she is aware that you are talking to them.
- Provide visitors with a general orientation to the area by describing its prominent features.
- Tell visitors with visual impairments if you are leaving briefly; they may not be aware that you have walked away. Conversely, note when you have returned, and with whom.
- Before you begin walking with the visitor, say where you are going. For example, “We are going into the library, and there are five steps leading to the door.” Be prepared to move more slowly through an area than you might ordinarily.
- Be very specific when giving directions or describing an area. Be sure to discuss any obstacles that may be encountered.
- Be familiar with guiding a visitor who is visually impaired. Refer to *The Sighted Guide Technique* section on page 35 for information.
- Do not worry about using words like “look” or “see.” They are part of everyone’s vocabulary.
- Be aware that people with visual impairments may be accompanied by guide dogs or seeing-eye dogs. Guide dogs are legally allowed in parks and buildings. Guide dog users generally prefer that their dogs not be petted, led, or spoken to.

The Sighted Guide Technique

- When approaching visitors with visual impairments, touch them on the shoulder as you speak to let them know you are talking to them. Be sure to identify yourself as a member of the park staff.
- Ask visitors if they would like assistance, and if so, what type of assistance.
- If a visitor requests to be guided, touch his or her forearm with the back of your hand—this will let him or her know where you are. The individual should grip your arm just above the elbow. Some visitors may simply need to maintain some sort of contact with you (touching elbows or forearms for example) rather than actually gripping you. Let the visitor determine what type of contact works best for him or her.
- When assisting a visitor with a guide dog, offer your left arm to the visitor. The dog is still "on duty," and acts as a safety officer.
- When assisting a visitor with a cane, offer your arm on the individual's free side.
- Keep your arm close to your body, and walk slightly ahead of the visitor. Walk at a normal pace. If the visitor grips tighter or pulls back, you may be walking too fast.
- Never push or steer the visitor ahead of you.
- Let the visitor know what is ahead, especially when you are approaching stairs. Stop before going up or down stairs, and assist the individual in finding the handrail. Tell the visitor if you will be proceeding up or down and when you have reached the last step.
- Let the visitor know when you have come to a door and which way it opens. When you open the door, allow the visitor to hold it as you both pass through.
- When guiding the visitor to a seat, place his or her hand on the back or arm of the chair and allow the individual to be seated. If it is a bench, guide their hand to the seat of the bench.

Methods of Description

The following are suggestions of how to assist visitors with visual impairments in "seeing an object through their hands or through their imaginations." With the assistance of park staff, visitors are able to enjoy and appreciate some of the state's historic objects and structures and the beautiful scenery of our parks.

Describing Objects

- Ask the visitors how much of the object they can see. Then, point out additional features of the object.
- Provide an overall description of the object. Include the historical or natural history background and its significance to the collection.
- For paintings, photographs, and sculptures, include the artist, title, period, and style.
- For a large object, you may want to walk the length with the visitors and then relate the height of the object to their height.
- Relate the object to something more familiar in size and shape. For example, "It is as big as a refrigerator, but it has round corners."
- For touchable objects, encourage visitors to feel the object with both hands before you tell them the details. Visitors can feel many things for themselves—like textures and

shapes—and do not need that information repeated. Rather, let them ask questions, or tell them the color or design of the object.

- For objects that may not be touched or that are very large, provide a touchable replica or model. When creating a model, be creative! Experiment using the same materials of which the object is actually made. Make it as detailed as possible. Include roads and trails when duplicating a landscape. If a replica is not possible, describe the object and provide samples of the textures. Mention any fragrances the object may have.
- For paintings or photographs, offer visual descriptions. Begin with the general depiction—size, setting, subject—and move to specific details, like color, texture, and more interesting features.
- Allow visitors to ask questions as you describe the object. Check periodically with them to make sure they understand your descriptions.
- Go ahead and describe the color of the object. Some visitors may have a visual memory, and will want to hear that detail.

Describing Historical Rooms

- Provide a physical description of the room, beginning with its size, lighting, windows, and furnishings. You may want to walk the length of the room with the visitor.
- Discuss the significance of the room, what it was used for, and who used it.
- Beginning with the background of the room, describe the style of furniture and other objects in the room. Make sure visitors understand any architectural terms you use in your description.
- Describe any significant objects in the room, such as a bed or a desk, and where they are located.
- For rooms that are not accessible, enlarged photographs or a video of the room should be available for visitors to see. Offer magnifying glasses to visitors with visual impairments.

Describing Natural Settings

- Provide a relief model of the park or a specific area. Use as much detail as possible, including natural materials with textures representative of the area you are interpreting.
- When out in the natural setting, be aware of all the sounds and smells around you. Identify these and discuss them. It is likely that the visitor will notice the sounds and smells before you do. You may want to ask them to describe what they hear or smell.
- For a specific object, such as a giant redwood, relate the size and shape to something more familiar. For example, say, “The tree is as tall as a ten-story building and as big around as a car.”
- Go ahead and describe the color of the area. Some visitors may have a visual memory and will want to hear that detail.

Audio description

Audio description has been defined as the “art of talking pictorially.” By describing all visual and nonverbal cues during pauses in the scripted dialogue of films, television programs and plays, audio description allows people who are visually impaired to hear what they cannot see. For example, characters’ costumes, body language, facial expressions, and other visual cues important to the understanding of the movie or play are described in detail so people who are visually impaired can enjoy the program in its entirety.

During live performances, descriptions may be heard through an earphone connected to an FM transmitter. For films, audio description can be incorporated into the narrative, or a pre-recorded description on tape can be played in synchronization; the description will occur during pauses in dialogue. “Descriptive Video Service” (DVS) is the term used for the service of audio description for television. DVS is provided via the second audio program channel, available on all stereo televisions.

Recent developments—including the Oct. 2010 passage of the 21st Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act as well as the DOJ’s proposed rule requiring movie theaters to provide audio descriptive services—have increased the number of audio-described media in existence. These developments foretell increased obligations for such accommodations going forward. Currently, audio description is being incorporated into many television programs and theatrical movies. Park staff and partners are encouraged to incorporate audio description at the onset of visual media planning. By planning for audio in advance, the cost and technical requirements can be made more minimal. Because the technology to provide audio description at this level can be expensive, park staff should also be prepared to offer sight-impaired visitors live, in-person audio description of any videos, slide shows, or performances shown to the public.

For more information on audio description, contact:
Audio Description, Inc.
The Metropolitan Washington Ear, Inc.
35 University Blvd. East
Silver Spring, MD 20901
(301) 681-6636 (voice)
(301) 681-5227 (fax)
information@washear.org
www.washear.org
This organization offers training for guides and docents in audio description, publishes a newsletter for individuals interested in audio description, and helps other organizations in obtaining the service.

Limited English Proficiency

California's population is growing at an enormous rate and becoming more culturally diverse. Many people living in California are unable to read or speak the English language with proficiency. Language barriers present a growing challenge for verbal and written communication in state parks. Although not considered a disability, individuals with limited English proficiency are discussed in this handbook because they too can benefit from simple modifications or additions to interpretive programs and facilities.

Park staff can employ a number of techniques to improve communication with visitors who have limited English proficiency. Some of the suggestions in this handbook may work well for foreign visitors as well as children and individuals with severe communication difficulties.

In addition to applying the techniques to your program, park units will benefit by recruiting docents and volunteers who are bi- or multi-lingual. They can serve as language translators at a program, or they can give the program in English and repeat it in another language.

Limited English Proficiency Etiquette

- Be aware of cultural differences. Gestures or body movements do not universally communicate the same meaning or may be considered disrespectful. For example, in Germany, it is considered impolite to talk with your hands in your pockets. For additional information on this subject, author Roger E. Axell has written *Do's and Taboos Around the World* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1990).
- Speak slowly and clearly.
- Make an effort to correctly pronounce visitors' names.
- Arrange to have a language translator present during your program or available at the park site, if visitation warrants it. When speaking for translation, use simple sentences, pause for the interpreter after each thought, and avoid the use of colloquialisms, idioms, and slang, because they are not easily translated. Sarcasm, puns, and witticisms—mainstays of American humor—also do not translate well.
- If necessary, pantomime your message. This may be the only way to communicate with some visitors who have limited English proficiency. Use facial expressions and hand and body movements. Draw pictures, if needed, to communicate your message.
- Be patient with visitors who are limited English proficient. Do not embarrass them by interrupting or finishing their sentences.

Older Adults

Today, people are living longer. Visitors over the age of 65 are also more active than ever before. Older adults constitute a large number of park visitors and volunteers. Most are healthy, alert, and energetic, but many experience mobility and sensory changes that limit their ability to fully enjoy park interpretive programs. Although not considered a disability, older adults are discussed in this handbook because they too can benefit from simple modifications or additions to interpretive programs and facilities.

If you have a group of older adults visiting your site, you are likely to see a wide range of abilities and limitations. Some adults may have a variety of conditions, while others may have no limiting condition at all. In order to make existing interpretive programs more enjoyable for your entire audience, become familiar with the program tips listed for each of the different disabilities mentioned. For example, an older adult with hearing loss may benefit from the information provided in the Hearing Impairments section, beginning on page 13.

Many older persons today are able to live on their own and pursue active lifestyles. Remember to treat older adults as individuals. Some will enjoy a horseback ride or a brisk walk on the beach in place of more traditional, sedentary activities. Do not assume that older adults cannot do an activity. Always attempt to include them in every aspect of a program.

The most common condition significantly affecting an older person's mobility is arthritis. Arthritis is a term that describes inflammation of the joints. Many different types of arthritis exist, with symptoms ranging from swelling, pain, and stiffness, to permanent change in joint shape. Individuals with arthritis may need to use canes, walkers, wheelchairs, or three- or four-wheel motored devices for mobility assistance.

Older individuals can experience decreased hearing, vision, taste, smell, and to some degree, touch. When one of these senses decreases, other senses may compensate for that loss. For example, an individual with decreased vision may have increased attention to sounds and tactile experiences.

Changes in Hearing

Three types of hearing loss are common in older adults. The first type is a mild hearing loss that may be caused by middle ear infection or wax blockage in the outer ear. This condition causes voices to become muffled and the location of noises less obvious. The second type is caused by lesions in various parts of the auditory pathway resulting in difficulty perceiving tones. Often, a hearing aid is prescribed for this type of hearing loss. The third and most recently recognized type of hearing loss is a problem in the transmission of sound along the auditory nerve between the inner ear and the brain. An individual with this condition may hear every word, but may not understand the message. Speaking clearly and in a moderate tone of voice, along with a reduction in background noise, will help older adults and others with hearing impairments.

Changes in Vision

Many people notice changes in their vision early in life. The process of aging alters the structure of the eye, which, in turn, may distort visual information.

As early as mid-life, individuals may have difficulty focusing on objects close to their eyes. This occurs when the optic muscle becomes less efficient at contracting the lens. This condition is usually corrected by prescription glasses, but not necessarily to perfect 20/20 vision.

Some older individuals may experience a decrease in the size of their pupils, which impairs their ability to function in lowered light levels and to see at night. Approximately one-third less light reaches the retina in the eyes of older adults as compared to younger people. Older adults with a decrease in pupil size may also have difficulty adjusting to drastic changes in levels of lighting. Remove potential barriers that may cause accidents in areas where extreme changes in lighting levels occur. Remember to allow sufficient time for visitors' eyes to adjust to extreme changes in lighting levels before asking them to move on to another exhibit or activity.

Another possible change in vision for older adults is in the increased density of the lens. A thicker lens can cause entering light to scatter, creating problems with glare. With increased glare, edges of counters, stairways, and porches seem to blend in to the background, making them hard to decipher. Colors like blue and green, although appearing to fade away, actually are absorbed by the lens—similar to the way the ocean absorbs the colors of red and orange.

To assist individuals with these kinds of visual impairments, be sure the edges of stairs and countertops contrast with their background. Signs should be lettered in large, dark print on a contrasting, light-colored, matte-finished background. Be aware of lighting conditions to minimize glares on glass.

Changes in Taste and Smell

There may be a biological basis to explain why certain foods taste delicious to adults and why children will stubbornly avoid the same foods. During the normal aging process, a reduction of the fibers in the olfactory nerves causes many individuals to become less capable of identifying pungent odors. A decrease in taste may begin around age 50, but it is more common in people over 70.

Changes in Touch

The decrease in the sense of touch is thought to be minimal for older adults. For example, some older individuals may have difficulty feeling the difference between rough granite and volcanic rock. Generally, older adults differ little from younger persons in their touch sensitivity.

Older Adults Etiquette

- When talking with an older visitor, speak directly to that person rather than through a third person.
- Offer assistance, and if accepted, ask how you can best assist them.
- Avoid using the word “elderly” because it implies frailty and helplessness.
- Older adults may have one or more disabilities mentioned in this handbook, or none of them. Refer to those sections that may apply.
- Be patient.

Interpretive Programs

Overview

Imagine being served a dish of your favorite ice cream, but you don't have a spoon. What a frustration! This simple analogy explains the importance of why interpretive programs should be accessible to all visitors. Even though the facilities may be completely physically accessible, some visitors may be unable to enjoy the audio-visual program or to participate in a guided tour of the area. If the programs offered are not easily accessible to them— or if they are unable to communicate with park staff—visitors with disabilities may prefer to stay away from California State Parks.

The Americans with Disabilities Act addresses the issue of physical access to buildings and considers the need for equally effective communication with people with disabilities and program accessibility.

Equally Effective Communication (ADA 35.160 - 35.164)

California State Parks must ensure that communications with individuals with disabilities are as effective as communications with others. In order to provide equal access, state parks are required to make available appropriate auxiliary aids and services, where necessary, to ensure effective communication. These aids and services must be provided in a timely manner and in such a way as to protect the privacy and independence of the visitor. While the Department must give primary consideration to the requests of the individual with a disability when determining what type of aids and services are necessary, it is important to consider the needs of people with disabilities when planning your program. Be prepared for such requests by having operable equipment and alternative format materials available.

Examples of auxiliary aids and services for individuals who are deaf or hard-of-hearing include qualified sign language or oral interpreters, note-takers, computer-aided transcription services, written materials, telephone handset amplifiers, assistive listening systems, telephones compatible with hearing aids, closed captioned decoders, open and closed captioning, TDDs and TTYs, videotext displays, and exchange of written notes. Factors to be considered in determining whether a sign language or oral interpreter is needed include the context in which the communication is taking place, the number of people involved, and the importance of the communication. However, **ADA does require that a sign language or oral interpreter be hired any time one is requested *at least 10 days in advance*.**

Auxiliary aids and devices that assist individuals with visual impairments encompass qualified readers, taped texts, audio recordings, audio descriptions of visual elements, Braille materials, large-print materials, and assistance in locating items.

Examples of devices used by individuals with speech impairments include TDDs and TTYs, computer terminals, speech synthesizers, and communication boards.

Program Accessibility (ADA 35.149 - 35.150)

State parks may not deny the benefits of their programs, activities, and services to individuals with disabilities because facilities are inaccessible. State park services, programs, or activities, when viewed in their entirety, must be readily accessible to, and usable by, individuals with disabilities. This standard, known as “program accessibility,” applies to all existing facilities in California State Parks. Parks, however, are not necessarily required to make each of their existing facilities accessible. Although less desirable, providing services to individuals with disabilities in a different location is one method of achieving program accessibility.

Modifications to programs that would result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of the program or activity or in undue financial and administrative burdens are not necessary. Yet, steps should be taken to ensure that individuals with disabilities receive the benefits and services of the program or activity. Examples of alternatives include acquiring or redesigning equipment used in the program or moving the program to an accessible location.

Individuals have the right to participate in a standard program. Even if a separate or special program for individuals with disabilities is offered, state parks cannot deny an individual with a disability participation in the regular program. State parks may offer separate or special programs when necessary to provide individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity to benefit from the programs. Such programs must be specifically designed to meet the needs of the individuals with disabilities for whom they are provided. For example, when offering a museum tour for people with visual impairments, allow individuals to touch and hold appropriate objects and provide detailed descriptions of the pieces included in the tour. Once again, a person with a visual impairment cannot be excluded from the standard museum tour.

Looking beyond mandated federal and state laws, it is the overall intent of the California Department of Parks and Recreation to make existing park interpretive programs accessible and all visitors welcome.

The following pages present suggestions for improving existing programs to meet the accessibility goal. These suggestions are proven methods for interpretation, so interpreters may find most of these techniques familiar. Good interpretation always relates the message to the audience by communicating in a way that is both understandable and provocative to the individual listener. This requires the interpreter to be sensitive to the interests and special needs of diverse audiences.

Many of the recommendations are repeated in different program sections, because they are useful in more than one situation. When planning one of the programs mentioned, read the section that applies, and any other sections that may relate to that topic or audience.

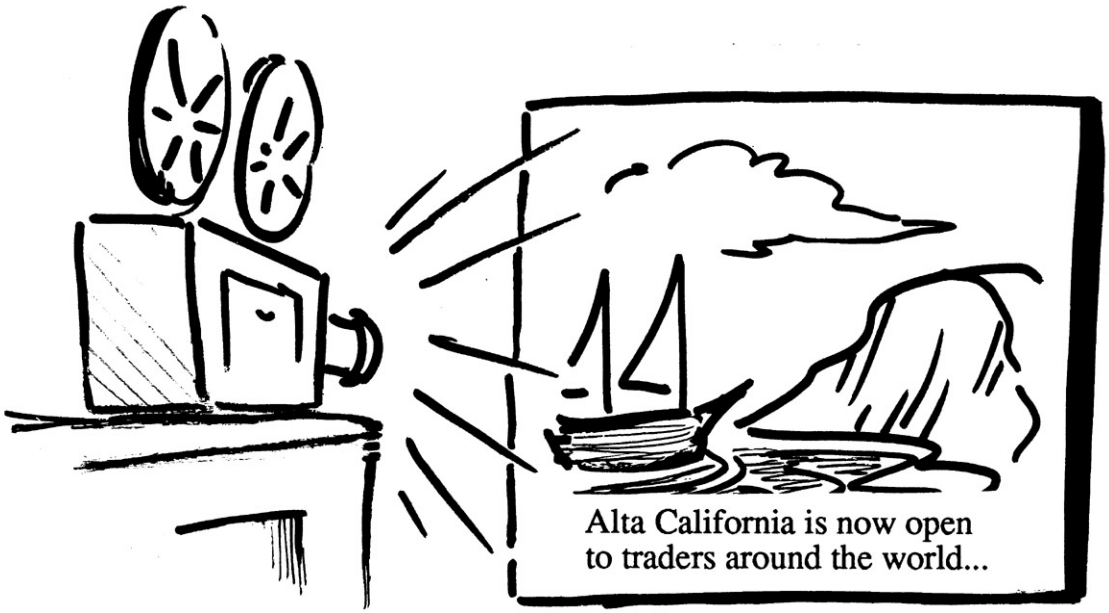
Audio-Visual Programs

Audio-visual programs include movies, slide programs, video programs (both interactive and passive), and audio messages. These programs are well-suited for telling sequential stories, as well as for providing overviews of park resources. Audio-visual (A/V) media can transport visitors through time and space to experience significant historic events or dramatic natural processes. Soundtracks, movement, color, and special effects make A/V programs effective at suggesting reality and evoking an audience's emotional response. These media are often portable, allowing information on inaccessible areas to be presented in accessible locations. Also, videos can be purchased by visitors and viewed later.

The following suggestions are provided to assist park staff in preparing and delivering audio-visual programs that will be universally satisfying and informative for a diverse audience.

Hearing Impairments

- Speak with visitors to determine how to meet their needs at your A/V program. Inform visitors of any assistive listening systems or devices available at the facility. Refer to the *Assistive Listening Systems* section on page 17 for more information.
- If requested in advance by a visitor with a hearing impairment, arrange for a licensed professional sign language or oral interpreter. Refer to the *Working with an Oral or Sign Language Interpreter* section on page 15 for more information.
- If you know sign language, use it. Your attempts will generally be appreciated.
- Select areas with minimal background noise for presenting A/V programs.



- Allow visitors with hearing impairments to sit up front so they can hear more clearly, watch the oral or sign language interpreter, or facilitate speech-reading.
- Present only captioned videos and provide written transcripts upon request.
- Be sure to allow extra time between slides for visitors to see the images you have explained. Some visitors may be watching you and speech-reading, or they may be watching the sign language or oral interpreter. If the room is too dark, a spotlight on you and/or the sign language interpreter may be also necessary.
- Be sure you have everyone's attention before you begin to speak, and be sure your audience has understood what was just said before continuing.
- Repeat questions from the audience and allow sufficient time for them to respond. An individual with a hearing impairment may understand the question a few seconds later because the sign language or oral interpreter is sometimes a few words behind the speaker.
- Speak clearly and in a normal tone of voice. Project your voice from your diaphragm. Speak louder only if it is requested and avoid shouting
- Use short sentences. A subject-verb-object sentence structure is best, because it is the same syntax of American Sign Language. For example, say, "The snake ate the mouse," not "The mouse was eaten by the snake."
- Always face the audience while speaking. If you turn away, speech-reading becomes impossible, and it may be difficult for the oral or sign language interpreter to hear you.
- Avoid sweeping arm movements or moving around while speaking, as this may distract visitors who are speech-reading or watching the sign language interpreter.
- Have a supplementary reading list available to augment your A/V program. Individuals may wish to learn more about the subjects you present.

Learning Disabilities

- When planning your presentation, select touchable objects related to the theme of the A/V program. Incorporating objects in your presentation will reinforce visual and audible information, as well as increasing interest in your program.
- Inform the audience of the length of the program and location of the exits. Permit members of the audience to leave early if necessary. Some individuals with learning disabilities have shorter attention spans and may wish to leave before the program is over. For longer presentations, you may want to schedule a break. Notify the audience before the presentation begins if they can expect an intermission.
- Choose A/V programs appropriate for your audience's age. Deliver the content of your program using a variety of different methods, instead of aiming for a lower level of comprehension.
- Avoid "over-stimulating" visitors with learning disabilities. An overload of visual, auditory, or tactile stimulation can easily confuse some individuals.
- Information should be grouped together in an organized fashion, presented step-by-step, and then reinforced through repetition.
- Discuss ideas in basic terms, and avoid abstractions. Relating new information to something already familiar to your audience will assist learning.

- Make smooth transitions in presentations. Jumping from one subject to another may cause confusion.
- Encourage audience participation whenever possible. This will reinforce information and increase interest in your program. For example, pass around objects that pertain to the theme of the A/V program.
- Take the time to individualize colors, textures, sounds, or smells of objects portrayed in a slide presentation. Discuss important characteristics individually; otherwise, they may be overlooked.
- Look for visitors to indicate a desire to answer a question before calling on them. A speech impairment or memory problem may interfere with their ability to answer questions. Calling on them when they are not ready may cause unnecessary embarrassment.
- Some individuals with learning disabilities have difficulty understanding the concept of historical and calendar time. If this information is included in your A/V program, use different ways of explaining or demonstrating it. For example, one way is to cut string or paper in different lengths relative to the periods of time you are discussing, and relative to the age of your audience. Place them next to each other to demonstrate the difference.
- Explain new or difficult words and concepts. Include definitions of new words in a handout, along with suggestions for additional reading. Visitors may wish to learn more about the subject presented.
- If the entire audience consists of visitors with learning disabilities, you may consider limiting the program to 30 minutes or less, with only one or two primary ideas.

Intellectual Disabilities

- Choose an area with minimal background noise and few distractions for your presentation.
- Inform the audience of the length of the program and the location of the exits. Some individuals with intellectual disabilities have shorter attention spans, and may wish to leave before the program is over. For longer presentations, you may want to schedule a break. Notify the audience before the presentation begins that they can expect an intermission.
- Incorporate touchable objects related to the theme of the A/V program. Models, plant and animal specimens, and dioramas add another dimension to verbal explanation.
- In a presentation that involves discussion, repeat questions from the audience. Some visitors may not have heard the question or did not fully understand it. Visitors may have been distracted and not paying attention. Once lost from the conversation, their interest in the presentation may also be lost.
- Do not immediately dismiss a question as being irrelevant. Sometimes, poor language skills confuse what the individual may be trying to say. Whenever possible, relate the question or answer to the subject.
- Encourage audience participation when possible. If individuals with intellectual disabilities are left with “empty time,” they may lose interest and could become disruptive.

- Give information in small segments, reinforced through repetition. Discuss ideas in basic terms, and avoid abstractions. Relating new information to something already familiar to your audience will assist learning.
- Explain new or difficult words and concepts. Include definitions of new words in a handout, along with suggestions for further reading. Some visitors may wish to learn more about the subjects you present during the A/V program.
- If a special program has been requested for a group of individuals with intellectual disabilities, find out what they are interested in and prepare your A/V program around those interests. One approach is to limit your thematic program to less than 30 minutes. An overload of information may cause confusion.

Mobility Impairments

- Evaluate the facility or area where the A/V program will be presented in advance. The area needs to be accessible to wheelchairs and meet wheelchair seating requirements. Stairs, curbs, and slippery surfaces may pose difficulty for visitors with limited mobility. A route with ramps may be necessary to accommodate wheelchair users. Refer to the *Interpretive Facilities* section, beginning on page 125, for more information and the *California State Parks Accessibility Guidelines*. Obtain a copy of the *ADA Accessibility Guidelines* and the *California State Accessibility Standards* for additional information and requirements.
- When publicizing the A/V program, be sure to indicate the level of accessibility of the program, as well as the facility where it will be presented.
- In areas where A/V programs will be presented without seating, suggest to visitors using wheelchairs that they sit in front of the audience, so they can see and hear more clearly. If possible, provide a few seats for visitors unable to stand for long periods of time.
- Be aware of the line-of-sight of individuals in wheelchairs. The video screen should be placed at a height that does not require the audience to tilt their heads backward to see. Some visitors may have limited muscle movement in their necks and shoulders.
- Provide A/V programs for natural areas, historic sites and structures, or objects that are inaccessible to people using wheelchairs or other assistive devices (ADA, 35.150). For example, a park's visitor center may present a video on local tide pools that can be viewed and enjoyed by visitors unable to access the tide pool areas.

Visual Impairments

- If possible, meet with visitors who are visually impaired before the A/V program to ask if there is anything they would like described. For example, if the program is about birds in the region, you can use a mounted bird for visitors to touch while you describe it.
- Choose an area with minimal background noise for presenting A/V programs. Excess noise can be very distracting.
- Evaluate the facility or area where the A/V program is to be presented in advance. Plan a route to the room or area that is accessible for the entire audience. Remove any obstacles or protruding objects that a visitor may encounter. Once visitors are inside the room or at their destination, provide a general orientation to the whole area, including ambiance and visual details.
- Suggest to visitors with visual impairments that they sit up close to the A/V screen.
- Wait for the group to settle before you begin the program.
- Handouts supplied to the audience should be in large, dark print (a 12-point, sans-serif font) and on a light matte background. Be prepared to explain the contents of handouts for those who are unable to read them. Written materials that are distributed regularly to visitors should also be available in an alternate format, such as printed in an 18-point, sans-serif font and/or in Braille.
- While narrating the A/V presentation, use very descriptive words and include as much detail as you can. For example, saying “An enormous, snow-capped, pine tree-covered mountain rises behind the shimmering lake”, creates a better impression in the mind of the visitor than, “There is a mountain in the background behind the lake.”
- Provide the narrative of A/V programs in an audio description format. Audio description details what is seen on the video or film in detail, along with the standard narration. For more information, refer to the *Audio Description* section on page 33.

Limited English Proficiency

- Plan to have a bilingual interpreter present the program if visitation warrants his or her participation.
- On short notice, ask a bilingual family member or friend of the visitor to translate for you. Or, if you think that will be too disruptive, arrange for a private tour.
- Point to objects as you refer to them during a slide presentation, so visitors can more easily follow along.
- Read aloud written information displayed in the slides.
- Repeat information in different ways. Use different words, gestures, and objects to convey interpretive information.
- Offer films, videos, or slides narrated in different languages.
- If visitation warrants it, provide A/V programs subtitled in different languages or provide transcripts of the programs in different languages.
- Offer to meet with visitors after the A/V presentation to answer any questions or to repeat information.

Older Adults

Older adults may have one or more of the previously described disabilities or none of them. In addition to some of the tips already mentioned, here is another thought for older adult visitors:

- After a film or slide presentation, some visitors may need extra time to allow their eyesight to adjust to the changes in light. Before leaving, take a few minutes to review the presentation they just saw or use this time for questions and answers. This will give them the additional time they may need. Always warn visitors before turning on and off the lights, because unexpected changes in lighting can cause anyone discomfort.

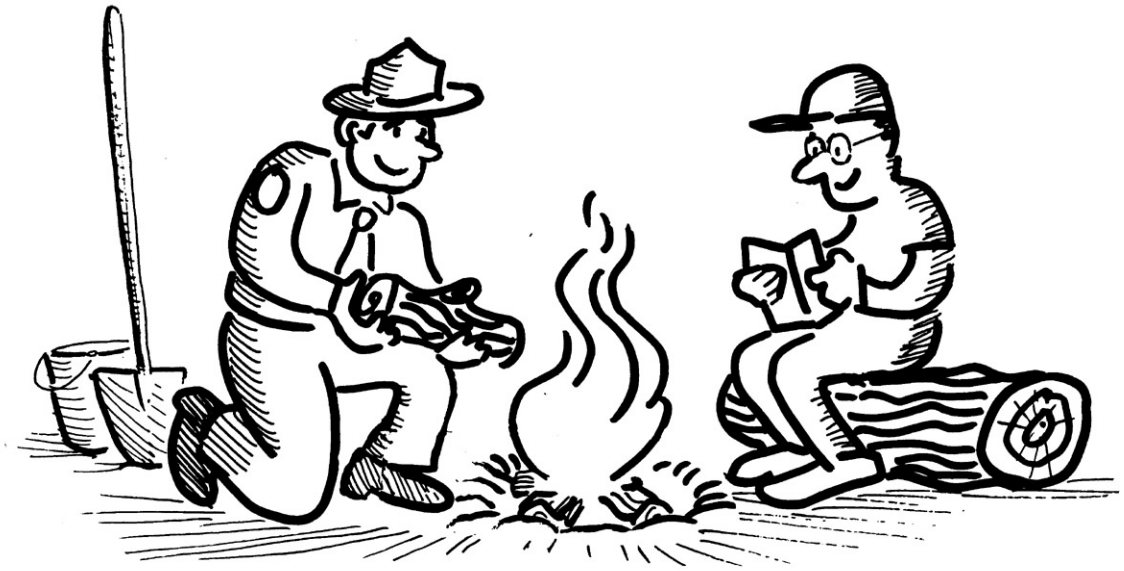
Campfire Programs

Campfire activities evoke the romance and nostalgia of the Old West and the distant past. When we share stories around a nighttime fire, we may be moved by deep memories of our species surviving thousands of generations through such rituals. The comforting, relaxing, and informal qualities of campfire activities make many visitors especially receptive to new ideas—particularly concerning protection of the resources of the park unit they are visiting and of the world in general. Campfire activities are fun as well as educational: they allow campers and staff to share songs, stories, and jokes and perform silly skits.

The following suggestions are provided to assist park staff in reaching all members of the audience when preparing and delivering campfire programs.

Hearing Impairments

- With such a wide range of hearing capabilities and limitations, ask visitors how you can suit their needs. Portable assistive listening devices can aid many visitors in hearing your campfire program. Refer to the *Assistive Listening Systems* section on page 17 for more information.
- If requested in advance by a visitor with a hearing impairment, arrange for an oral or sign language interpreter (allow 10 days in advance of the program). For a program taking place at night, the sign language interpreter may need a spotlight. For more information, refer to the *Working with an Oral or Sign Language Interpreter* section on page 15.
- If you know some sign language, use it. Your attempts will generally be appreciated.
- Invite visitors with hearing impairments to sit up front, so they can see or hear the sign



language or oral interpreter more clearly, and/or to facilitate speech-reading.

- Have an outline of your campfire program available, so visitors can more easily follow along. Include song sheets in this handout.
- Speak clearly in your normal tone of voice for your campfire program; only speak louder when it is requested, and avoid shouting. Project your voice from your diaphragm.
- Be sure you have everyone's attention before you begin to speak. Be sure that everyone understands the point you are making before continuing.
- Repeat questions from the audience, and allow sufficient time for the audience to respond. An individual with a hearing impairment may understand the verbal exchange a few seconds later because the sign language interpreter is sometimes a few words behind the speaker.
- Use short sentences. A subject-verb-object sentence structure is best, because it is the same syntax as American Sign Language. For example say, "James Marshall discovered gold," not "Gold was discovered by James Marshall."
- Challenge groups doing skits to pantomime their messages instead of talking.
- During a slide program, have extra time between slides for visitors to see the images you just described. While other visitors are looking at the slides as you speak, visitors with hearing impairments are speech-reading, or are watching the oral or sign language interpreter. For more information, refer to the *Audio-Visual Programs* section on page 45.
- Project title slides or song slides on the A/V screen during your campfire program. This will help visitors follow along in the program.
- All videos shown during the A/V portion of the campfire program must be captioned.
- Position yourself so you face a light source. This allows visitors to see your face and helps facilitate speech-reading.
- Avoid sweeping arm motions or moving around while speaking as this may distract the visitor from speech-reading or watching the sign language or oral interpreter.
- Explain new or difficult words or concepts. Define unfamiliar words in a handout, along with suggestions for additional reading on the subject.

Learning Disabilities

- Inform the audience of the campfire program's length, if they can expect an intermission, and the location of the exits. Some individuals with learning disabilities have shorter attention spans and may not wish to stay for the entire program. You may see visitors leave after the warm-up and before the formal presentation begins.
- Deliver the content of your program using a variety of different sensory methods instead of aiming for a lower level of comprehension.
- Be sure you have everyone's attention before you begin to speak, and that everyone has understood what you have just said before continuing.
- Pose questions to the entire audience to encourage involvement.
- Repeat questions from the audience.
- Allow enough time for the audience to answer questions.

- Look for visitors to indicate a desire to answer a question before calling on them. A speech impairment or memory problem may interfere with visitors' abilities to answer questions. Calling on them when they are not ready may cause undue embarrassment.
- Make smooth transitions in presentations; jumping from one subject to another may cause confusion.
- Discuss ideas in basic terms and avoid abstractions. Deliver information in short, organized segments and reinforce through repetition.
- Encourage audience participation, and incorporate items that may be touched, heard, smelled, or tasted pertaining to the theme of the campfire program. Information provided in a variety of ways reinforces learning and increases interest in your program. However, be careful not to "over-stimulate" visitors with an overload of visual, auditory, or tactile stimulation, which can easily confuse some individuals.
- Skits and songs with hand and body motions are a great way to involve the audience. Plan ahead and incorporate tasks that can be accomplished by people with varying abilities. Do not assume visitors with disabilities cannot or do not want to participate; let the visitor make the decision.
- Some individuals with learning disabilities have difficulty understanding the concept of historical and calendar time. If such information is included in your campfire presentation, use different ways of describing or demonstrating it.
- Explain new words and concepts. Include definitions of unfamiliar words in a handout, along with suggestions for further reading. Visitors may wish to learn more about the subjects you present during the campfire program.

Intellectual Disabilities

- Be sure you have everyone's attention before beginning the warm-up. If visitors miss part of the program, they may lose interest and/or have difficulty following what you are saying.
- Be aware that some audience members may not wish to stay for the entire length of the campfire program. Some individuals with intellectual disabilities have shorter attention spans. You may see some visitors leave after the warm-up and before the formal presentation begins.
- Give information in small, organized segments, and reinforce it through repetition. Too much information may be overwhelming, causing some visitors to lose interest.
- Avoid sweeping arm motions or moving around while speaking, as this may be distracting to visitors.
- Repeat questions the audience's questions out loud. Some visitors may not have heard the question, or may not fully understand what was asked. Sometimes, the visitor may not have been paying attention.
- Allow enough time for the audience to answer your question. Look for visitors to indicate a desire to answer a question before calling on them. Ask open-ended questions, with neither right nor wrong answers. Give immediate positive feedback to visitors.

- Do not dismiss a question as being irrelevant. Sometimes, poor language skills confuse what the individual may be trying to say. Whenever possible, relate the question or answer to the subject.
- Relate new information to something familiar to your audience.
- Encourage audience participation. If an individual with an intellectual disability is left with “empty time,” he or she may lose interest and may become disruptive. It is important that you demonstrate any activity or concept before asking the audience to participate. A song with hand and body motions is one way to involve the audience, but make sure everyone understands the movements before beginning. Use engaging activities throughout the program to encourage maximum audience participation and alertness.
- Choose campfire program activities that involve partners and that do not single out individuals. Some individuals may not want to become involved due to fear of embarrassment. Positive reinforcement may encourage future involvement.
- Present items pertaining to the theme of your campfire program that may be touched, smelled, heard, and tasted. Information provided in a variety of ways reinforces learning and increases interest in your program.
- Explain unfamiliar words or concepts. Include definitions of new words in a handout. Some visitors may wish to learn more about the subject.

Mobility Impairments

- Evaluate the accessibility of the campfire area in advance. Stairs, curbs, steep slopes, and slippery surfaces may pose difficulty to visitors with mobility impairments. Trails leading to the campfire area should be accessible by wheelchair. When publicizing the campfire program, be sure to indicate the accessibility of the campfire area. Refer to the *Interpretive Facilities* section, beginning on page 125, for more information. Obtain a copy of the ADA Accessibility Guidelines, *California State Parks Accessibility Guidelines*, and *California State Accessibility Standards* for additional information and requirements.
- During your campfire program, present a film or a slide show of areas not easily accessible by people with mobility impairments. For example, provide an A/V program about wilderness or underwater landscapes.
- Be aware of the line-of-sight of visitors in wheelchairs. Show objects at the eye level for people in wheelchairs. Remember that some individuals are unable to look up or down for long periods of time.
- Do not exclude people using communication boards or books from discussions. Look for individuals to indicate a desire to answer a question or make a comment before asking them to respond, and be sure to give them the extra time they may need.
- When incorporating items that may be touched into your campfire program, be aware of the audience’s capabilities and limitations. You or another staff member may need to hold the object for the visitors, while they look at it.
- If you have a visitor who is using an electric wheelchair, wait until the noise of the wheelchair has stopped before you begin speaking.
- Offer to have park staff escort any visitors who request assistance returning to their campsites.

Visual Impairments

- Locate any obstacles or protruding objects that may be encountered en route to the campfire center, and remove them, if possible. Inform visitors of any obstacles prior to attending. Guiding visitors to the seating area may be helpful. Refer to the *Sighted Guide Technique* section on page 31 for tips on assisting people with visual impairments.
- Be alert to the individual needs of visitors with visual impairments. Recommend to visitors with visual impairments that they sit up close to the front, so they can view the program more easily.
- Wait for the audience to settle before talking. Excessive noise can be very distracting.
- Be familiar with different methods of describing historical and natural settings. Refer to the *Methods of Description* section on page 31.
- Use descriptive language during your program. Emphasize textures and colors of objects or the topography of areas; otherwise, they could be overlooked. For example, during a slide presentation, have the audience close their eyes while you describe a slide to them. Then, ask them open their eyes and see the image. Next, ask an audience member to describe another slide to the group. The first picture could be a panoramic shot like a mountain landscape, and the second could be a close-up of an object, such as a water droplet. It will be fun to hear the different descriptions and then the audience's reactions when the image is finally revealed.
- Incorporate sensory activities into your campfire program. One way is to have everyone close their eyes and listen to the sounds of the night.
- Written materials supplied to the audience, such as song sheets, should be in large, dark print (a minimum 12-point, sans-serif font is recommended) on a light matte background. Be prepared to explain the contents of handouts for those who are unable to read them. Written materials that are distributed regularly to visitors should also be available in an alternate format, such as printed in an 18-point, sans-serif font and/or in Braille.
- Offer to have park staff escort any visitors who request assistance back to their campsites.

Limited English Proficiency

- Plan to have a bilingual interpreter present the campfire program, if visitor demand warrants it.
- Offer some interpretive programs in common languages other than English.
- Repeat information in a variety of ways. Use different words, gestures, and objects to convey interpretive information.
- Pantomime your message. This may be the only way to communicate with some visitors who have limited English proficiency. Use facial expressions, as well as hand and body movements. If necessary, draw pictures to communicate interpretive information.
- Challenge groups doing skits to pantomime their messages instead of talking.

- Avoid using colloquial expressions because they may be difficult for visitors to understand.
- Prepare photographs, slides, objects, and other visual and tactile examples to illustrate interpretive information.
- Look for visitors who indicate a desire to answer a question before calling on them. Asking them to respond before they are ready may cause unnecessary embarrassment.
- When distributing written materials, explain the contents for those who may not be able to read it. If possible, also have copies of those materials available in different languages.
- Offer to meet with visitors after the campfire program to answer questions or repeat information.
- If you learn that a group of foreign visitors with limited English proficiency is coming to your campfire program, try to make arrangements to speak with them before the program begins. Ask if they have any native songs or games they want to share with the group during the warm-up. This will involve your visitors and add a multi-cultural experience to the campfire program.

Older Adults

Older adults may have one or more of the disabilities described previously, or none of them. In addition to some of the tips already mentioned, here are additional considerations to use for older adult visitors:

- The campfire area's low light levels may make it difficult for visitors to see. If you are planning on distributing written materials, remind visitors in the program announcement to bring flashlights with them to the campfire.
- As the visitors arrive or during the warm-up, ask the audience if anyone has any early childhood memories or stories of state parks they want to share. Some older adults may have fascinating stories of their first experiences in parks.
- Offer to have park staff assist visitors returning to their campsites after the campfire program, in case they have trouble finding their way in the dark.

Environmental Living and Studies Programs

Many state park units work with local school systems to develop school programs involving the resources of state parks. Environmental Living Programs (ELPs) provide children overnight park experiences to explore the interaction between people and their environment. Immersed for a brief time in the past, students learn from their own experiences about earlier cultures and lifestyles. When providing an Environmental Living Program for a group that may include children with disabilities, speak with their teacher, parent, or guardian. Ask about any special needs that may affect the presentation of your program, their overnight stay, or an emergency situation.

Environmental Studies Programs (ESPs) have similar goals to ELPs but are organized without the overnight stay. Both are equally structured to provide the most informative experience in the allotted time. They focus on the unit's interpretive themes and coordinate with concepts taught in the classroom. Programs incorporate demonstrations, hands-on activities, and follow-up student assignments. As with living history programs, interpreters in period attire add a heightened sense of historic realism. In some cases, the students also dress in period attire to play historic roles.

Before all Environmental Studies Programs or Environmental Living Programs, present the teacher with an outline of content to be covered and the vocabulary pertinent to your theme. This way he/she can pre-teach the students so they will already be familiar with the words and concepts before they arrive at your site.

The following suggestions are provided to assist park staff in developing and presenting ELPs and ESPs that will be enjoyable for all participants.

Hearing Impairments

- Meet with visitors or their parents or guardians before they arrive and ask how you can suit their child's individual needs. With the wide range of hearing impairments, many options for assistance are possible.
- Provide an amplification system to improve communication between you and your visitors. Refer to the *Assistive Listening Systems* section on page 17 for more information.
- If requested in advance by a visitor with a hearing impairment, arrange for a licensed professional sign language or oral interpreter to assist you during the ELP or ESP. Ten days in advance is standard for advance planning. Refer to the *Working with an Oral or Sign Language Interpreter* section on page 15 prior to the program.
- In addition to having an audible building alarm system, sleeping facilities must have a visual emergency alarm installed that is in compliance with the National Fire Alarm Code. Consult your local State Fire Marshal or the Department's Accessibility Section for guidance in regard to these important safety measures.
- Invite children with hearing impairments to sit in the front of the group, so they can hear more clearly, speech-read, or see the sign language or oral interpreter.
- If you know some sign language, use it. Your attempts will generally be appreciated.
- Select areas with minimal background noise for your ELP or ESP presentations and discussions.
- Provide an outline of your program, so children can more easily follow along.
- Always face the group and the light source when you speak. If you turn away, speech-reading becomes impossible, and it may become difficult for the sign language or oral interpreter to hear you.
- When presenting your program, speak in your normal tone of voice and volume. Do not assume you need to shout at children who are hearing impaired. Project your voice from your diaphragm. Speak louder only when it is requested.
- Be sure you have everyone's attention before beginning to speak, and be sure that everyone understands what you are saying before continuing.

- Use short sentences. A subject-verb-object sentence structure is best, because it is the same syntax as American Sign Language. For example, say, “Most of the buildings at Fort Tejon were constructed of adobe bricks,” not “Adobe bricks were used to construct most of the buildings at Fort Tejon.”
- When showing the group an object or demonstrating a craft and discussing it at the same time, allow extra time for the group to see what you have just described. Although some children can look at an object as you talk about it, children with hearing impairments may be speech-reading or watching the sign language or oral interpreter. Position yourself so the group can see you and the object of discussion at the same time. When working with a sign language or oral interpreter, place the object between the two of you.
- Avoid sweeping arm motions or moving around while speaking, as this may distract the child from speech-reading or watching the sign language or oral interpreter.
- Repeat questions from the group, and allow time for the children to respond to your questions. A child with a hearing impairment may understand the questions a few seconds later, because the sign language or oral interpreter is sometimes a few words behind the speaker.
- Explain unfamiliar words or concepts used in the ELP or ESP. Include definitions of unfamiliar words in a handout, along with suggestions for additional reading on the subject.

Learning Disabilities

- Ask the teacher, parent, or guardian the specific learning disabilities student experiences, so you can understand the best way to communicate with the individuals in the group.
- Prepare visual, tactile, and audible materials pertaining to the theme of the ELP or ESP and distribute them prior to the program. This acquaints the children with the subject matter and also with unfamiliar words that may be used during the program.
- Select areas with minimal background noises and few distractions for ELP or ESP presentations or discussions.
- Keep the group small. It is helpful to work one-on-one as much as possible.
- Be sure you have everyone’s attention before beginning to speak, and that everyone has understood what you have just said before continuing.
- Too much information may “over-stimulate” an individual with a learning disability, causing confusion and disinterest. Keep the ESP or ELP program limited to one or two primary ideas, and remember to stay focused on the theme.
- The content of the ELP or ESP should be presented using a variety of different methods, instead of aiming for a lower level of comprehension. Another suggestion is to use a variety of media to convey the interpretive information. Models, plant and animal specimens, photographs, drawings, and dioramas may add to verbal explanations.
- Involve all the senses in your program. Incorporate interpretive materials pertaining to the theme of your program to smell, hear, touch, and taste. Information provided in this way reinforces learning and increases interest in your program. As with all visitors, incorporate hands-on activities whenever possible to increase visitor participation.

- Highlight the colors, textures, sounds, and smells of objects. Discuss their important characteristics individually; otherwise, they may be overlooked.
- Pose questions to the group to encourage everyone's involvement.
- Repeat questions from the children.
- Allow enough time for the group to respond to questions.
- Look for children to raise a hand or other sign to indicate their interest in responding to a question before calling on them. A speech impairment or memory problem may interfere with a child's ability to answer questions. Calling on an individual when he or she is not ready may cause undue embarrassment.
- Provide smooth transitions during presentations. Jumping from one subject to another may cause confusion.
- Discuss ideas in basic terms, and avoid abstractions. Organize information in a logical fashion. Deliver it in short segments, and reinforce ideas through repetition.
- Some children with learning disabilities have difficulty understanding the concepts of historical or calendar time. Use different methods to explain or demonstrate it. Relate time to something more familiar in their lives, such as their age. For example, say, "If you were born during the Gold Rush, you would be about 160 years old today."
- Read aloud exhibit or trail signage.
- Explain new words and concepts. Include definitions of unfamiliar words in a handout, along with suggestions for additional readings on the subject. Children may wish to learn more about the subjects presented in the ELP or ESP.

Intellectual Disabilities

- Ask the teacher, parent, or guardian about any individual needs to be aware of.
- Select areas with minimal background noises and few distractions for discussions and presentations.
- Show children an area map indicating where activities will take place and where they will be sleeping. This will help them to become more familiar with their surroundings.
- Have everyone's attention before beginning to speak. If students miss part of the discussion, they may lose interest in the talk.
- Provide information in small, organized segments. Too much information may be overwhelming, causing some children to lose interest. Keep the program limited to one or two primary ideas and stay focused on the theme.
- Avoid sweeping arm movements or moving around while speaking, as this may be distracting.
- Repeat questions from the group. Some children may not have heard the question, may have forgotten what was asked, did not fully understand its meaning, or paying full attention.
- Allow enough time for the group to answer your question. Look for a sign from children to indicate their interest in responding to a question, before calling on them. Ask open-ended questions with answers that are neither right nor wrong. Offer children immediate positive feedback.

- Do not dismiss a question as being irrelevant. Sometimes poor language skills confuse what an individual is trying to say. Relate the question or answer to the subject.
- Demonstrate the activity or task before asking program participants to perform it.
- Do not talk as you demonstrate an activity or object. The group will be concentrating on your movements or the object, and not on your words. Speak before or after the demonstration.
- Relate new information to the children's lives and then reinforce this information through repetition.
- Encourage every child to participate. If a child with intellectual disability is left with "empty time," he or she may lose interest and become disruptive.
- In some instances you may need to remind the group of the park's or program's rules, and what can or cannot be touched.
- Choose ELP or ESP activities involving partners that do not single out individuals. Some children may not want to participate, fearing embarrassment. Positive reinforcement from you may encourage future involvement.
- Read aloud exhibit or trail signage.
- Explain new words or concepts used in the ELP or ESP. Include definitions of new words in a handout, along with suggestions for additional readings on the subject.
- Use items pertinent to your program's theme to touch, hear, smell, and taste. Information presented in a variety of ways can reinforce learning and increase interest in your program. Models, plant and animal specimens, photographs, drawings, and dioramas add another dimension to verbal explanation.
- Remind children to handle objects with care. If you are concerned that the objects may be dropped or mishandled, hold the objects yourself or pass around only non-breakable items.

Mobility Impairments

- Refer to the 2010 ADA Standards and *California State Accessibility Standards* for requirements on sleeping accommodations that should be applied to ELP activities.
- Arrange to have first-floor sleeping accommodations for all ELP participants. If this is not possible, be sure that individuals with mobility impairments can be accommodated on the first floor.
- Plan for your program to be presented in areas accessible to the entire group. Walk the area in advance to identify potential areas of visitor concern. Raised or narrow entrances and stairs may pose problems for children with mobility impairments.
- .Refer to the *Interpretive Facilities* section on page 125, the 2010 ADA Standards, *California State Parks Accessibility Guidelines*, and *California State Accessibility Standards* for more information.
- Point out emergency evacuation routes to all visitors, and make sure they are accessible.
- If all attempts to make an area of the park site accessible are unsuccessful, provide a film, slide show, or photographs of those public areas not accessible by wheelchair. (ADA, 35.150). In addition, provide objects or replicas of artifacts from an area or room

not accessible for the children to see and/or touch. For example, many second-story rooms of historic buildings are not accessible to individuals using wheelchairs. The park unit should offer visitors a look at a video, photographs, or slides of the room, along with actual objects or replicas from the room.

- Provide seating with backs and armrests. Remember, not all children are able to sit on the floor, or able to get up and down from that position easily. For outside programs, seating in the shade is preferred. Some children with mobility impairments cannot regulate their body temperature and may be susceptible to heat-related ailments.
- If a child is using an electric wheelchair, wait until the noise of the wheelchair has stopped before you begin speaking.
- Be aware of the line-of-sight of visitors using wheelchairs. Show objects at their eye level. Some individuals have difficulty looking up or down for long periods of time. Mirrors can be used to assist individuals looking up at high places, such as the top of a historic building or a flag raised high on a pole.
- When incorporating items that may be touched into your programs, be aware of individual capabilities and limitations. You or another staff member may need to hold objects for the child, while they touch or look at it.
- If you are pushing a child using a wheelchair, do not deliver program information while walking. This individual may not hear you. It may be necessary to seek assistance from another staff member to push the wheelchair, while you present your program.
- Do not exclude children using communication books or boards from discussions. Look for a desire to respond and give them the time they need to formulate their message.

Visual Impairments

- Inform your visitors about the location of restroom facilities near the sleeping area. Make sure a staff member is available to assist, if needed. Refer to the *Sighted Guide Technique* section on page 31 for tips on guiding visitors with visual impairments.
- If fire or other emergency alarms are required in the sleeping area, be sure they are audible as well as visual and that they are working properly. Inform all visitors of evacuation routes, and walk the evacuation route with visitors who are visually impaired.
- Evaluate the area where the ELP or ESP will take place. Look for any obstacles or protruding objects which may be encountered by children with visual impairments, and inform them of their location.
- When the group arrives, take the time to describe the area in detail to children with visual impairments. Include in your description textures, colors, and sizes of buildings, trees, and other important features. Refer to the *Methods of Description* section on page 31 for more information.
- Select areas with minimal background noise for ELP or ESP discussions and presentations.
- Provide a tactile relief map of the facility and/or area so children with visual impairments can become oriented to their surroundings.
- Be alert to the individual needs of children with visual impairments. Allow them to sit or stand close to the front, so they can see you or the objects of discussion more easily.

- Provide adequate lighting for reading, drawing, or craft activities.
- Wait for the children to settle before speaking. Excess noise can be very distracting.
- Always talk facing the group and the light source.
- Give clear, verbal direction to the group when moving from one area to another. Once at your destination, provide a general orientation to the whole area, including atmosphere and visual details.
- Read aloud exhibit or trail signage.
- Provide hand lenses or magnifiers to view photographs, signs, or exhibits, or to take on outdoor walks. The whole group can benefit by taking a closer look at the detail of some historic or natural objects.
- Use enlarged photographs to allow children to see more detail.
- Take a moment to listen to the sounds and to smell the fragrances of the area. Be aware of sounds and smells you might otherwise ignore, especially during cooking activities. Discuss what you hear and smell. Encourage the entire group to use multiple senses, in addition to sight.
- Use life-size or scale models of objects that may not be touched.
- When demonstrating a skill, have a child with a visual impairment hold your hands as you work; at the same time, explain in detail what you are doing.
- Handouts supplied to the group, such as role-playing cards or game sheets, should be in large, dark print (a 12-point, sans-serif font) and on a light matte background. Be prepared to explain the contents of handouts for those who are unable to read them. Written materials that are distributed regularly to visitors should also be available in an alternate format, such as printed in an 18-point, sans-serif font and/or in Braille.
- Offer an additional reading list pertaining to the theme of the ELP or ESP. The participants may be able to find talking books or books in Braille to supplement their visit.

Limited English Proficiency

- Talk with the teacher or parent and arrange for a language translator to be present during the ELP or ESP if needed. When working with a translator, speak at a moderately slow pace, speak in short sentences, and pause occasionally to let the translator and listeners “catch up.”
- If necessary, pantomime your message. This may be the only way to communicate with some children who have limited English proficiency. Use facial expressions, as well as hand and body movements. Draw pictures, if needed, to communicate interpretive information.
- Prepare photographs, slides, objects, and other visual and tactile examples to illustrate interpretive information.
- Describe the program information in a variety of ways. Use different words, gestures, and objects to convey interpretive information.
- Point to objects you are speaking about.
- Avoid using colloquial expressions, idioms, and slang because they may be difficult for visitors to understand.

- Look for children to indicate a desire to answer a question before calling on them. Asking them to respond before they are ready may cause embarrassment.
- When distributing written materials, explain them for those who may not be able to read.
- If the number of ELP or ESP participants warrants it, have copies of written materials available in different languages.

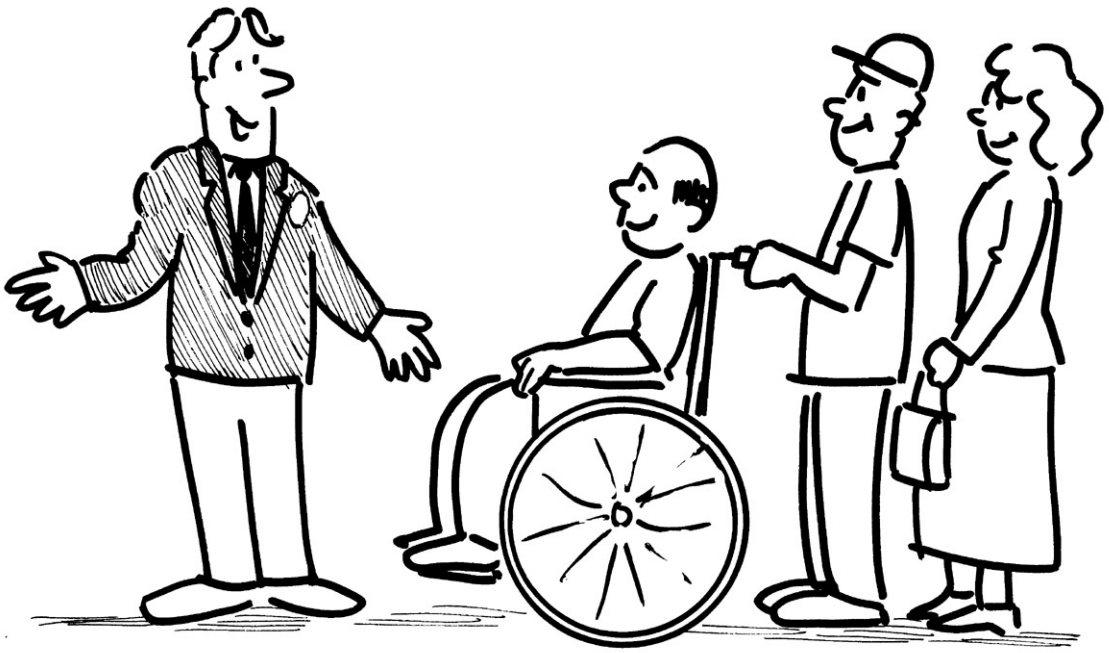
Guided Walks, Tours and Talks

Guided walks, tours, and talks are highly effective interpretive media, because they bring together a skilled interpreter, interested visitors, and valued cultural or natural resources. A park experience with an interpreter will often be the most rewarding and memorable part of an individual's visit. Guided walks, tours, and talks can make full use of the available resources, while meeting a variety of visitor interests and needs. As with all interpretive programs, the interpreter should describe the walk or program to visitors at the beginning, including the length and level of difficulty. This information may help them determine if your program is suitable to meet their need for accessibility.

The following suggestions are provided to assist park staff in preparing and delivering guided walks, tours, and talks for all visitors.

Hearing Impairments

- With the range of hearing capabilities and limitations, talking with visitors is the best way to find out how to suit their individual needs. Portable assistive listening devices can aid many visitors in hearing your talk. Refer to the *Assistive Listening Systems* section on page 17 for more information.
- A licensed professional sign language or oral interpreter must be provided if requested at least ten days in advance. Refer to the *Working with an Oral or Sign Language Interpreter* section on page 15 for more information.



- Invite visitors with hearing impairments to be in front of the group so they can hear more clearly, speech-read, or see the sign language or oral interpreter.
- If you know some sign language, use it. Your attempts will generally be appreciated. Some parks have trained docents give tours in sign language.
- If possible, select areas with minimal background noise for your walk, tour, or talk.
- Always face the audience when you speak. If you turn away, speech-reading becomes impossible, and it is very difficult for the sign language or oral interpreter to hear you.
- Speak in your normal tone and volume during your program. Do not assume you need to shout for visitors who are hearing impaired. Project your voice from your diaphragm. Speak louder only when it is requested.
- Be sure you have everyone's attention before beginning the talk or tour. Also, periodically check to see that everyone understands before continuing.
- Provide an outline of your tour, so visitors can more easily follow along.
- Before beginning the walk or tour, describe your route (trail conditions and length) and give a brief overview of the resources and setting along the way.
- Always position yourself so that you are facing a light source and the audience when you are speaking. This will allow visitors to see your face and speech-read.
- Use short sentences. A subject-verb-object sentence structure is best, because it is the same syntax as American Sign Language. For example, "The flowers are blooming on the mountain," instead of, "On the mountain the flowers are blooming."
- When showing visitors an object and discussing it at the same time, allow extra time for them to see what you have described. Although some visitors can look at an object as you talk about it, visitors with hearing impairments may need to watch the sign language or oral interpreter, or they may be speech-reading. Position yourself so that visitors can see you, as well as the object under discussion, at the same time. When working with a sign language or oral interpreter, place the object between the two of you.
- Point to objects you are describing. Visual cues, like this, will help visitors to more clearly understand your talk.
- Be aware of textures, colors, or smells you might otherwise ignore. Encourage the entire group to be more aware of their senses. Take a moment to smell the fragrances of the area, or to feel the textures of objects. Discuss what you smell or touch.
- Avoid sweeping arm movements or moving around while speaking. This may distract visitors who are speech-reading or watching the sign language or oral interpreter.
- Repeat questions from the audience and allow sufficient time for the audience to respond. An individual with a hearing impairment may understand the question a few seconds later, because the sign language or oral interpreter is sometimes a few words behind the speaker.
- Explain new or difficult words or concepts. Include definitions of unfamiliar words in a handout, along with suggestions for additional reading on the subject.

Learning Disabilities

- Be aware that everyone may not wish to stay for the entire guided walk or tour, as some individuals with learning disabilities have shorter attention spans. Prior

arrangements may need to be made to have park staff escort individuals back to the starting point.

- Before beginning the walk or tour, describe the route that will be taken and give a brief overview of the resources to be interpreted along the way. This will increase anticipation and interest in your program.
- Provide a tactile relief map of the area. This involves the senses of touch and sight, while allowing visitors to see where they are going on their tour or walk.
- Keep the tour group small. It is helpful to work one-on-one as much as possible.
- Select areas with minimal background noise and distractions to speak to the group during a guided walk, tour, or talk.
- Be sure you have everyone's attention before beginning to speak. Also, periodically check to see that everyone has understood what you have just said before continuing.
- Avoid "over-stimulating" the audience. An overload of visual, tactile, or auditory stimulation can easily confuse some individuals.
- Too much information may cause confusion and could result in disinterest in the tour or talk. Keep the program focused around your theme.
- Deliver the content of your program using a variety of different methods, instead of aiming for a lower level of comprehension.
- Use several types of media to convey the interpretive information. Models, specimens, photographs, drawings, and dioramas all add another dimension to verbal explanation.
- Involve all the senses in your tour or talk. Incorporate items pertaining to the theme of your program that may be smelled, heard, touched, or tasted. Information presented in a variety of ways reinforces learning and increases interest in your program.
- Be aware of sounds and smells you might otherwise ignore. Encourage the entire group to be more aware of their senses. Take a moment to listen to the sounds and to smell the fragrances of the area. Discuss what you hear and smell.
- Individualize color, texture, sound, or the smell of an object. Discuss the important characteristics individually; otherwise, they may be overlooked.
- Pose questions to the entire tour group to encourage everyone's involvement.
- Repeat questions from the audience.
- Allow enough time for the tour group to ask or to respond to questions.
- Look for visitors who indicate a desire to answer a question before calling on them. A speech impairment or memory problem may interfere with visitors' abilities to answer questions. Calling on them when they are not ready may cause unnecessary embarrassment.
- Create smooth transitions in presentations; jumping from one subject to another may cause confusion.
- Discuss concepts and ideas in basic terms; avoid abstractions. Group information logically. It should be conveyed in short segments and reinforced through repetition.
- Some individuals with learning disabilities have difficulty understanding the concept of historical and calendar time. If this information is included in your tour or talk, use different ways to explain or demonstrate it.
- Explain new or difficult words and concepts. Include definitions of unfamiliar words in a handout or brochure, along with suggestions for additional reading. Visitors may wish

to increase their understanding or learn more about the subjects presented during the walk, tour, or talk.

- If your audience is a group of people with learning disabilities, a tour of 30 minutes or less may be an ideal length.

Intellectual Disabilities

- If possible, select areas with minimal background noise and distractions to speak to the group during the tour or talk. An outdoor tour's introduction may begin indoors in order to minimize noise and distractions.
- Keep the size of the tour group small.
- It may be necessary to remind the tour group of the park's or museum's rules.
- Provide visitors with a simple map of the area or floor plan(s) of the building, indicating where you will go and what you will see while on tour. This will stimulate curiosity and interest in your program.
- Be sure you have everyone's attention before beginning the tour or talk. If visitors miss part of the discussion, they may be lost or lose interest in the program.
- Be aware that everyone may not wish to stay for the entire tour or talk. Some individuals with intellectual disabilities have shorter attention spans and may leave before the end of your program. Determine in advance if park staff may need to escort individuals back to the starting place.
- Provide information in small, organized segments and reinforce it through repetition. Too much information can be overwhelming and may cause some visitors to loose interest.
- Avoid sweeping arm motions or moving around while speaking, as this may be distracting.
- Repeat questions from the tour group. Some visitors may not have heard the question, may not understand what was asked, or weren't paying attention.
- Be sure to allow enough time for the group to answer your questions. Look for visitors who indicate a desire to answer a question before calling on them. Ask open-ended questions with no right or wrong answers. Offer immediate, positive feedback to the visitors.
- Do not automatically dismiss a question or an answer as being irrelevant. Sometimes poor language skills confuse what the individual is trying to say. Do your best to relate the question or answer to the subject.
- Where possible during the tour or talk, demonstrate the activity or concept, allow visitors to participate, relate information to their lives, and then reinforce the information through repetition.
- Encourage audience participation. Some individuals with intellectual disabilities, if left with "empty time," can lose interest, and may become disruptive.
- Be aware of the sounds and smells you might otherwise ignore. Encourage the entire group to be more aware of their senses. Take a moment to listen to the sounds and smell the fragrances of the area. Discuss what you hear and smell.

- Choose activities that involve partners and do not single out individuals. Some individuals may not want to become involved through fear of embarrassment. Your positive reinforcement may encourage their future involvement.
- Take along items pertaining to the theme of your tour or talk that may be touched, heard, smelled, or tasted. Information provided in a variety of ways reinforces learning and increases interest in your program. Models, specimens, photographs, drawings, and dioramas add another dimension to verbal explanation.
- When incorporating objects that can be touched into your tour, remind everyone to handle the objects with care. If you are concerned about them being dropped or mishandled, hold the objects yourself, or pass around only non-breakable items.
- Explain new or difficult words or concepts. Include definitions of unfamiliar words in a handout, along with suggestions for additional reading on the subject. Visitors may wish to increase their understanding or learn more about the subjects presented during the walk, tour, or talk.
- If the tour group consists entirely of people with intellectual disabilities and is prearranged, find out you visitors' interests. Consider planning a tour of no longer than 30 minutes, based on their interests.

Mobility Impairments

- Evaluate the access to the site proposed for your talk or to the area you plan to tour in advance. Stairs, curbs, and slippery surfaces may prove hazardous for visitors with mobility impairments. Check the route for any barriers or other difficulties, including slopes that may be encountered. Plan a route that is accessible for the entire audience. Some parks provide ramps and paved trails to highly visited areas. This provides safety and access to all visitors, and can also provide protection for sensitive park resources such exposed tree roots. Refer to the *Interpretive Facilities* section on page 125 for information on the ADA Accessibility Guidelines and Parks Accessibility Guidelines.
- When publicizing the guided walk, tour, or talk, be sure to indicate the accessibility of the area, the difficulty of the walk, and the length of the program. However, do not tell a visitor what they "cannot do."
- As stated in the Introduction, the Department's priority is to make park sites accessible. If access is not feasible, alternatives must be provided so that people with disabilities have an equal opportunity to benefit from the service provided. These include portrayal in film, slide show, or audio-visual relay.
- It is also helpful to provide exhibit objects or replicas of artifacts from inaccessible areas or rooms for the visitors to see and/or touch.
- At the beginning of your tour or walk, discuss any obstacles that may be encountered.
- Prearranged rest breaks should be announced at the beginning of the tour, and additional breaks should be accommodated, if requested. Also, inform the group of the location or absence of restrooms and drinking fountains along the tour.
- Allow visitors to leave the tour early or make prior arrangements to have a staff member escort them back to the starting point. Some visitors may find long walks or tours too strenuous. Long talks could also be a problem for individuals who are unable to sit for extended periods of time.

- Offer an optional “leisure tour,” a separate tour available to anyone who wants to proceed at a slower pace.
- Offer self-guided printed or audio tours for those who wish to proceed at their own pace.
- If the tour group includes a visitor who is using an electric wheelchair, wait until the noise of the wheelchair has stopped before speaking.
- Place seats with backs and armrests along routes used for long tours or walks. For outdoor programs, seating with shade is preferred, as some people with mobility impairments cannot regulate their body temperature and may easily suffer from heat-related ailments.
- During walks or tours, allow extra time between points of interest or exhibits. People with assistive mobility devices may require additional time to move about.
- Be aware of the line-of-sight of visitors in wheelchairs and present objects at eye level to them. Remember, some individuals may be unable to look up or down for long periods of time.
- When incorporating items that may be touched into your tour program, be aware of individual capabilities and limitations. You or another staff member may need to hold the object for the visitor, while they examine it.
- If you are pushing a visitor in a wheelchair during a tour, do not deliver tour information while walking. This individual may not hear you when you are behind him/her. It may be necessary to seek assistance from another staff member to push the wheelchair while you speak to the entire group.

Visual Impairments

- Be aware of any obstacles or protruding objects that may be encountered during your tour. Inform visitors of the obstacles at the beginning of your tour or walk. You or another staff member may be requested to guide a visitor with a visual impairment. Refer to the *Sighted Guide Technique* on page 31 for tips on assisting people with visual impairments.
- Meet with visitors who are visually impaired before the tour or walk begins and ask if there is anything they would like described to them.
- Before beginning the tour or walk, describe the route that will be taken and give a brief overview of the resources that will be interpreted along the way. Provide a tactile relief map of the facility and/or area so visitors can more easily become oriented with their surroundings.
- Select areas with minimal background noise when speaking during the guided walk, tour, or talk.
- Wait for the audience to settle before talking. Excess noise can be very distracting.
- Be alert to the individual needs of visitors with visual impairments. Allow individuals to sit or stand at the front of the tour group so they can see you or the object of discussion more easily.
- Be aware of lighting conditions and, where possible, minimize glare on glass.
- Always talk facing the group and a light source.

- Give clear verbal direction to the tour group when moving from one area to another. Once at your destination, provide a general orientation to the whole area, including ambiance and visual details.
- Read aloud exhibit text or wayside trail signage.
- Use descriptive language during your talk; emphasize textures, colors, topography, etc. Be familiar with different methods of describing historical and natural settings and objects. Verbal description plays an important role in guiding tactile exploration. Refer to the *Methods of Description* section on page 31 for further information.
- Magnifiers should be available to use on photographs, signs, or exhibits, or to take on outdoor walks for a closer inspection of natural materials.
- Offer enlarged photographs to allow all visitors to see more detail.
- Be aware of sounds and smells you might otherwise ignore. Encourage the entire group to be more aware of their senses. Take a moment to listen to the sounds and smell the fragrances of the area. Discuss what you hear and smell. Night hikes are one way to emphasize the other senses.
- For tours or talks, have either life-size or scaled-down models available of objects that are not to be touched. The National Park Service, for example, has a life-size model of the Statue of Liberty's foot for people to touch in their visitor center at the Statue of Liberty.
- Handouts supplied to the audience should be in large, dark print (a 12-point, sans-serif font) and on a light matte background. Be prepared to explain the contents of handouts for those who are unable to read them. Written materials that are distributed regularly to visitors should also be available in an alternate format, such as printed in an 18-point, sans-serif font and/or in Braille. The California State Capitol Museum has a Braille brochure describing each floor of the Capitol building.
- Offer an additional reading list pertaining to the walk, tour, or talk. Visitors may be able to find talking books or books in Braille to supplement their visit.
- Offer guided tours in lieu of self-guided tours, for those who request it.

Limited English Proficiency

- Provide visitors with a simple map of the area or floor plan(s) of the buildings indicating where you will go and what you will see. This helps visitors to follow the tour when they cannot understand verbal directions.
- If the audience warrants it, plan to have a bilingual interpreter present the program.
- On short notice, ask a bilingual family member or friend of the visitor to translate for you during the tour or talk. Ask that the translating be done at the rear of the audience (away from the guide) if the translating is being done for a portion of the group. If you think that will be too disruptive, arrange for a private tour.
- Pantomime your message. This may be the only way to communicate with some visitors who have limited English proficiency. Use facial expressions, as well as hand and body movements. If needed, draw pictures to communicate the interpretive information.
- Point to objects to which you are referring. This provides a visual cue to help visitors understand your talk.

- Prepare photographs, slides, objects, and other visual and tactile examples to illustrate interpretive information.
- Repeat the program's material in a variety of ways. Use different words, gestures, and objects to convey the interpretive information.
- Avoid using colloquial expressions such as idioms, and slang because they may be difficult for visitors to understand.
- Look for visitors to indicate a desire to answer a question before calling on them. Asking them to respond before they are ready may cause undue embarrassment.
- When distributing written materials, explain the contents for those who may not be able to read it.
- Have copies of handouts made available in different languages if the park's visitation warrants it.
- Offer to meet with visitors after the walk, tour, or talk to answer questions or repeat information.

Older Adults

Older adults may have one or more of the disabilities previously mentioned, or none of them. In addition to some of the tips already mentioned, here are additional suggestions for older adult visitors.

- Prearranged rest breaks should be announced at the beginning of the tour, and additional breaks should be accommodated, if requested. Also, inform the audience of the location or absence of restrooms along the tour.
- Low light levels in some areas on the tour may create hazardous situations. Some older adults may need extra time to allow their eyes to adjust to drastic changes in light levels. Suggest that the group stay still while their eyes adjust. Also, remove any potential barriers that may cause accidents in areas where extreme changes in lighting levels occur.
- If you are planning to distribute written materials to your audience, make sure adequate lighting is provided for reading.
- Avoid long or fast-paced walks.
- Provide seating with backs and armrests. While outdoors, route the tour through areas of shade and drinking fountains, or suggest visitors bring water along with them.

Interpretive Demonstrations

Interpreters can effectively show visitors modern recreational skills. They can also present how traditional activities and crafts were produced in the past through live demonstrations. These activities not only help visitors step back into another time, but also bring them closer to other traditions and cultures. It is very important that all techniques be presented properly and as accurately as possible for a particular interpretive period. Examples of live interpretive demonstrations include basket making, beer brewing, bread making and baking, Native Californian skills and crafts, fly tying, fire starting, sign painting, carpentry, gardening, leather working, sewing, weaving, military drills, placer mining, newspaper printing, games, and storytelling.

The following suggestions are provided to assist park staff in preparing and delivering interpretive demonstrations that will be satisfying and informative for a diverse audience.

Hearing Impairments

- With the range of hearing capabilities and limitations, it is important to talk with visitors to find out how best to meet their needs. Portable assistive listening devices work well during interpretive demonstrations. Refer to the *Assistive Listening* section on page 17 for more information.
- If requested in advance by a visitor, arrange for a licensed professional sign language or oral interpreter. Refer to the *Working with an Oral or Sign Language Interpreter* section on page 15 for more information.
- Provide an outline of your program, possibly including diagrams or drawings representing the series of steps in the demonstration, so visitors can more easily follow along.
- Select areas with minimal background noise for the demonstrations.
- Allow visitors with hearing impairments to sit or stand up front, so that they can hear more clearly, speech-read, or see the sign language or oral interpreter.
- If you know some sign language, use it. Your attempts will usually be appreciated.
- Always face the audience when you speak. If you turn away, speech-reading becomes impossible, and it is difficult for the sign language or oral interpreter to hear you.
- Always position yourself so that you are facing the light source. This allows visitors to see your face to speech-read.
- Avoid sweeping arm motions or moving around while speaking, as this distracts visitors from speech-reading, or watching the sign language or oral interpreter.
- Speak in your normal tone and volume during your demonstration. Project your voice from your diaphragm. Speak louder only when you are requested to, and avoid shouting.
- Be sure you have everyone's attention before you begin the demonstration. Periodically check to see that everyone has understood what was said before continuing.
- Use short sentences and a subject-verb-object sentence structure. For example, say, "Acorns were ground to make flour," not "Flour was made by grinding acorns."
- When showing an object and discussing it at the same time, allow visitors extra time to look over the object just described to them. Often, a closer look or being able to touch an object can replace verbal description. Although some individuals can look at an object as you talk about it, visitors with hearing impairments may be speech-reading or watching the sign language or oral interpreter. Position yourself so visitors can see you and the object of discussion at the same time. When working with a sign language or oral interpreter, place the object between the two of you.
- Repeat questions from the audience, and allow sufficient time for the audience to respond. An individual with a hearing impairment may understand the question a few seconds later, because the sign language or oral interpreter is sometimes a few words behind the speaker.
- Explain new or difficult words or concepts used in your demonstration. Include definitions of unfamiliar words in a handout.

Learning Disabilities

- Be aware that not everyone may wish to stay for the entire demonstration, as some individuals with learning disabilities have shorter attention spans. Some visitors may leave before the end of your program. If your audience is composed of a group of people with learning disabilities, you may want to shorten your demonstration to 30 minutes or less.
- Deliver the content of your program using a variety of different methods, instead of aiming for a lower level of comprehension. Select areas with minimal background noise and minimal distractions for your demonstration.
- Keep the tour group small. It is helpful to work one-on-one as much as possible.
- Be sure everyone is paying attention before you begin your demonstration, and that everyone has understood what you have just said before continuing.
- Avoid “over-stimulating” the audience with too much information, as this may cause confusion and disinterest. Keep the program limited to one or two primary ideas.
- Involve all the senses in your program. Incorporate items pertaining to your demonstration that may be touched and passed around. Information provided in a variety of ways reinforces learning and increases interest in your program. For example, allow visitors to feel the materials being used in the demonstration, or let visitors try the demonstration activity themselves.
- Draw attention to the color, texture, sound, or smell of the object(s) being demonstrated. Discuss their important characteristics individually.
- Pose questions to the entire audience to encourage involvement.
- Repeat questions from the audience.
- Allow enough time for the audience to answer questions. A speech impairment or memory problem may interfere with the visitor’s ability to answer questions.
- Look for visitors to indicate a desire to answer a question before calling on them. Asking them to respond when they are not ready may cause undue embarrassment.
- Make smooth transitions in presentations; jumping from one subject to another may cause confusion.
- Discuss ideas in basic terms; avoid abstractions. Information should be delivered in short, organized segments and reinforced through repetition.
- Some individuals with learning disabilities have difficulty understanding the concept of historical or calendar time. If this information is included in your presentation, offer different ways of explaining or demonstrating it.
- Explain new or difficult words and concepts used in your demonstration. Include definitions of unfamiliar words in a handout.

Intellectual Disabilities

- Select areas with minimal background noise and minimal distractions for your demonstrations.
- Be sure you have everyone's attention before beginning the demonstration. If a visitor misses part of the demonstration, it may be difficult for them to understand what you are doing.
- Be aware that not everyone may wish to stay for the entire demonstration. Some individuals with intellectual disabilities have shorter attention spans and may leave in the middle of your program.
- Provide information in small, organized segments. Too much information may be overwhelming, causing some visitors to lose interest.
- Avoid sweeping arm movements or moving around while speaking, as this may be distracting.
- Do not talk as you demonstrate an activity or task. The audience may be concentrating on your movements or the object, and not on your words. Give information before or after the demonstration.
- Repeat questions from the audience. Some visitors may not have heard the question being asked, may not have understood the question, or may not have been paying attention.
- Be sure to allow enough time for the audience to answer your question. Look for visitors to indicate a desire to answer a question before calling on them. Ask open-ended questions with neither right nor wrong answers. Give immediate, positive feedback to the visitors.
- Do not dismiss a question as being irrelevant. Sometimes poor language skills confuse what the individual is trying to say. Whenever possible, relate the question or answer to the subject.
- Where possible, involve visitors in your demonstration, relate information to their lives, and then reinforce the information through repetition.
- Encourage audience participation. If individuals with intellectual disabilities are left with "empty time," they could lose interest, and may become disruptive.
- Choose demonstration activities for visitors that involve partners and that do not single out individuals. Some visitors may not want to become involved due to fear of embarrassment. Positive reinforcement may encourage their future involvement.
- Explain new or difficult words or concepts used in the demonstration. Include definitions of unfamiliar words in a handout.
- Involve all the senses in your demonstration. Include items pertaining to your demonstration that may be felt, heard, smelled, or tasted.
- When incorporating objects to be touched into your demonstration, remind everyone to handle them with care. If you are concerned that the objects may be dropped or mishandled, hold them yourself or pass around only non-breakable items.

Mobility Impairments

- Evaluate the accessibility of the area where you plan to provide the demonstration in advance. Stairs, curbs, and slippery surfaces may prove difficult for visitors with mobility impairments. Plan a route that is accessible for the entire audience. When publicizing the program, indicate the area's accessibility. Refer to the *Interpretive Facilities* section, beginning on page 125 for information on the *2010 ADA Standards* and *California State Parks Accessibility Guidelines*.
- According to federal law, state parks must provide a film, a slide show, or photographs of the demonstration, if it is held in an area not accessible by wheelchair. (ADA 35.150). In addition, display objects or replicas of artifacts from the demonstration (and/or inaccessible area or room) for visitors to see and/or touch.
- Provide seating with backs and armrests for demonstrations expected to last longer than ten minutes. For outdoor programs, seating with shade is preferred, as some people with mobility impairments cannot regulate their body temperature and could easily suffer from heat-related ailments.
- If you have a visitor who is using an electric wheelchair, wait until the noise of the wheelchair has stopped before beginning the demonstration.
- Be aware of the line-of-sight of visitors using wheelchairs or other assistive devices. Always present objects at eye level. Remember, some individuals may not be able to look up or down for long periods of time.
- When incorporating items that may be touched in your demonstration, be aware of individual capabilities and limitations. You or another staff member may need to hold the object for visitors while they touch or look at it.

Visual Impairments

- Be aware of any obstacles or protruding objects that may be encountered en route to the demonstration area by visitors with visual impairments. Inform visitors of the obstacles when they first arrive at the park site. You or another staff member may be requested to guide a visitor with a visual impairment. Refer to the *Sighted Guide Technique* on page 31 for tips on assisting people with visual impairments.
- Meet with visitors who are visually impaired before the demonstration begins and ask if there is anything they would like described to them.
- Select areas with minimal background noise for demonstrations.
- Be alert to the individual needs of visitors with visual impairments. Allow them to sit or stand up close, so they can see you and the demonstration more easily.
- Be aware of lighting conditions. Provide bright, even light.
- Always talk facing the group and the light source.
- Wait for the audience to settle before speaking. Excess noise can be very distracting.
- If possible, when demonstrating a skill, allow a visitor with a visual impairment to hold your hands as you work, while at the same time explaining in detail what you are doing.
- Use descriptive language during your demonstration, emphasizing textures, colors, and shapes. Be familiar with different methods for describing historical and natural

settings and objects. Verbal description plays an important role in guiding tactile exploration. Refer to the *Methods of Description* section on page 31.

- Be conscious of sounds and smells you might otherwise ignore, and discuss them. Encourage the entire group to be aware of all their senses, not just their vision. Offer things to smell, touch and taste.
- Have touchable, life-size or scale models of objects similar to those used in the demonstrations available to be touched by visitors.
- Handouts supplied to the audience should be in large, dark print (a 12-point, sans-serif font) and on a light matte background. Be prepared to explain the contents of handouts for those who are unable to read them. Written materials that are distributed regularly to visitors should also be available in an alternate format, such as printed in an 18-point, sans-serif font and/or in Braille.
- Where possible, provide a reading list pertaining to the demonstration. Visitors may be able to find talking books or books in Braille to supplement their visit.
- Offer to meet with visitors after the demonstration, to answer questions or describe anything for them.

Limited English Proficiency

- Plan to have a bilingual interpreter present the demonstration if the audience warrants it.
- On short notice, ask a bilingual family member or friend of the visitor to translate for you during the program.
- Pantomime your message. This may be the only way to communicate with some visitors who have limited English proficiency. Use facial expressions, as well as hand and body movements. Draw pictures to communicate the information if necessary.
- Repeat the demonstration's information in a variety of ways. Use different words, gestures, and objects to convey the points.
- Avoid using colloquial expressions, idioms, and slang, because they may be difficult for visitors to understand.
- Look for visitors who indicate a desire answer a question before calling on them. Asking them to respond before they are ready may cause embarrassment.
- When distributing written materials for the demonstration, explain them for those who may not be able to read the materials.
- Have copies of handouts available in different languages, as warranted by visitor interest.
- Offer to meet with visitors after the demonstration, to answer any questions or to repeat information.

Older Adults

Older adults may have one or more of the disabilities previously mentioned, or none of them. In addition to some of the tips already mentioned, here are additional suggestions for older adult visitors:

- Make sure adequate lighting is provided to make it easy for your audience to read any written materials you distribute during the program. The low light levels of some demonstration areas may be difficult for some visitors to see.
- Some older adults need extra time to allow their eyes to adjust to rapid changes in light levels. Use the adjustment time to answer questions, or suggest they remain seated a few moments until their eyes adjust to the different light level. Remove any potential barriers, which could cause accidents in areas where there are extreme changes in lighting.

Interpretive Sales and Concessions

Interpretive concessions play an important role in parks by providing needed services to park visitors and by helping to ensure the creation of a “living” historic environment. They can invite visitor involvement, as well as offer lasting mementos of a park experience. In partnership with the State, concessions may enhance the public’s understanding of historic commercial ventures and other park activities. All contracts with concessionaires must include language regarding compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Concessionaires must be willing to share their special knowledge and/or skills through their interactions with the public, as well as their merchandise. As with any park interpretation, the basic elements of a historic-style concession need to be as accurate

and authentic as possible, with particular attention given to appropriate furnishings, clothing, merchandising, display techniques, demonstrations, signage, and advertising.

Requirements that tend to screen out individuals with disabilities are prohibited, such as requiring an individual to produce a driver's license as the only means of identification for cashing a check.

The following suggestions are provided to assist concessionaires in communicating with and serving park visitors.

Hearing Impairments

- Provide adequate lighting in the concession for speech-reading. When speaking, position yourself to face the light source and the visitor.
- Speak clearly to customers and in a normal tone of voice. Project your voice from your diaphragm. Talk louder only when asked to do so and avoid shouting.
- If possible, speak with customers who have hearing impairments in relatively quiet areas.
- Avoid sweeping arm motions and moving around while speaking, as this may distract visitors from speech-reading. Do not turn away while talking, as this makes speech-reading impossible.
- Position yourself so that customers can see you and any merchandise or objects you may be discussing at the same time. This allows them to speech-read while focusing on the object at the same time.
- If you know some sign language, use it. Your attempts will generally be appreciated.
- Keep paper and pencils handy and use them to assist communication when a sign language or oral interpreter is not available.
- Provide printed descriptions of historic or unfamiliar objects displayed in the store in the form of an exhibit or pamphlet. A preprinted explanation is one way to reply to the question, "What is that?"
- Be sure to allow an ample amount of time for customers to respond to your questions. They may be speech-reading, or watching a sign language or oral interpreter.
- Provide a portable amplification system. Refer to the *Assistive Listening* section on page 17 for more information.

Learning Disabilities

- Interpretive information can be presented by using a variety of different methods, instead of aiming for a lower level of comprehension.
- Be aware that individuals with perceptual problems or lack of coordination may have difficulty holding small items.
- If possible, offer merchandise that involves the use of the senses. For example, foods (dried foods and non-perishables work best) that can be smelled and tasted (if samples are offered), and clothes or shoes that can be touched. Some occasions may also call for period music to be played.

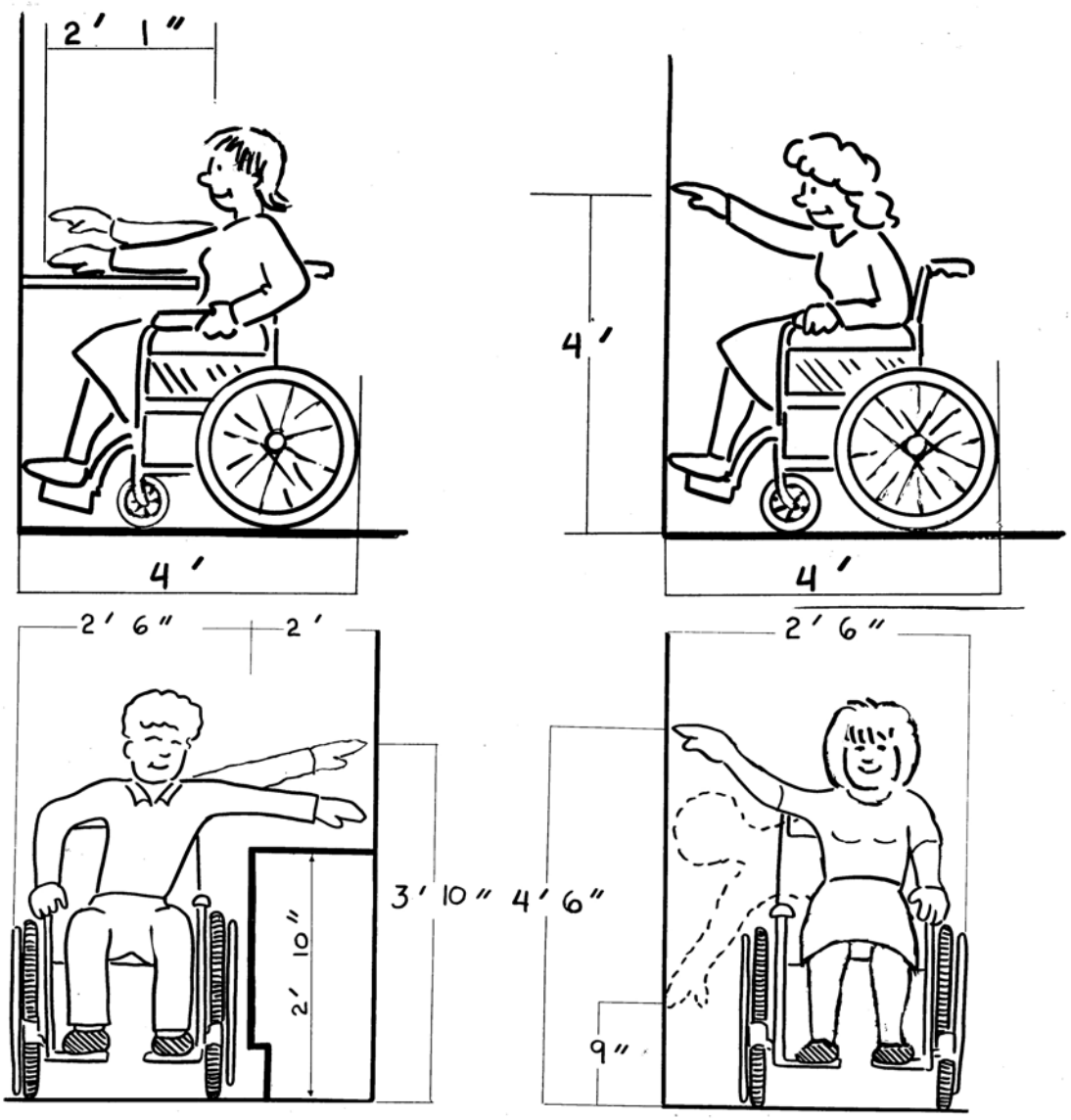
- Avoid “over-stimulating” customers; too much noise or too many activities may cause confusion.
- Some individuals with learning disabilities may have difficulty understanding the concept of historical or calendar time. Explain or demonstrate this concept in different ways.
- If printed materials are available to customers, explain their content for those who may be unable to read them.
- Explain unfamiliar words or concepts. Discuss ideas in basic terms, avoiding abstractions. Relate the information to something more familiar to visitors.

Intellectual Disabilities

- You may need to tell customers of the concession’s rules. For example, explain which items may or may not be touched, no running, etc.
- Explain unfamiliar words, concepts, or unusual objects. Discuss ideas in basic terms; avoid abstractions. Relate the information to something more familiar to customers.
- If possible, offer merchandise that involves the use of the senses. For example, foods (dried foods and non-perishables work best) that can be smelled and tasted (if samples are offered), and clothes or shoes that can be touched. Some occasions may also call for period music to be played.
- If printed materials are available to customers, explain their content for those who may be unable to read them.

Mobility Impairments

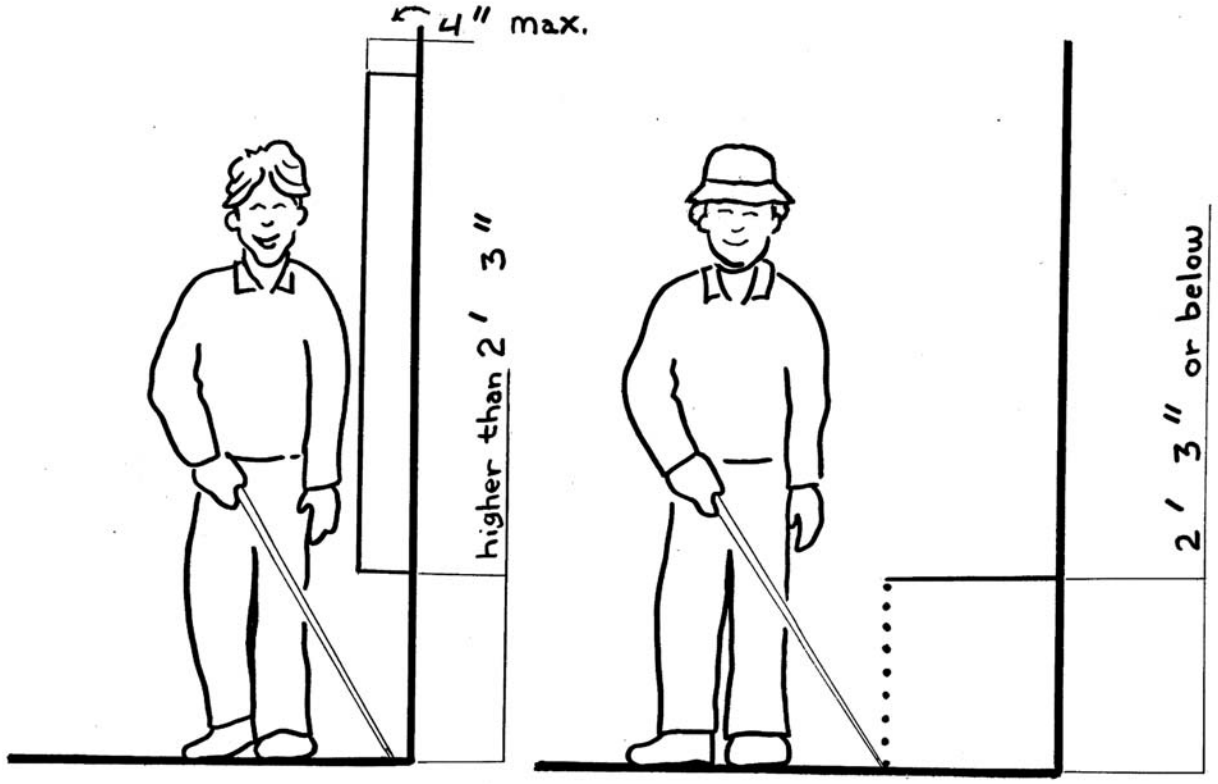
- Evaluate the accessibility of the concession facility and its surroundings. Areas to be aware of include doorways, aisles, stairs, ramps, walkways, the height of objects and signs, height of counter tops, parking, telephones, restrooms, and drinking fountains. For more information, refer to the *Interpretive Facilities* section beginning on page 125. The requirements listed in that section will also apply to sales and concession facilities. For complete guidelines, see the *California State Parks Accessibility Guidelines*, the *2010 Accessibility Standards*, and *California State Accessibility Standards*.
- Locate signs at a comfortable viewing height for both standing and seated visitors; between 3’10” and 5’2” above the floor, at a viewing distance of 6’ or more.
- Merchandise should be placed so it can be easily reached by people using wheelchairs. See the diagrams on next page.
- Accessible seating with armrests and backs must be provided where other seating is available. If the concession is outdoors, seating with shade should be provided.
- Have staff available to assist customers with mobility impairments.



Visual Impairments

- Offer a general orientation to the sales area for customers with visual impairments. Include the historical ambiance and visual details. If the area is relatively large, provide a simple map or floor plan of the space.
- Be alert to the needs of visitors who are visually impaired. Place merchandise so customers can stand within 3” of it without encountering any obstacles, including swinging doors. Provide sufficient lighting for reading and viewing merchandise.
- Have magnifiers available by request for customers to use on signs or price tags or to view merchandise.
- Have staff available nearby to assist customers. Be familiar with the *Sighted Guide Technique* presented on page 31.

- Where possible, offer merchandise for customers to touch. Verbal description plays an important role in guiding tactile exploration. Refer to the *Methods of Description* section on page 31 for more information.
- Display items that involve the use of the senses. For example, foods (dried foods and non-perishables work best) to smell and taste (if samples are offered), and clothes or shoes that can be touched. Some occasions may also call for period music to be played.
- When demonstrating a skill or craft, have customers with visual impairments hold your hands as you work, at the same time explaining what you are doing.
- Remove objects or merchandise which protrude from walls or store fixtures over 4”, and that lie within 27” to 80” above the floor. Objects that are less than 27” from the floor may protrude any length but cannot reduce the clear space required for wheelchair passage. See diagram below.
- Pamphlets, menus, price guides, or other handouts should be produced in large, dark print (a 12-point, sans-serif font) and on a light matte background. Be prepared to explain the contents of handouts for those who are unable to read them. Written materials that are distributed regularly to visitors should also be available in an alternate format, such as printed in an 18-point, sans-serif font and/or in Braille.
- If appropriate, sell books on tape or in Braille pertaining to the theme of the concession.



Limited English Proficiency

- If warranted by visitation, provide written materials (price guides, menus, historical information, etc.) in different languages.
- If necessary, pantomime your message. This may be the only way to communicate with some customers who have limited English proficiency, when you are not familiar with their language. Use facial expressions, as well as hand and body movements. Draw pictures, if needed, to communicate the information.
- Point to objects to which you are referring.
- Speak slowly and distinctly.
- Avoid using colloquial expressions, idioms, and slang because they may be difficult for visitors to understand.
- Repeat information in a variety of ways. Use different words, gestures, and objects to convey messages. Prepare photographs, replicas, or other visual and tactile examples to convey information.
- When distributing written materials, explain the contents for those who may not be able to read them.
- If the concession's services include selling printed materials, consider providing versions in different languages.

Older Adults

Older adults may have one or more of the disabilities previously described, or none of them. In addition to some of the suggestions already mentioned, here are additional considerations for older adult customers.

- Provide adequate lighting for reading signs and seeing merchandise. Some older customers may need extra lighting for reading or seeing small details.
- Some older customers need extra time to allow their eyes to adjust to drastic changes in light levels. For example, when a customer enters a store from the outside during a bright, sunny day they may experience a temporary visual impairment. Remove objects from around the entrance that may pose a hazard in this situation.

Junior Ranger Programs

Junior Rangers is a statewide children's educational program designed for ages 7 to 12 years. Individuals can join the program at one unit and may continue to participate in Junior Ranger activities as they visit other units of the State Park System. Participation in the program enables children to earn buttons, badges, and certificates while learning more about the world around them. The program emphasizes the stewardship of park resources while connecting park resource issues to global concerns. Interpretive activities focus on geology, Native Californians, history, plant and animal life, energy, water, weather and climate, ecology, safety, survival and crime prevention, and park careers.

The following suggestions are provided to assist park staff in preparing and delivering Junior Ranger programs for a diverse audience.

Hearing Impairments

- Hearing abilities and limitations can vary from child to child; talk with the child or parent to find out how to suit individual needs. Portable assistive listening devices may aid many visitors in hearing your program. Refer to the *Assistive Listening Systems* section on page 17 for more information.
- If requested in advance by a visitor, arrange for a licensed professional sign language or oral interpreter. Refer to the *Working with an Oral or Sign Language Interpreter* section on page 15 for more information.
- Suggest that children with hearing impairments be placed in front of the group, so they can hear more clearly, speech-read, or see the sign language or oral interpreter.
- If you know some sign language, use it. Your attempts will generally be appreciated.
- Select areas with minimal background noise for your Junior Ranger program.
- Provide an outline of your program, so children can more easily follow along.
- Always face the group and the light source when you speak. If you turn away, speech-reading becomes impossible, and it may become difficult for the sign language or oral interpreter to hear you.
- When presenting your program, speak in your normal tone of voice and volume. Project your voice from your diaphragm. Do not assume you need to shout at children who are hearing impaired. Speak louder only when it is requested.
- Be sure you have everyone's attention before beginning to speak, and that everyone has understood before continuing.
- Use short sentences. A subject-verb-object sentence structure is best, because it is the same syntax as American Sign Language. For example, say, "The salmon spawn upstream," not "Upstream is where salmon spawn."
- When showing Junior Rangers an object and discussing it at the same time, allow extra time for the audience to see what you have just described. Although some children can look at an object as you talk about it, children with hearing impairments may be speech-reading or watching the sign language or oral interpreter. Position yourself so the group can see you and the object of discussion at the same time. When working with a sign language or oral interpreter, place the object between the two of you.
- Avoid sweeping arm motions or moving around while speaking, as this may distract the child from speech-reading or watching the sign language or oral interpreter.
- Repeat questions from the group and allow time for the group to respond to your questions. A child with a hearing impairment may understand the questions a few seconds later, because the sign language or oral interpreter is sometimes a few words behind the speaker.
- Explain new words or concepts. Include definitions of words in a handout, along with suggestions for additional reading on the subject.

Learning Disabilities

- Select areas with minimal background noises and few distractions to present your Junior Ranger program.
- Keep the group small. It is helpful to work one-on-one as much as possible.
- Be sure you have everyone's attention before beginning to speak and that everyone has understood what you have just said before continuing.
- Too much information may "over-stimulate" an individual with a learning disability, causing confusion and disinterest. Keep the program limited to one or two primary ideas and remember to stay focused on the theme.
- Junior Ranger program content need not be lowered, just communicated in several ways. Use a variety of media to convey the interpretive information. Models, plant and animal specimens, photographs, drawings, and dioramas can all add to verbal explanations.
- Involve all the senses in your program. Incorporate interpretive materials that may be smelled, heard, touched, and tasted, pertaining to the theme of your program. Information provided in this way reinforces learning and increases interest in your program. For example, an interpreter may include samples of plants used by Native Americans for food and medicine, and suggest the group smell and touch the plants. Musical Instruments may also be used to explore other senses.
- Highlight the colors, textures, sounds, and smells of objects. Discuss their important characteristics individually; otherwise, they may be overlooked. For example, an interpreter could emphasize the sounds and smells of elephant seals and provide pieces of molted skin and fur for visitors to feel.
- Offer a tactile relief map of the area that involves the senses of touch and sight. This will allow Junior Rangers to see where they are going on their hike.
- Pose questions to the group to encourage everyone's involvement. Allow plenty of time for responses.
- Repeat questions from the children.
- Look for children to indicate a desire to respond to a question before calling on them. A speech impairment or memory problem may interfere with a child's ability to answer questions. Calling on them when they are not ready may cause undue embarrassment.
- Provide smooth transitions in presentations. Jumping from one subject to another may cause confusion.
- Discuss ideas in basic terms, avoiding abstractions. Organize information in a logical fashion. Deliver it in short segments and reinforce it through repetition.
- Some children with learning disabilities have difficulty understanding the concepts of historical or calendar time. If this information is included in your presentation, use different methods to explain or demonstrate it.
- Read aloud exhibit or trail signage.
- Explain new words and concepts. Include definitions of unfamiliar words in a handout, along with suggestions for additional readings on the subject. Children may wish to learn more about the subjects presented in the Junior Ranger program.

- If your group consists entirely of children with learning disabilities, you may want to keep your program to no more than 30 minutes.

Intellectual Disabilities

- Select areas with minimal background noises and few distractions for your Junior Ranger program.
- Provide children with a simple map of the area indicating where your Junior Ranger activities will occur, and what you will see. This will help stimulate curiosity and interest in your program.
- Have everyone's attention before beginning to speak. If visitors miss part of the discussion, they may lose interest because it will be more difficult for them to follow the program.
- Be aware that not all children will want to stay for the entire Junior Ranger program. Some individuals with intellectual disabilities have shorter attention spans. Prior arrangements may need to be made to escort individuals back to their family or guardian.
- Provide information in small, organized segments. Too much information may be overwhelming, causing some children to lose interest. Keep the program limited to one or two primary ideas, and stay focused on the theme.
- Avoid sweeping arm movements or moving around while speaking, as this may be distracting.
- Repeat questions from the group. Some children may not have heard the question being asked, may not have understood the question, may have forgotten it, or may not have been paying attention.
- Allow enough time for the Junior Rangers to answer your question. Look for children to indicate a desire to respond before calling on them. Ask open-ended questions with neither right nor wrong answers. Offer immediate, positive feedback to the children.
- Do not dismiss a question as being irrelevant. Sometimes, poor language skills confuse what the individual is trying to say. Relate the question or answer to the subject.
- Demonstrate the Junior Ranger activity before asking program participants to perform it. Do not talk as you demonstrate the task or activity. The group may be concentrating on your movements or the object and not on your words. Give explanations and information before or after the demonstration.
- Relate new information to the children's lives and then reinforce this information through repetition.
- Encourage every Junior Ranger to participate. If a child with an intellectual disability is left with "empty time," he or she may lose interest and may become disruptive.
- In some instances, you may need to remind the Junior Ranger group of the park's or program's rules, and what can or cannot be touched.
- Choose activities involving partners and that do not single out individuals. Some children may not want to participate, fearing embarrassment. Positive reinforcement from you may encourage future involvement.

- Read aloud exhibit or trail signage.
- Explain new words or concepts. Include definitions of new words in a handout, along with suggestions for additional readings on the subject.
- Incorporate items that may be touched, heard, smelled, and tasted pertaining to the theme of your program. Information presented in a variety of ways can reinforce learning and increase interest in your program. Models, plant and animal specimens, photographs, drawings, and dioramas add another dimension to verbal explanation.
- Remind children to handle objects with care. If you are concerned that the objects may be dropped or mishandled, hold the objects yourself or pass around only non-breakable items.
- If your group consists entirely of children with intellectual disabilities, you may want to keep your program to no more than 30 minutes.

Mobility Impairments

- Evaluate the access to the areas where you plan to take the Junior Rangers in advance. Stairs, steep slopes, and uneven surfaces may pose problems for children with mobility impairments. Walk the route you plan to take with the Junior Rangers and look for any barriers or other difficulties that may be encountered. Plan a route that is accessible to the entire audience. When publicizing the program, indicate the accessibility of the area; the difficulty of the walk; and the length of the tour or walk. Refer to the *Interpretive Facilities* section beginning on page 125, *California State Parks Accessibility Guidelines*, The 2010 Accessibility Standards, and *California State Accessibility Standards* for more information.
- At the beginning of a walk or hike, remind the group of any obstacles that may be encountered.
- Provide a film, slide show, or photographs of public areas not accessible by wheelchair. In addition, provide objects or replicas of artifacts from an area or room not accessible for the children to see and/or touch. For example, if the Junior Rangers are going on a hike into the forest and the trail has steps or large obstacles that cannot be maneuvered by a child in a wheelchair, bring the forest to the visitor instead. Show the child slides or photographs, including interesting and common features seen along the trail. Have samples of objects found along the path for the child to see, feel, hear, or smell.
- Allow extra time for the hike or shorten its length, as children with mobility impairments may require more time to move about.
- Allow children to leave a program by making prior arrangements to have a staff member escort them back to their families or guardians. Some children may find a long hike too strenuous. Offer an optional “leisure tour,” a separate walk available to anyone who wants to proceed at a slower pace.
- Prearranged rest breaks should be announced at the beginning of Junior Ranger hikes, and additional breaks should be accommodated, if requested.
- Provide seating with backs and armrests at intervals throughout a long hike. For outside programs, seating in the shade is preferred. Some people with mobility impairments cannot regulate their body temperature and may be susceptible to heat stroke.

- If you have a Junior Ranger who is using an electric wheelchair, wait until the noise of the wheelchair has stopped before you begin speaking.
- Be aware of the line-of-sight of visitors using wheelchairs. Show objects at their eye level. Some individuals have difficulty looking up or down for long periods of time. Mirrors can be used to assist individuals looking up at high places, such as a forest canopy or the top of a historic building.
- When incorporating items that may be touched into your programs, be aware of individual capabilities and limitations. You or another staff member may need to hold objects for the children, while they touch or look at it.
- If you are pushing a child using a wheelchair during a program, do not deliver program information while walking. This individual may not hear you. It may be necessary to seek assistance from another staff member to push the wheelchair, while you present your program.
- Do not exclude children using communication books or boards from discussions. Look for an indication that a desire to respond and then give them the time they need to formulate their message.

Visual Impairments

- During your program, be aware of any obstacles or protruding objects that may be encountered by children with visual impairments. Inform the group about any obstacles at the beginning of your hike. You or another staff member may be requested to guide a child with a visual impairment. Refer to the *Sighted Guide Technique* on page 31 for suggestions.
- If possible, before the program begins, meet with children who are visually impaired to ask if there is anything they would like described to them.
- Select areas with minimal background noise for your Junior Ranger programs.
- Provide a tactile relief map of the facility and/or area so children with visual impairments can become oriented to their surroundings.
- Be alert to the individual needs of children with visual impairments. Allow them to sit or stand close to the front, so they can see you or the objects of discussion more easily.
- Provide adequate lighting for reading, drawing, or craft activities.
- Wait for the children to settle before speaking. Excess noise can be very distracting.
- Always talk facing the group and the light source.
- Give clear, verbal direction to Junior Rangers when moving from one area to another. Once at your destination, provide a general orientation to the whole area, including atmosphere and visual details.
- Read aloud exhibit or trail signage.
- Use descriptive language during your program. Emphasize textures, colors, and topography. Be familiar with different methods for describing historical and natural settings and objects. Verbal description plays an important role in guiding tactile exploration. Refer to the *Methods of Description* section on page 31 for more information.

- Magnifiers should be available to use on photographs, signs, or exhibits, or to take on outdoor walks. The whole group can benefit and enjoy hand lenses on a hike by taking a closer look at leaves, bark, or bugs.
- Use enlarged photographs to allow children to see more detail.
- Take a moment to listen to the sounds and to smell the fragrances of the area. Be aware of sounds and smells you might otherwise ignore. Discuss what you hear and smell. Encourage the entire group to use their other senses, in addition to sight.
- Use life-size or scale models of objects that may not be touched.
- When demonstrating a skill, have a child with a visual impairment hold your hands as you work; at the same time, explain in detail what you are doing.
- Handouts supplied to the Junior Rangers, such as scavenger hunt sheets, should be in large, dark print (a 12-point, sans-serif font) and on a light matte background. Be prepared to explain the contents of handouts for those who are unable to read them. Written materials that are distributed regularly to visitors should also be available in an alternate format, such as printed in an 18-point, sans-serif font and/or in Braille.
- Offer an additional reading list pertaining to the theme of the Junior Ranger program. The participants may be able to find talking books or books in Braille to supplement their visit.

Limited English Proficiency

- If necessary, pantomime your message. This may be the only way to communicate with some children whose English proficiency is limited. Use facial expressions, as well as hand and body movements. Draw pictures, if needed, to communicate interpretive information.
- Prepare photographs, slides, objects, and other visual and tactile examples to illustrate interpretive information.
- Repeat information in a variety of ways. Use different words, gestures, and objects to convey interpretive information.
- Point to objects to which you are referring.
- Ask a bilingual family member or friend of the visitor to translate for you during the Junior Ranger program. Or, if you think that will be too disruptive, offer to meet with the child and a translator after the program to review interpretive information.
- Avoid using colloquial expressions, idioms, and slang because they may be difficult for visitors to understand.
- Look for children to indicate a desire to answer a question before calling on them. Calling on them before they are ready may cause embarrassment.
- When distributing written materials, explain the contents for those who may not be able to read them.
- If the number of Junior Ranger participants warrants it, have copies of written materials available in different languages.
- Offer to meet with visitors after the Junior Ranger program to answer any questions or to repeat information.

Living History Programs

Living history has become an important interpretive medium for many historic parks. This type of presentation incorporates authentic activities, replica clothing, objects, and historic personas, which are used to re-create an event in which visitors gain insights into the history of a site and/or period. Living history requires accuracy in detail, as well as participants willing to share their special knowledge with visitors. It is through interactive presentations that visitors understand how the demonstrations, scenarios, or reenactments fit into the larger historical picture.

The following are suggestions to assist park staff in preparing for and delivering living history programs that can be enjoyed by all visitors.

Hearing Impairments

- Meet with visitors with hearing impairments prior to the living history presentation and find out how to best suit their needs. With the wide range of hearing impairments, several options for assistance are possible.
- One option is to provide an amplification system for your program. Refer to the *Assistive Listening Systems* section on page 17 for more information.
- Use a microphone if your voice projection is weak, or if performing for a large audience.
- Where possible, select areas that have minimal background noise and few distractions for the living history demonstrations and reenactments.
- Suggest to visitors with hearing impairments that they sit at the front of the audience, so they can hear more clearly.
- If requested in advance by a visitor with a hearing impairment, arrange for a licensed professional sign language or oral interpreter. Refer to the *Working with an Oral or Sign Language Interpreter* section on page 15 for more information.
- While performing the role of a historic persona or when interacting with visitors, always face the light source and the audience. This will facilitate speech-reading. If you turn away, speech-reading becomes impossible, and it also becomes difficult for the sign language or oral interpreter to hear you.
- Position living history characters so the audience can see them and their activities at the same time. This allows visitors to speech-read and focus on the activities at the same time.
- Speaking clearly is as important as speaking loudly, when performing as a historic character. Project your voice from your diaphragm. Do not let the level of your delivery trail off at the end of a passage.
- Provide an outline of the living history presentation's script, so visitors can more easily follow along.
- Repeat questions from the audience.
- Be sure to allow enough time for the audience to answer your questions.
- Avoid sweeping arm motions or moving around while speaking, as this may distract some visitors from watching the oral or sign language interpreter, or may make speech-reading difficult.

Learning Disabilities

- The interpretive content of the living history program can be presented by using a variety of different methods, instead of aiming for a lower level of comprehension..
- Select areas with minimal background noise to avoid distractions during the program.
- Be sure you have everyone's attention before beginning to speak and that they have understood what you have just said before continuing.
- Have living history characters interact with the audience as part of the program. Involve all the visitors' senses. For example, allow them to touch some of the tools

or other objects being used in the program. This will reinforce learning and increase interest in the presentation.

- Use a variety of media to convey information. Living history characters might have a basket or box filled with plant or animal specimens, photographs, tools, toys, drawings, or other materials to share with visitors. These all add to the verbal explanation.
- Interpretive information should be delivered in short segments and reinforced through repetition.
- Provide smooth transitions in your program; jumping from one subject to another or one character to another without adequate explanation may cause confusion.
- Avoid "over-stimulating" the audience. Too much information may cause confusion, resulting in visitor disinterest in the living history presentation. Limit the program to one or two main ideas.
- Discuss concepts and ideas in basic terms, and avoid abstractions.
- Repeat questions from the audience.
- Look for visitors to indicate a desire to answer a question before calling on them. Asking them to respond before they are ready may cause embarrassment.
- Allow enough time for the audience to answer your questions. A speech impairment or memory problem may interfere with a visitor's ability to answer questions.
- Do not dismiss questions or answers that may seem irrelevant to the subject. Whenever possible, relate the questions or the answers to the living history program.
- Explain new words and concepts. Include definitions of new words in a handout, along with suggestions for additional reading on the historic subject or era.
- Allow individuals to leave living history presentations early, as some individuals with learning disabilities may have shorter attention spans.
- Individuals with learning disabilities may have difficulty understanding the concept of historical or calendar time. Explain or demonstrate this information in different ways. For example, relate time to something familiar in their lives, such as their age.

Intellectual Disabilities

- Choose areas with minimal distractions for the living history program.
- Be sure you have everyone's attention before beginning the living history program. If visitors miss part of the discussion, it may be more difficult for them to follow and lose interest.
- Encourage audience participation involving all their senses. Allow visitors to touch the tools used in the presentation, or bring along dried foods, herbs, or spices relative to the historic period for visitors to smell or taste. This will increase interest in your presentation and aid in learning.
- Give information in small, organized segments and reinforce through repetition.
- Discuss ideas and concepts in basic terms and avoid abstractions.
- Relate new information to something already familiar to the audience to assist learning.

- Repeat questions from the audience. Some visitors may not have heard the question being asked, may not have understood the question, or may not have been paying attention.
- During a living history program, do not dismiss a visitor's question or answer as being irrelevant. Sometimes, poor language skills confuse what the individual is trying to say. Do your best to relate the question or the answer to the subject or era.
- Explain new words and concepts. Include definitions of new words in a handout, along with suggestions for additional reading on the historic subject or era.

Mobility Impairments

- Evaluate the access to the areas where the living history program will be taking place in advance. Be sure they are accessible to people with mobility impairments. Stairs, slopes, and slippery surfaces may cause difficulty for visitors with mobility impairments. Refer to the *Interpretive Facilities* section on page 125 for more information and requirements.
- Seating with backs and armrests should be provided. For outdoor living history programs, seating should be located in shady areas. Some individuals with mobility impairments have difficulty regulating their body temperature and can easily suffer from heat stroke.
- In areas without seating, allow visitors using wheelchairs to move to the front of the audience, so they can see and hear more clearly.
- If a visitor is using an electric wheelchair, wait until the noise of the wheelchair has stopped before beginning the living history program.
- Be aware of the line-of-sight of individuals with mobility impairments. Some individuals may have difficulty looking up or down for long periods of time.
- Do not exclude people using communication boards or books from discussions. Look for an individual to indicate a desire to answer a question or make a comment before asking them to respond and be sure to give them the extra time they may need.

Visual Impairments

- Evaluate the access to the areas where the living history presentation will take place in advance. Plan routes that are accessible to the entire audience. Remove any obstacles or protruding objects which may be encountered.
- Choose areas with minimal background noise for the living history program.
- Meet with visitors before the presentation to ask if there is anything they want described to them. Provide visitors with a general orientation to the area, including ambiance and visual details.
- Allow visitors to feel the costumes and objects used in the living history program, as you guide them with verbal descriptions. Refer to the *Methods of Description* section on page 31 for more information.
- Suggest to visitors with visual impairments that they sit or stand in front of the audience, so they can see more clearly.

- Wait for the audience to settle before beginning any living history dialogues. Excess noise can be very distracting.
- Always face the audience and the light source when you speak.
- If possible, offer a prerecorded audio description of the living history presentation. For more information, refer to the *Audio Description* section on page 33.
- When demonstrating a skill, have a visitor with a visual impairment hold your hands as you work, while at the same time explaining in detail what you are doing.
- Handouts developed for the living history program and supplied to the audience in large, dark print (a 12-point, sans-serif font) and on a light matte background. Be prepared to explain the contents of handouts for those who are unable to read them. Written materials that are distributed regularly to visitors should also be available in an alternate format, such as printed in an 18-point, sans-serif font and/or in Braille..

Limited English Proficiency

- If the audience warrants it, plan to have a bilingual interpreter be a part of the living history program.
- On short notice, ask a bilingual family member or friend of the visitor to translate during the living history program.
- If necessary, pantomime your message. Use facial expressions, as well as hand and body movements, or draw pictures to communicate interpretive information.
- Point to objects to which you are referring during the living history program.
- Have the living history characters repeat information in a variety of ways. Use different words, gestures, and objects to convey the interpretive information.
- Avoid using colloquial expressions, idioms, and slang, because they may be difficult for visitors to understand.
- Provide a handout, audio, or video of the living history presentation in different languages. Include an explanation about the activities and demonstrations, the names of the tools, and other pertinent information related to the re-created events.
- When distributing written materials, explain the contents for those who may not be able to read them.
- Offer to meet with visitors after the tour to answer any questions or to repeat information.

Older Adults

Older adults may have one or more of the disabilities previously mentioned or none of them. In addition to some of the tips already suggested, here are additional considerations for older adult visitors.

- Some older individuals have difficulty seeing cool colors, such as green and blue. Where appropriate, use a variety of colors for props and period clothing (especially small items) in the living history presentation.
- Some older individuals need time to allow their eyes to adjust to drastic changes in light levels. Allow visitors to stay seated while their eyes adjust to changes in light, possibly using this time for discussion.

Off-Site Interpretive Programs

Off-site interpretive programs can extend park interpretation into local communities. These programs enable professional staff and docents to share their interests, skills, and knowledge with those sectors of the community that are unable to come to park sites. Off-site interpretive programs can take many forms, such as workshops, classes, talks, A/V programs, and demonstrations. Older adults, people with disabilities, and school children make ideal audiences for off-site interpretive programs. Presentations made to local service groups also help build community support for park programs.

The following are suggestions to assist park staff in preparing for and delivering off-site interpretive programs so they may be satisfying and informative for a diverse audience.

Hearing Impairments

- With the wide range of hearing abilities and limitations, it is best to speak with the group's contact person in advance to find out how to best suit individual or group needs. Portable assistive listening devices can aid many visitors in hearing your talk. Refer to the *Assistive Listening Systems* section on page 17 for more information.
- Let the group's contact person know that your program needs an area with minimal background noise.
- If requested in advance, arrange for a licensed professional sign language or oral interpreter. Refer to the *Working with an Oral or Sign Language Interpreter* section on page *19* for more information.
- Invite individuals with hearing impairments to sit up front to hear more clearly, facilitate speech-reading, or see the sign language or oral interpreter.
- If you know some sign language, use it. Your attempts will generally be appreciated.
- Always face the audience when you speak. If you turn away, speech-reading becomes impossible, and it also becomes difficult for the sign language or oral interpreter to hear you.
- Present your program in a normal tone of voice and volume. Project your voice from your diaphragm. Do not assume you need to shout to people who are hearing impaired. Speak louder only when it is requested and then avoid shouting.
- Be sure to have everyone's attention before beginning to speak and that everyone has understood before continuing.
- Use short sentences and a subject-verb-object sentence structure. This works best because it is the same syntax as American Sign Language. For example, say, "The Army Corps of Engineers built the dam," not "The dam was built by the Army Corps of Engineers."
- When showing the group an object and discussing it at the same time, allow time for everyone to see what you have just described. Although some people can look at an object as you talk about it, individuals with hearing impairments may need to watch the sign language or oral interpreter, or may be speech-reading. Position yourself so the group can see you and any objects of discussion at the same time. When working with a sign language or oral interpreter, place yourselves so that the object is between you.
- Always face the light source and the audience when speaking. This allows the group to see your face and will facilitate speech-reading. If your program involves slides, arrange a light source directed toward you in a darkened room.
- Avoid sweeping arm motions or moving around while speaking, as this may distract an individual from speech-reading or watching the sign language or oral interpreter.
- Repeat questions from the audience and allow enough time for the audience to respond. An individual with a hearing impairment may understand the question a few seconds later, because the sign language or oral interpreter is sometimes a few words behind the speaker.
- Explain new or difficult words or concepts. Include definitions of new words in a handout, along with suggestions for additional reading on the subject being interpreted.

- Provide an outline of your off-site interpretive program, so that your audience can easily follow along.

Learning Disabilities

- Prior to your visit, provide the group with written and audio-visual materials pertaining to the program theme. This increases their interest, anticipation, and knowledge of the subjects to be presented.
- Let the group's contact person know that your program requires an area with minimal background noise and distractions.
- Keep the group small. It is helpful to work one-on-one as much as possible.
- Be sure you have everyone's attention before beginning to speak and that everyone has understood what you have just said before continuing.
- Avoid "over-stimulating" the audience with too much information, as this may cause confusion and disinterest. It is important to stay focused on your theme.
- Program content can be presented by using a variety of different methods, instead of aiming for a lower level of comprehension. Use several media to convey interpretive information. Models, plant and animal specimens, photographs, drawings, and dioramas can all add to verbal explanation.
- Involve all the senses in your off-site interpretive program. Incorporate items that may be smelled, heard, touched, and tasted pertaining to the theme of your program. Information provided in this way reinforces learning and increases interest in your off-site interpretive program. For example, bring along a collection of objects pertaining to the theme of the program, such as pelts, bones, tools, dried foods, or clothing.
- Emphasize the colors, textures, sounds, and smells of an object, discussing each characteristic individually.
- Bring along photographs or a video of your park site to present during or after your off-site interpretive program. This may entice the group to visit the park.
- Pose questions to the entire audience to encourage everyone's involvement.
- Allow enough time for the audience to answer your questions.
- Repeat questions from the audience.
- Look for individuals to indicate a desire to answer a question before calling on them. A speech impairment or memory problem can interfere with an individual's ability to answer questions. Calling on them when they are not ready may cause undue embarrassment.
- Provide smooth transitions in presentations; jumping rapidly from one subject to another may cause confusion in your audience.
- Discuss ideas and concepts in basic terms and avoid abstractions. Arrange the material to be presented in an organized fashion. Interpretive information should be delivered in short segments and reinforced through repetition.
- Individuals with learning disabilities may have difficulty understanding the concept of historical and calendar time. If this information is included in your presentation, use different ways to explain or demonstrate it.

- Explain new or difficult words and concepts. Include definitions of new words in a handout, along with suggestions for additional readings. Individuals may wish to learn more about the subjects presented during your program.
- Discuss the content and length of the off-site interpretive program with the group's contact person. If the group consists of all children with learning disabilities, you may consider limiting the program to 30 minutes.

Intellectual Disabilities

- Let the group's contact person know that your program requires an area with minimal background noise and distractions.
- Prior to your visit, find out the group's interests and plan the program's theme around them.
- Provide a video or photographs of the park site. This may stimulate the group's curiosity and interest in the visiting the park.
- Be sure you have everyone's attention before beginning to speak. If visitors miss part of the discussion, they may have difficulty following along and lose interest.
- Present information in small, organized segments. Large amounts of information may overwhelm some visitors, causing them to lose interest.
- Avoid sweeping arm motions or moving around while speaking, as this may be distracting.
- Repeat questions from the audience. Some individuals may not have heard the question being asked, may not have understood the question, may have forgotten the question, or may not have been paying attention.
- Be sure to allow enough time for the audience to respond to your questions. Look for individuals to indicate a desire to answer a question before calling on them. Ask open-ended questions with neither right nor wrong answers, and offer immediate, positive feedback to the individual.
- Do not dismiss a question as being irrelevant to the point of your program. Sometimes poor language skills may confuse what the individual is trying to say. Relate the question or answer to the program's subject as best you can.
- During the off-site interpretive program, demonstrate the activity or concept, relate the information to your audience, and then reinforce the information through repetition.
- Encourage audience participation. If individuals with intellectual disabilities are left with "empty time," they may lose interest and could become disruptive.
- Choose activities that involve partners and do not single out individuals. Some individuals may not want to become involved because of their fear of embarrassment. Your positive reinforcement may encourage their future involvement.
- Explain new or difficult words and concepts. Include definitions of unfamiliar words in a handout, along with suggestions for additional readings on the off-site interpretive program's subject(s).
- Share items that may be touched, heard, smelled, and tasted pertaining to the theme of your talk. Information presented in a variety of ways not only reinforces

learning, but also increases interest in your program. Models, plant and animal specimens, photographs, drawings, and dioramas can all add to the verbal explanation.

- When incorporating objects to be touched into your program, remind everyone to handle the objects with care. If you are concerned about objects being dropped or mishandled, hold the objects yourself, or pass around only non-breakable items.
- Discuss the program content and length with the group's contact person in advance. If your group consists of all people with intellectual disabilities, consider limiting the program to 30 minutes.

Mobility Impairments

- Let the group's contact person know that your program needs an area that is accessible to all visitors. If the prearranged space is not accessible, relocate your program to an accessible area.
- Seating with backs and armrests should be provided. For programs presented outside, seating with shade is preferred, as some people with mobility impairments cannot regulate their body temperature and can easily suffer from heat stroke.
- Do not exclude people using communication boards or books from discussions. Look for audience members to indicate a desire to answer a question before calling on them and then give them the time they need to respond.
- If you have a visitor who is using an electric wheelchair, wait until the noise of the wheelchair has stopped before beginning to speak.
- Be aware of the line-of-sight of visitors in wheelchairs. Present objects at eye level for people in wheelchairs. Some individuals may have difficulty looking up or down for long periods of time.
- When incorporating touchable items into your off-site interpretive programs, be aware of your audience's individual capabilities and limitations. You or another staff member may need to hold the objects, while the group members touch or look at them.
- Do not deliver program information while pushing an individual in a wheelchair. This individual may not hear you when you are standing behind him/her. It may be necessary to seek assistance from another staff member to push the wheelchair while you present the information.

Visual Impairments

- You or another staff member may be requested to guide a visitor with a visual impairment. Refer to the *Sighted Guide Technique* on page 31 for tips on assisting people with visual impairments.
- Let the group's contact person know that your program requires an area with minimal background noise.
- If possible, before the off-site interpretive program begins, meet with individuals who are visually impaired to explain its content and to ask if there is anything they would like described in advance.

- Wait for the audience to settle before beginning the program. Excess noise can be very distracting.
- Be aware of the needs of individuals with visual impairments. Suggest that they sit or stand up close so they can see you or the object of discussion more easily.
- Always face the light source when speaking to your audience.
- Use descriptive language during your program, emphasizing textures, colors, topography, etc. Be familiar with different methods for describing historical and natural settings and objects. The ability to convey information plays an important role in guiding tactile exploration. Refer to the *Methods of Description* on page 31 for more information.
- Provide magnifiers to use for photographs, models, and objects presented during the program.
- Use enlarged photographs to allow individuals to see more detail.
- Share items relating to the program's theme that encourage the use of all the audience's senses.
- When demonstrating a skill, let a person with a visual impairment hold your hands as you work, while at the same time explaining in detail what you are doing.
- Supply handouts to the audience in large, dark print (a 12-point, sans-serif font) and on a light matte background. Be prepared to explain the contents of handouts for those who are unable to read them. Written materials that are distributed regularly to visitors should also be available in an alternate format, such as printed in an 18-point, sans-serif font and/or in Braille.
- Provide a reading list pertaining to the off-site interpretive program's theme. Audience members may be able to find talking books or books in Braille to supplement your presentation.

Limited English Proficiency

- If possible and if warranted by the audience, make arrangements for a bilingual interpreter to translate during the off-site interpretive program.
- If a translator is not available, communicate your message through pantomime. This may be the only way to communicate with some individuals who have limited English proficiency. Use facial expressions, as well as hand and body movements. If needed, draw pictures to communicate interpretive information.
- Present photographs, slides, objects, and other visual and tactile materials to illustrate the interpretive information in the program.
- Repeat the off-site interpretive program's information in a variety of ways, using different words, gestures, and objects to convey the material.
- Point to objects to which you are referring.
- Avoid using colloquial expressions because they may be difficult for visitors to understand.
- Look for individuals to indicate a desire to answer a question before calling on them. Asking them to respond before they are ready may cause undue embarrassment.

- When distributing written materials, explain the contents for those who may not be able to read them.
- If warranted by the volume of visitation, have copies of written materials made available in different languages.
- Offer to meet with members of the audience after the program, to answer any questions, or to repeat information.

Older Adults

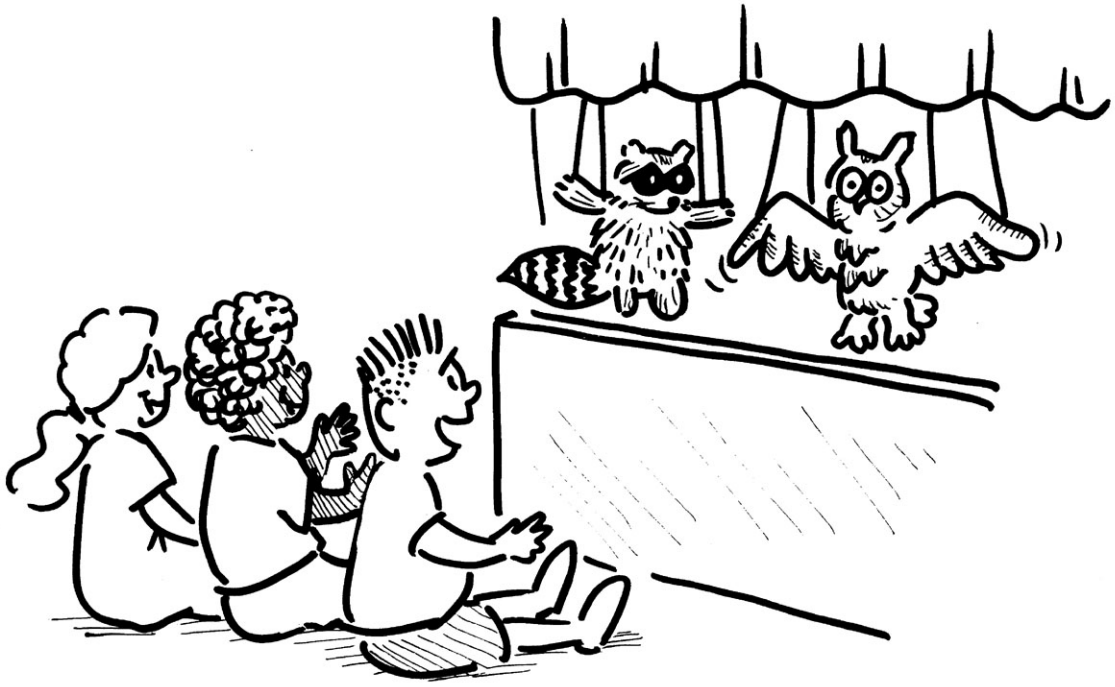
Older adults may have one or more of the disabilities previously mentioned, or none of them. In addition to some of the tips already suggested, here are additional considerations for older adult visitors.

- If you are planning to distribute written materials to your audience as part of your off-site interpretive program, make sure there is adequate light for reading.
- Some older adults may need time to allow their eyes to adjust to drastic changes in light levels. Remove any potential barriers that may cause accidents in areas where extreme changes in lighting levels occur, or allow the group to stay still for a few minutes. You could use this time for a group discussion.

Puppet Shows

Shadow puppets, string and rod puppets, marionettes, and hand puppets have been used for thousands of years to entertain and educate and to comment on society and politics. Today, puppet shows have proven to be an excellent way of communicating resource information and park values to children and adults alike. Through stories, songs, improvised dialogues, and jokes, live puppetry can engage and focus the audience's attention, imagination, and emotions around important interpretive concepts. Such programs can be employed to help individuals see critical issues from a variety of perspectives, as well as to better appreciate the world around them.

The following suggestions are provided to assist park staff in preparing and delivering puppet shows so they may be enjoyed by all visitors.



Hearing Impairments

- Talk with visitors to find out how best to suit their needs, as there is a wide range of hearing abilities and limitations in advance. Many visitors can be aided in hearing the puppet show through portable assistive listening devices. Refer to the *Assistive Listening Systems* section on page 17 for more information.
- Use a microphone if your voice projection is weak or if performing for a large audience.
- Consider pre-recording the puppet show's dialogue with sound effects and amplifying it for the audience.
- Speaking clearly is as important as speaking loudly when performing as a puppeteer. Project your voice from your diaphragm. Do not let the level of your delivery trail off at the end of a passage.
- When requested in advance by a visitor, arrange for a licensed professional sign language or oral interpreter for the puppet show. Refer to the *Working with an Oral or Sign Language Interpreter* section on page 15 for more information.
- Have the oral or sign language interpreter face the audience and a light source.
- Suggest to visitors with hearing impairments that they be seated at the front of the audience, so they can hear more clearly, speech-read, or see the sign language or oral interpreter.
- If you are familiar with some sign language, use it. Your attempts will generally be appreciated.
- Present puppet shows in areas where there is minimal background noise.
- Use short sentences. A subject-verb-object sentence structure works best, because it is the same syntax as American Sign Language. For example, say, "The raccoon ate our food," not "Our food was eaten by the raccoon."
- Keep the dialogue to a minimum and pantomime the script with the puppets.
- Scripts should be easy to follow for both the audience and the oral or sign language interpreter.
- Sign language or oral interpreters should be positioned to one side of the puppet stage. During the program, allow extra time for visitors with hearing impairments to watch the puppets and then the sign language or oral interpreter.
- Repeat questions from the audience, and allow sufficient time for the audience to respond. Individuals with hearing impairments may understand the verbal exchange a few seconds later because the sign language or oral interpreter is sometimes a few words behind the speaker.
- Explain new or difficult words or concepts used in the puppet show. Include definitions of new words in a handout, along with suggestions for additional readings on the subject.
- Copy the puppet show script and make it available for the audience, so they can easily follow along.

Learning Disabilities

- Select an area for puppet shows to be staged that has few background noises or distractions.
- Some individuals with learning disabilities have shorter attention spans and may not wish to stay for the length of the entire show. Do not be insulted if some visitors leave before the end of your program. You may consider limiting the puppet show to no longer than 30 minutes.
- Keep the puppet show audience small. Fewer people mean fewer distractions.
- Have everyone's attention before beginning the puppet show.
- The script should be easy for the audience to follow.
- The program's content using a variety of different methods, instead of aiming for a lower level of comprehension.
- Emphasize colors, textures, sounds, or smells of an object. Discuss the important characteristics individually; otherwise, they may be overlooked.
- Use the puppets to pose questions to the entire audience to encourage everyone's involvement.
- Repeat any questions from the audience.
- Allow enough time for the audience to respond to questions.
- Look for visitors to indicate a desire to answer a question before calling on them. Speech impairments or memory problems may interfere with visitors' abilities to answer questions. Calling on them when they are not ready may cause undue embarrassment.
- Keep transitions smooth in puppet show presentations. Skipping from one subject to another may cause confusion.
- Some individuals with learning disabilities have difficulty understanding the concept of historical and calendar time. If this information is included in your puppet show, use different ways to describe or demonstrate it.
- Explain new or difficult words and concepts. Include definitions of new words in a handout, along with suggestions for further reading.

Intellectual Disabilities

- Select an area for the puppet stage where there is minimal background noise and distractions.
- Keep the audience small for the performance. It may also be necessary to remind the group of the park's or museum's rules.
- Have everyone's attention before beginning the puppet show. If visitors miss part of the program, they may not understand the story and lose interest.
- Some individuals with intellectual disabilities have shorter attention spans and may not wish to stay for the entire puppet show. You may see some visitors leave before the end of your program.
- Your script should be easy for the audience to follow. Present the story in small, organized segments so as not to overwhelm, which can cause some visitors to lose interest.

- An uncomplicated plot does not have to be boring or uneventful. There should be one theme that your characters are trying to convey. You do not want the audience to forget the theme, so repeat it throughout the show.
- Where possible, relate the puppet show's story to your audience's lives.
- Encourage audience participation whenever possible. If individuals with intellectual disabilities are left with "empty time," they may lose interest and could become disruptive.
- Repeat any questions from the audience. Some individuals may not have heard the question, may not have understood the question, may have forgotten the question, or may not have been paying attention.
- Allow sufficient time for the audience to respond to your questions. Look for individuals to indicate a desire to answer a question before calling on them. Ask open-ended questions with neither right nor wrong answers, and offer immediate, positive feedback to the responses.
- Do not dismiss any audience questions or answers as being irrelevant. Sometimes poor language skills confuse an individual's response. Relate the question or answer to the subject of the puppet show.
- Explain new or difficult words or concepts within the context of the puppet show's script. Include definitions of new words in a handout, along with suggestions for additional reading on the subject.
- In association with the performance, reinforce learning by using items pertaining to the show's theme that may be touched, heard, smelled, or tasted. Information provided in this way increases interest and reinforces learning. For example, during a puppet show about California gold miners, a reproduction of a gold nugget could be passed around.
- If you are concerned about objects being dropped or mishandled, pass around only non-breakable items.

Mobility Impairments

- Prior to the arrival of the audience, evaluate access to the area where you plan to stage the puppet show. Stairs, curbs, and slippery surfaces may cause difficulty for visitors with mobility impairments. Walk the route to the area and look for any barriers or other difficulties, including slopes that may be encountered. Plan a route that is accessible for the entire audience. When publicizing the program, be sure to indicate the accessibility of the area. Refer to the *Interpretive Facilities* section beginning on page 125 for more information.
- Provide seating with backs and armrests. For puppet shows presented outside, shaded seating areas are preferred, as some people with mobility impairments cannot regulate their body temperature and may easily suffer from heat-related ailments.
- Be aware of the audience's line-of-sight. Stage the show at the eye level of people in wheelchairs. Some individuals with mobility impairments have difficulty looking up or down for long periods of time.
- If a member of the audience is using an electric wheelchair, wait until the noise of the wheelchair has stopped before beginning the puppet show.

- When incorporating items that may be touched into your puppet program, be aware of individual capabilities and limitations. You or another staff member may need to hold objects for members of the audience while they touch or look at them.

Visual Impairments

- Present the puppet shows in areas with few background noises.
- Locate any obstacles or protruding objects that may be encountered en route to the puppet show and inform your prospective audience of these obstacles. You or another staff member may be requested to guide individuals with visual impairments to their seats. Refer to the *Sighted Guide Technique* section on page 31 for tips on assisting people with visual impairments.
- If possible, meet with individuals who are visually impaired before the puppet show begins to ask if there is anything they would like described to them. Allow them to touch the puppets while you describe them. Be sure to include colors in your descriptions. Refer to the *Methods of Description* section on page 31 for further information.
- Offer audience members with visual impairments an overview of the stage and the general area where the puppet show is being presented. This will assist the visitors in better orienting themselves to their environment.
- Be alert to the individual needs of visually impaired audience members. Allow them to sit or stand close to the stage so they can see the puppet show more easily. Provide even and adequate lighting.
- Wait for the audience to settle before beginning the performance. Excess noise can be very distracting.
- Have the puppet show characters read aloud sign text or other written materials presented in the performance.
- Speaking clearly is as important as speaking loudly when performing as a puppeteer. Project your voice from your diaphragm. Do not let the level of your delivery drop at the end of a passage.
- Use descriptive language in the puppet show, emphasizing textures, colors, etc. Be familiar with different methods for describing historical and natural settings and objects. Verbal description plays an important role in guiding tactile exploration. Refer to the *Methods of Description* section on page 31 for more information.
- Your script should be easy for the audience to follow.
- If possible, involve all of the senses during your puppet show. Where appropriate, pass around items pertaining to the theme of the show that the audience can feel, smell, or listen to. Encourage the entire group to become aware of more than just their visual abilities.
- Handouts supplied to the audience should be in large, dark print (a 12-point, sans-serif font) and on a light matte background. Be prepared to explain the contents of handouts for those who are unable to read them. Written materials that are distributed regularly to visitors should also be available in an alternate format, such as printed in an 18-point, sans-serif font and/or in Braille.

- Provide an additional reading list pertaining to the theme of the puppet program. Audience members may be able to find talking books or books in Braille to supplement their visit.

Limited English Proficiency

- If the audience warrants it, plan to have a bilingual interpreter narrate the puppet show.
- On short notice, ask a bilingual family member or a friend of the visitor to translate for you during the puppet show. Alternatively, if you think that will be too disruptive, arrange for a separate performance.
- Your script should be easy for the audience to follow.
- Keep the number of words to a minimum and pantomime the script with the puppets. Use facial expressions as well as hand and body movements with the puppets.
- Repeat information in a variety of ways. Use different words, gestures, and objects to convey the interpretive information. Prepare visual and tactile examples to illustrate the story.
- Avoid using colloquial expressions because they may be difficult for audiences to understand.
- Look for individuals to indicate a desire to answer a question before calling on them. Asking them to respond before they are ready may cause unnecessary embarrassment.
- When distributing written materials, explain the contents for those who may not be able to read them. If possible, also have copies of those materials available in different languages.
- Offer to meet with members of the audience after the performance to answer any questions, or to repeat information.

Older Adults

Older adults may have one or more of the disabilities described previously, or none of them. In addition to some of the tips already mentioned, here are additional considerations for older adult visitors.

- Low light levels in some areas may create difficulty for some audience members. If you are planning to distribute written materials, make sure there is adequate light for reading.
- At the program's end, older adults may need extra time to allow their eyesight to adjust to light level changes before leaving. Remove any potential barriers that may cause accidents in areas where extreme changes in lighting levels occur, or give them the extra time they may need.

Staged Dramatic Presentations

A dramatic presentation on a formal stage or platform can be an effective medium for conveying historic information. The presentation can be one person playing the role of a historic personality who tells stories and converses with the audience. Or, it may be a multi-person stage presentation recreating a historic event.

The following suggestions are provided to assist park staff in preparing and delivering staged dramatic presentations so they may be enjoyed by all audience members.

Hearing Impairments

- If possible, meet visitors with hearing impairments prior to your presentation to determine how to best suit their needs. Many options for assistance are possible to address the range of hearing impairments.
- Provide an outline in advance of your staged dramatic presentation so visitors can easily follow along.
- Use a microphone if your voice projection is weak or if performing for a large audience. Refer to the *Assistive Listening Systems* section on page 17 for more information.
- If requested in advance by a visitor, arrange for a licensed professional sign language or oral interpreter. Refer to the *Working with an Oral or Sign Language Interpreter* section on page 15 for more information.
- If using a portable stage, select a location that has minimal background noise for the presentation.
- Allow visitors with hearing impairments to sit up front, so they can hear more clearly.
- Wait for the group to settle before you begin the presentation.
- When on stage, always face the audience and the light source when you speak. This allows visitors to speech-read. If you turn away, speech-reading becomes impossible, and it also becomes difficult for the sign language or oral interpreter to hear you.
- Speaking clearly is as important as speaking loudly. Project your voice from your diaphragm. Do not let the level of your delivery trail off at the end of a passage.
- Position yourself on stage so the audience can see you and any objects of discussion at the same time. This allows visitors to speech-read while focusing on the objects at the same time.
- Point to the object to which you are referring. This provides a visual cue as to what is being presented.
- Repeat questions from the audience.
- Allow plenty of time for the audience to answer your questions.
- Avoid sweeping arm motions or moving around while speaking, as this may distract some visitors from watching the oral or sign language interpreter or may make speech-reading difficult.
- If technology allows, during the scripted formal part of the dramatic presentation use “real-time” captioning. Real-time captioning projects the text of the program on a screen in large lettering as it is being spoken. If this isn’t possible, have a printed transcript available.

Learning Disabilities

- The staged dramatic presentation's content using a variety of different methods, instead of aiming for a lower level of comprehension.
- When setting up a portable stage for a dramatic presentation, select an area with minimal background noise to avoid distractions.
- Interact with your audience during your dramatic presentation. Involving all the visitor's senses will reinforce information and increase interest in your dramatic presentation. For example, offer back stage tours and allow visitors to touch the costumes, tools, or other props before or after the performance.
- Interpretive information should be delivered in short segments and reinforced through repetition.
- Be sure you have everyone's attention before you begin the dramatic presentation. Also, periodically check to see if everyone has understood what you have just said before continuing.
- Provide smooth transitions in your presentation. Jumping from one subject to another may cause confusion.
- Avoid "over-stimulating" the audience. Too much information may cause confusion and result in the visitors becoming uninterested in your presentation. Keep the program limited to one or two primary ideas.
- Discuss concepts and ideas in basic terms and avoid abstractions.
- Repeat questions from the audience.
- When asking the audience questions from the stage, look for visitors to indicate a desire to answer a question before calling on them. Asking them to respond when they are not ready may cause embarrassment. Allow enough time for the audience to answer your questions. Speech impairments or memory problems may interfere with visitors' abilities to answer questions.
- Do not to dismiss questions or answers that seem irrelevant to the subject. Relate the questions or the answers as best you can to the dramatic presentation.
- Explain new or difficult words and concepts. Include definitions of new words in a handout, along with suggestions for additional readings on the subject.
- Allow people to leave during your presentation, or make prior arrangements for another staff person to escort them back, because some individuals with learning disabilities may have shorter attention spans. For longer presentations, you may want to schedule a break. Notify the audience before the presentation begins that an intermission can be expected.
- Some individuals with learning disabilities have difficulty understanding the concept of historical or calendar time. If this information is included in your presentation, use different ways to explain or demonstrate it.

Intellectual Disabilities

- When using a portable stage, choose an area with minimal distractions for the dramatic presentation.
- Be sure you have everyone's attention before you begin the dramatic presentation. If part of the stage presentation is missed, visitors may quickly lose interest.
- Interact with your audience before and/or during your staged dramatic presentation. Involving the visitor's senses will reinforce information and increase interest in your dramatic presentation. For example, mingle with the audience and allow visitors to touch the costumes, tools, or other props before or after the performance.
- Present the information in small, organized segments and reinforce it through repetition. Relate new information to something already familiar to your audience.
- Avoid sweeping arm motions or moving around while speaking, as this may be distracting.
- Discuss ideas and concepts in basic terms and avoid abstractions.
- Repeat questions from the audience. Some visitors may not have heard the question being asked, may not have understood the question, or may not have been paying attention.
- Do not immediately dismiss a visitor's question or answer as being irrelevant. Sometimes, poor language skills confuse what the individual is trying to say. Do your best to relate the question or answer to the subject.
- Allow people to leave during your presentation or make prior arrangements for another staff person to escort the visitor(s), as some individuals with intellectual disabilities may have shorter attention spans. For longer staged presentations, you may want to schedule a break. Notify the audience before the presentation begins that an intermission can be expected.
- Explain new or difficult words and concepts. Include definitions of new words in a handout, along with suggestions for additional readings on the subject. Visitors may wish to learn more about the subject being presented.

Mobility Impairments

- Evaluate the area where the staged dramatic presentation will take place in advance. Be sure the area is accessible to people with mobility impairments. Stairs, curbs, and slippery surfaces may prove difficult to visitors with mobility impairments. A route with ramps may be necessary. Refer to the *Interpretive Facilities* section beginning on page125 for more information and requirements.
- In areas without seating, allow visitors using wheelchairs to be seated up front so they can see and hear more clearly. If possible, provide some seating for visitors who may be unable to stand for long periods of time.
- If a visitor is using an electric wheelchair, wait until the noise of the wheelchair has stopped before beginning the dramatic presentation.
- Be aware of the line-of-sight of individuals using wheelchairs or other assistive devices. Remember, some individuals may have difficulty looking up or down for long periods of time.

Visual Impairments

- Evaluate the accessibility of the area where the staged dramatic presentation will take place in advance. Plan a route that is accessible to the entire audience. Remove any obstacles or protruding objects that may be encountered. Once visitors have reached their destination, provide a general orientation of the area, including ambiance and visual details.
- If possible, provide a prerecorded audio description of the dramatic presentation. For more information, refer to the *Audio Description* section on page 33.
- Meet with visitors before the presentation and ask if there is anything they would like described to them in advance. For example, before the presentation begins, allow visitors to feel the costumes and objects used in the dramatic presentation, as you guide them with verbal description. Refer to the *Methods of Description* section on page 31 for more information.
- After the performance has ended, demonstrate the skill(s) used in the dramatic presentation and have the visitor hold your hands as you work, at the same time explaining in detail what you are doing.
- Recommend to visitors with visual impairments that they sit or stand in front so they can see more clearly. Be aware of lighting conditions and minimize glares.
- Wait for the audience to settle before you begin to talk—excessive noise can be very distracting.
- Speaking clearly is as important as speaking loudly. Project your voice from your diaphragm. Do not let the level of your delivery trail off at the end of a passage.
- Handouts supplied to the audience should be in large, dark print (a 12-point, sans-serif font) and on a light matte background. Be prepared to explain the contents of handouts for those who are unable to read them. Written materials that are distributed regularly to visitors should also be available in an alternate format, such as printed in an 18-point, sans-serif font and/or in Braille.

Limited English Proficiency

- If the audience warrants it, plan to have a bilingual interpreter be a part of the dramatic presentation.
- Pantomime your message. Use facial expressions, as well as hand and body movements. If needed, draw pictures to communicate interpretive information.
- If warranted, during the dramatic program's formal staged presentation, project subtitles in a foreign language or have printed transcripts in a foreign language available.
- On short notice, ask a bilingual family member or friend of the visitor to translate during your presentation.
- If the majority of your audience has limited English proficiency, speak slowly and clearly so they have a better chance of understanding you.
- Point to objects to which you are referring. This provides a visual cue that may help visitors in understanding your presentation.
- Avoid using colloquial expressions because they may be difficult for audiences to understand.

- Repeat information in a variety of ways. Use different words, gestures, and objects to convey interpretive information.
- Provide a handout or audiotape of the dramatic presentation dialogue in different languages.
- When distributing written materials, explain the contents for those who may not be able to read them.
- Offer to meet with visitors after the tour to answer any questions or repeat information.

Older Adults

Older adults may have one or more of the disabilities described previously, or none of them. In addition to some of the program tips already mentioned, here are additional considerations for older adults.

- Some older individuals have difficulty seeing cool colors, such as green or blue. Use a variety of colors for props and costumes in your dramatic presentation.
- Some older adults need extra time for their eyes to adjust to drastic changes in light levels. At the end of an indoor performance, allow visitors to stay seated while their eyes adjust to the change in light. Use this time to answer questions about the presentation.

Special Events

Nearly all state parks hold special events, whether to celebrate park anniversaries or a famous individual's birthday, to commemorate significant events, or just to gather people together to have fun. During special events, park sites may experience visitation of hundreds—even thousands—more than on their average days. Before these events, park staff must make special preparations for this increase in attendance. Having more visitors also means greater numbers of individuals with varying disabilities, and additional arrangements should be made to accommodate them.

The following are suggestions to assist park staff in preparing for special events.

- When publicizing a special event, indicate the accessibility of the area where it will be held and provide a contact number for people with disabilities to call to arrange for assistance. When using fliers for publicity, printed information should be produced in clear, readable type (12-point, sans-serif font is recommended) and in dark ink on a light matte background. Refer to the *Publications Guidelines* section on page 167 for more information.
- Have a map of the area available noting the location of accessible parking, routes of travel and facilities. All event facilities must be generally accessible.
- If requested at least ten days in advance, an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter must be hired to be present during presentations. In general, if oral presentations are a significant part of the program, an ASL interpreter is recommended. Publicize that sign language or oral interpreters will be on site for the event. For more information, see Departmental Notice 2004-07 – Use of Qualified Sign Language Interpreters.
- When providing additional restroom facilities for special events, like portable toilets, remember to increase the number of accessible toilets. At least 5 percent plus 1 of added portable restrooms must be accessible. If portable toilets are clustered in several locations, there should be 5 percent, but no less than one, accessible toilets in each cluster. If only one portable toilet is available at each location, it must be accessible. Accessible units must be identified by the International Symbol of Accessibility. Routes to and from restrooms must be accessible as well. Refer to the *California State Parks Accessibility Guidelines* sections on Restrooms and Portable Toilets for further information.
- Assistive listening systems should be provided in assembly areas. *California State Parks Accessibility Guidelines* requires that receivers for assistive listening systems be provided at a rate of 4 percent of the total number of seats, but in no case should there be less than two receivers.
- When additional seating is provided for special events, remember to increase the number of spaces for people using wheelchairs. Seating requirements are as follows:

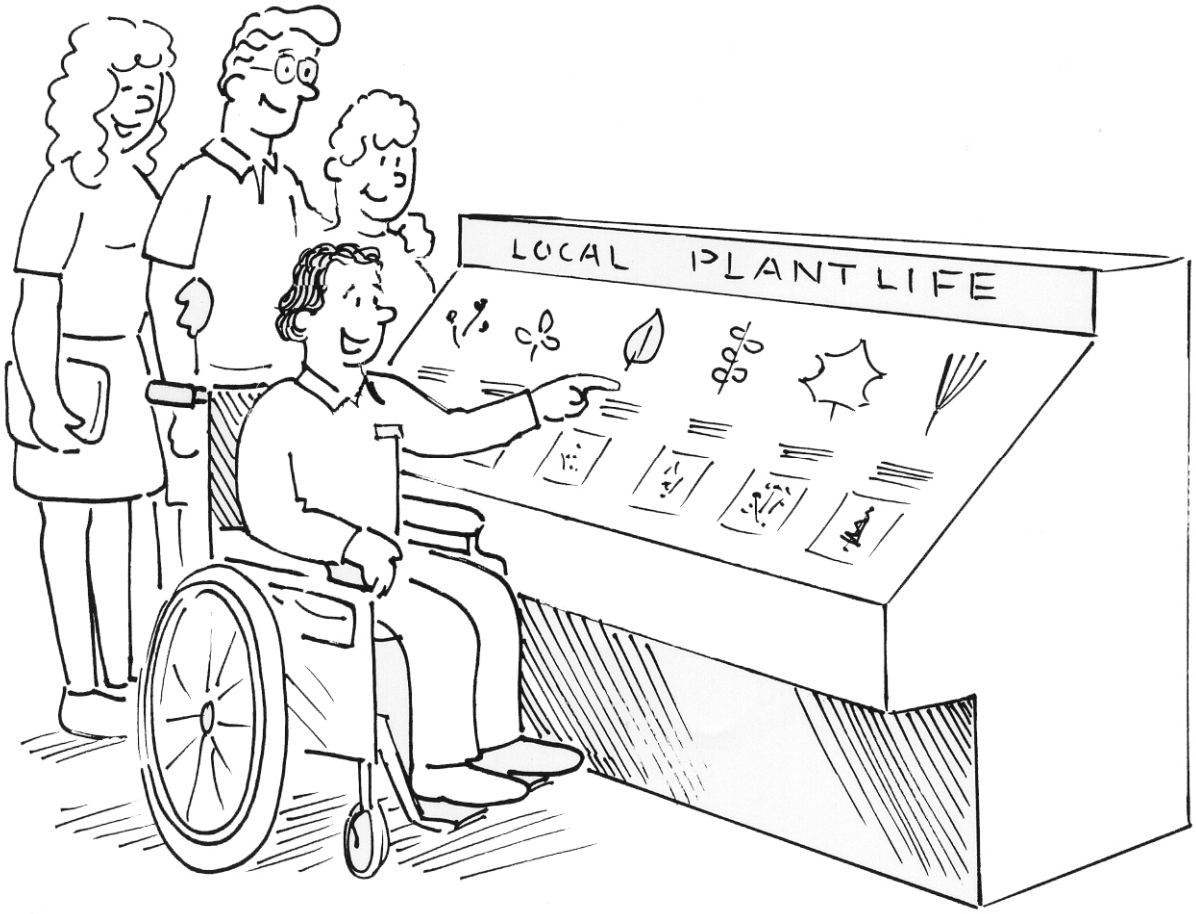
Seats	Wheelchair spaces
4-25	1
26-50	2
51-150	4
151 – 300	5
301 – 500	6
Over 500	add 1 per 150 seats

- Wheelchair spaces must be level and should be distributed throughout the assembly area to provide a choice of sight lines. Readily removable seats may be installed in these wheelchair spaces when they are not accommodating wheelchair users. For complete information on wheelchair spaces in assembly areas, refer to the *California State Parks Accessibility Guidelines* section on Campfire Centers/Assembly Areas.
- When providing additional parking, in a vacant lot for example, remember to include a number of additional spaces for accessible disabled parking. Refer to the

California State Parks Accessibility Guidelines for the required minimum number, as well as for the design of the parking spaces.

- Establish accessible routes to and from additional parking spaces, restrooms, and seating areas. Accessible routes must comply with the *2010 ADA Standards and* or *California State Accessibility Standards*. Facilities must comply with the guideline that is the more stringent of the two. You may refer to the *California State Parks Accessibility Guidelines* for further information.
- During special events, be certain there are adequate shaded areas and drinking fountains for visitors. Some individuals with mobility impairments have difficulty adjusting their body temperatures and are susceptible to heat-related ailments.
- Remind private vendors of their obligation to provide access to their sales areas, exhibits, etc.
- Use the Special Events Checklist in the appendix of the *California State Parks Accessibility Guidelines* to ensure that accessibility is correctly provided.

Interpretive Facilities



Overview

With the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990, the California Department of Parks and Recreation is required to make all facilities accessible to people with disabilities. Steps should be taken to make sure that visitors have:

- Access to facilities from public sidewalks, parking, or public transportation. Adjustments may include adding ramps, additional accessible parking spaces, widening entrances and replacing hardware such as door openers that require tight pinching, twisting, or grasping.
- Access to the goods and services offered in the facility. Adjustments may include rearranging the layout of the exhibits or display areas, lowering counter heights, and providing Braille or large-print signage.
- Access to restroom facilities. Adjustments may include widening doorways, providing accessible signage, and installing grab bars.
- Access to any other privileges, advantages, or accommodations provided by state parks.

Newly constructed buildings and facilities must be free from architectural and communication barriers that restrict access or use by individuals with disabilities. Also, any alterations to an existing building must be made accessible.

California State Parks must meet requirements delineated in Title II of the ADA, which applies to public agencies. Title II states that accessibility requirements must be met, with two exceptions: When compliance would result in a “fundamental alteration” of the program or service or when “undue financial or administrative burden” would be created. An example of fundamental alteration might be viewed in the creation of a backcountry trail into a wilderness area. In order to make such a trail accessible, significant alteration would likely need to be accomplished; this then would destroy the intended purpose of the trail—providing a wilderness experience. As it applies to California State Parks, the exemption based on undue financial/administrative burden could be extremely difficult to justify, as we are a branch of the State of California government.

If accessibility requirements cannot be met, alternative steps must be taken to make the park resources, interpretive displays, or services of state parks accessible. These could include providing services at the door or outside, relocating exhibit objects or merchandise to accessible shelves or spaces, and providing activities in accessible locations. **Facilities and programs accessible to people with disabilities should be identified with the proper symbols of accessibility.**

All accessible entrances need to display the International Symbol of Accessibility. Refer to the *Publication Guidelines* on page 169 for information regarding access symbols.

Two levels of accessibility regulations exist—federal and state. At each level, there is considerable legislation regarding accessibility. At this time, most dominant from the federal level is *The United States Department of Justice 2010 ADA Standards,* which is

a combination of guidelines previously contained in the *Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines, (ADAAG)* and the *Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards, (UFAS).* At the state level, technical requirements for providing accessibility are primarily contained in the California Code of Regulations, Title 24, California Building Code. In those instances where differences exist between the federal and state laws, the most stringent of the two must be followed. A consolidated resource regarding most issues influenced by both federal and state legislation is the *California State Parks Accessibility Guidelines* (CSPAG), available on the California State Parks website (www.parks.ca.gov/accessibility). In some cases, the Department may recommend more than what the law currently requires because accessibility to many outdoor areas is an emerging concept and certain technical standards are still under development.

For the purposes of this handbook, this section will focus on interpretive facilities, including amphitheaters and campfire centers; historic structures and sites; interpretive trails; and visitor centers, interpretive centers, museums, and the exhibits displayed in them. The information provided in this section is intended to give the reader guidance on improving accessibility to our interpretive facilities. However, it is by no means comprehensive. **For complete information on compliance with departmental requirements in relation to facilities, park staff should always consult *California State Parks Accessibility Guidelines* or Accessibility Section staff.** References to specific sections in the *California State Parks Accessibility Guidelines* are made throughout the following sections.

Amphitheaters and Campfire Centers

Amphitheaters and campfire centers can be very effective interpretive facilities. They provide space for day or evening talks, workshops, demonstrations, audio-visual programs, dramatic presentations, puppet shows, Junior Ranger programs, and special events.

These facilities and the routes to them need to be physically accessible to visitors using wheelchairs and other assistive mobility devices. At campfire centers and amphitheaters, the programs themselves need to be accessible to all visitors, including those who may have hearing, learning, intellectual, or mobility impairments.

The following suggestions and requirements are provided to assist park staff in assessing and designing amphitheaters and campfire centers to assure access to all visitors, including those with disabilities. However, this is not a comprehensive list. For specific information on facility requirements, see the *California State Parks Accessibility Guidelines*, *the 2010 Accessibility Standards*, and *California State Accessibility Standards.*

Hearing Impairments

- Provide an assistive listening system, like those described in the *Assistive Listening Systems* section on page 17. When this equipment is made available, the International Symbol of Access for Hearing Loss (shown here) should be displayed. Receivers for assistive listening systems shall be provided at a rate of 4 percent of the total number of seats, but in no case less than two receivers.
- If the campfire center or amphitheater seats a large audience, use an amplification system for programs.
- If the listening system serves individual fixed seats, these seats should be located within a 50' viewing distance of the stage or playing area, with a complete view of the performance space.
- Remember, service animals such as hearing guide dogs are allowed in all park facilities.
- Amphitheaters and campfire centers should be located in areas with minimal background noise.

Mobility Impairments

- Evaluate the route from the parking area to the amphitheater or campfire center. The path should be accessible to people using wheelchairs or other assistive devices. Stairs, curbs, steep slopes, and slippery surfaces may prove difficult for visitors with mobility impairments. A route with ramps may be necessary. Campfire centers may have a paved trail that directs visitors from accessible parking to the campfire center. Space may be provided near the front of the campfire center for people using wheelchairs. See *California State Parks Accessibility Guidelines*, Section 33, for detailed information.
- Walkways, corridors, aisles, slopes and handrails have specific measurement requirements that must be met. See *California State Parks Accessibility Guidelines*, Section 8, for information on these requirements.
- *California State Parks Accessibility Guidelines*, Section 8, also contains detailed information about seating requirements.
- The ground or floor of the wheelchair space should be level, firm and slip-resistant. (2010 ADA Standards 302.1) Wood chips and gravel are not recommended as a surface for campfire centers, as they can be extremely slippery. Concrete, asphalt, or a hard-packed dirt surface, resistant to forming puddles when wet, work best.
- An accessible route should connect wheelchair seating spaces with the performing area and backstage areas used by performers. (2010 ADA Standards 206.2.6) Some state parks provide ramps leading to the stage of the campfire center, so visitors with mobility impairments are able to participate in skits.
- Remember, service animals are legally permitted in all facilities.

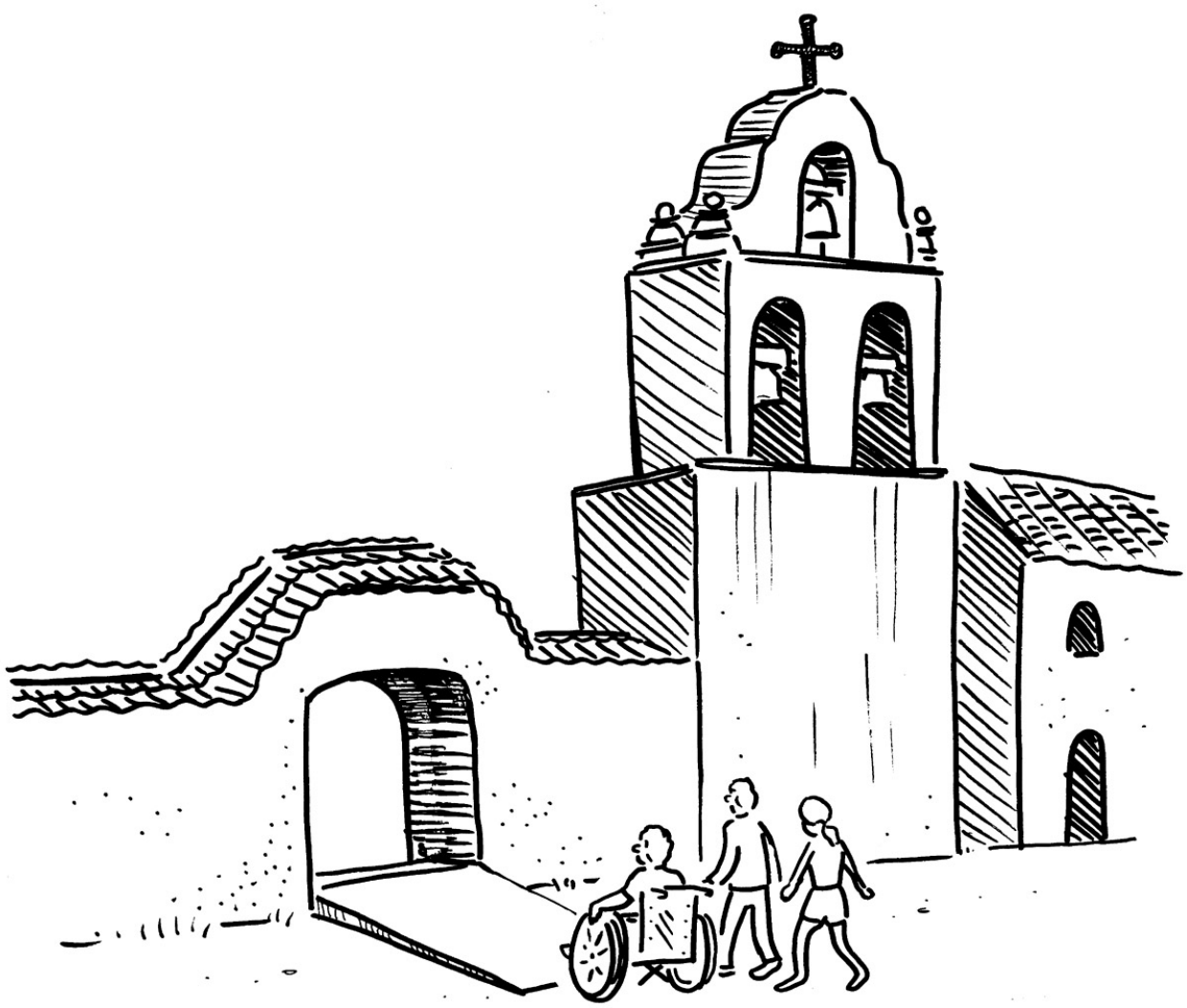
Visual Impairments

- The amphitheater or campfire center should be bright and evenly lit during the time when visitors are entering or exiting the facility.

- On at least one side of the trail to the campfire center, a distinctive edge should be provided to serve as a cue for visitors with visual impairments. This edge should differ from the surface texture of the trail, as well as the textures outside the trail. Refer to the *Interpretive Trails* section on page 135, for more information.
- Walkways and aisles should be free from protruding objects. Refer to *CSPAG*, Section 33, for specific requirements regarding protruding objects.
- Refer to *CSPAG*, Sections 8, and 35 for detailed requirements regarding signage.
- Stairways must be designed according to specific standards. Refer to *CSPAG*, Section 38, for detailed information.
- Remember, service animals assisting people with disabilities are legally permitted in all park facilities.

Historic Structures and Sites

Historic structures are preserved as they were in their original state or are reconstructed structures of a particular period. In state parks, they are used to house museums, visitor centers, museums, interpretive centers, concessions, park offices, and storage. Historic structures are often distinguished by features such as narrow hallways and entryways, steep or monumental stairways and steps, and heavy doors. These elements not only pose difficulty for people with disabilities, but also may form actual physical barriers that make some historic structures inaccessible. Historic sites are locations of historical importance.



How do you make historic buildings or sites accessible to people with disabilities without threatening or destroying their historic significance? This question is often very difficult to answer. *California State Parks Accessibility Guidelines*, Section 22, which deals with historic buildings/sites, states, “The same access code requirements as those for non-historic buildings shall apply to historic structures unless compliance with regular code threatens historical significance or character-defining features. In other words, the accessibility requirements outlined in other CSPAG sections on buildings, doorways, elevators, lifts, ramps, restrooms, routes of travel, etc., should be applied before” alternatives are considered. Staff must fully understand that a decision to use alternative access is not to be taken lightly. Serious consideration must be given to various descending levels of creating access as outlined in the California State Historical Building Code, Chapter 8-6, Accessibility. Ultimately, documentation must be developed, and sign-off at headquarters—not within the District—will be necessary.

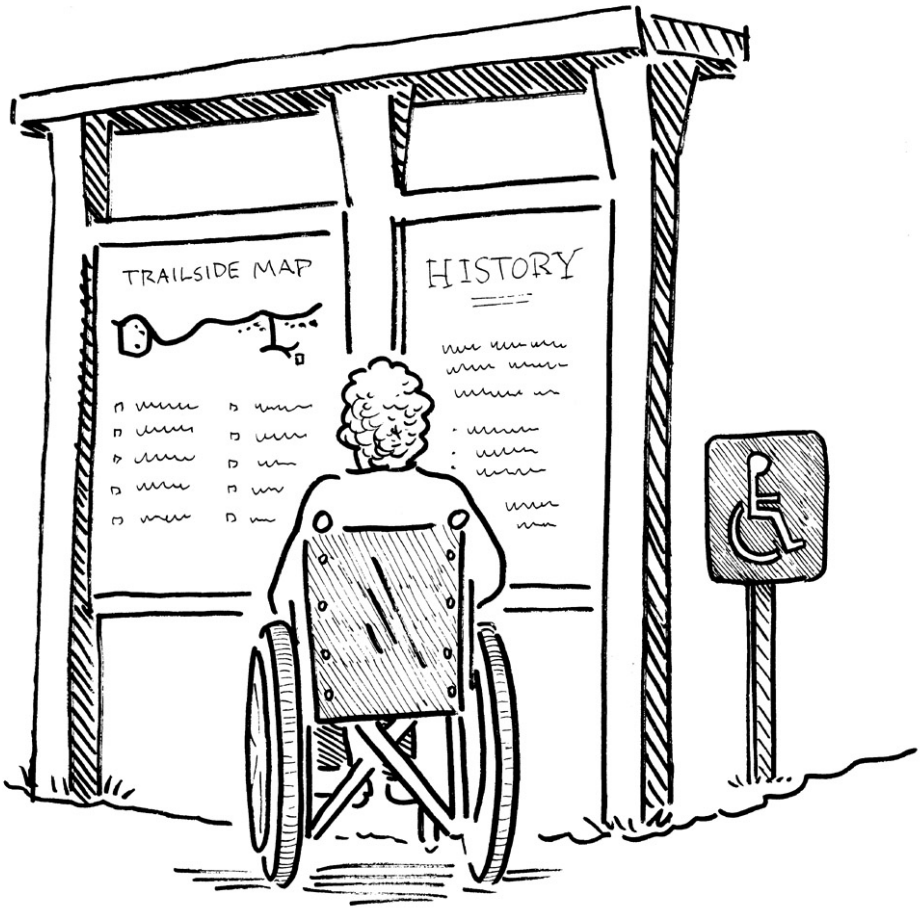
Examples of alternative measures include:

- Providing audio-visual materials and devices to show the areas of the historic structure or site that are inaccessible. These could include: films, video, slide shows, photographs, or taped audio description of the areas.
- Arrange for interpretive staff to guide individuals with disabilities into or through inaccessible areas of the building or site. **Do not** carry a visitor with a mobility impairment through an inaccessible area. The only time park staff may carry a visitor is when it is requested by the visitor and the park staff person is specifically trained on how to do so, or in the case of an emergency.
- Provide accessible, portable restrooms if those inside the historic structure cannot be modified to meet ADA requirements.
- Relocate programs and services to accessible locations.

Interpretive Trails

Trails can effectively interpret the quality and extent of an area's cultural development or of its natural life forms, forces, and elements. Resources located on the trail can be interpreted through brochure descriptions keyed to numbered posts or recognizable landmarks, audio versions of brochure text, trail panels, visitor-activated message repeaters, or park staff. Self-guided trails also can serve large numbers of users at their own pace. They should provide physical access to park areas, as well as effectively interpret the park's resources.

Trails should be designed for all visitors. People with disabilities do not particularly want a "special" or separate trail. For example, trails providing signage or printed guides in Braille are encouraged, but they should not be labeled as "Braille Trails." Keep in mind that trails made accessible to people in wheelchairs are also convenient for visitors using baby strollers, crutches, or walkers.



A variety of obstacles can make maneuvering on a path or trail difficult or impossible for visitors with disabilities. These obstacles may include large rocks, protruding roots, overhanging branches or vines, soft trail surfaces, erosion channels, ice, and stream crossings. Attempts should be made to keep paths and trails clear of such hazards.

Understandably, not all outdoor areas are capable of being wheelchair accessible, just like you cannot build roads in places with rocky cliffs or steep, rugged mountain sides without significantly altering the natural environment. State park trails need to be as accessible as possible, but sensitive to the natural landscape. A multidisciplinary team of trail designers and resource specialists shall address trail accessibility per the Federal Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas. This process will determine to what extent the trail can be made accessible while protecting the resources of the area.

The Department has specific standards for paths and trails published in the *California State Parks Accessibility Guidelines*, Section 41. Refer to this publication, as well as guidelines for "Walks" in *California State Accessibility Standards, Title 24* and "Accessible Routes" in the *2010 ADA Standards*.

The following suggestions will assist park staff in designing and operating trail systems, so they can be made accessible to all visitors, including those with disabilities. The requirements are indicated with the section of the law (in parenthesis) that applies to the situation.

Hearing Impairments

- Make available a transcript of any verbal trail information provided through visitor-activated message repeaters.
- Trail panel text should follow the easy-to-read format, as described in the *Publications Guidelines* section on page 167.
- Remember, leashed service animals are allowed on trails.

Learning Disabilities

- Provide interactive wayside exhibits. Some parks offer "adventure packs" to visitors using self-guided trails. Included in these packs are magnifying glasses, field guides, and other tools useful for self-guided interpretation.
- Trail panel text should be grouped in an organized fashion, following the easy-to-read format described in the *Publications Guideline*s section on page 167.
- Information presented in trail signage should be in basic terms that avoid abstractions.
- Provide trails with varying lengths and degrees of difficulty. Some visitors with learning disabilities have shorter attention spans, and trails which take 20-30 minutes to complete may be preferred. Signs located at trail heads may state the trail length and difficulty. Approximate time to complete trail is not currently required on accessible signage.
- Trail signage should include illustrations to supplement the printed text.
- Record trail signage in common downloadable audio formats such as MP3, and make players available for loan to visitors who may be unable to read. Many state

parks offer free audio tours and information on their California State Parks webpages, as well as self-guided trail brochures available at certain trail heads.

Intellectual Disabilities

- Trails should be easy to follow. Clearly mark trail routes with directional signs, especially when separate trail paths cross.
- Offer park visitors a trail map to use while they are on their walk. Indicate on the map the trail's route and cultural or natural features that can be seen along the way. This stimulates curiosity and piques visitor interest.
- Provide interactive wayside exhibits. Examples of bark, leaves, or needles of the different trees in the area, could be made available for visitors to touch as they read about them. These may not only provide tactile and olfactory stimulation, but also will help keep visitors on the trail who might otherwise veer off to feel the textures of trees, or to smell the scent of a Douglas fir.
- Trail panel text should be grouped in an organized fashion, following the easy-to-read format described in the *Publications Guidelines* section on page 167.
- Information provided on trail signage should be presented in basic terms.
- Offer trails with varying lengths and degrees of difficulty. Some visitors with intellectual disabilities have shorter attention spans and could easily become distracted or bored. A trail that takes 20-30 minutes to complete may be preferred. At the beginning of the trail, be sure to state the length and difficulty rating of the trail.
- Trail signage should include illustrations to supplement the printed text.
- Make audio recordings of trail signage and have them available for visitors who may be unable to read.

Mobility Impairments

- Refer to *California State Parks Accessibility Guidelines*, Section 41, for specific requirements regarding physical accessibility to trails.
- Signs should be positioned at the beginning of the trail, indicating the accessibility of the trail, obstacles which may be encountered on the trail, and trail distance. The time it may take to complete the trail is not currently required on accessible signage. Trails considered to be entirely physically accessible should display the "International Symbol of Accessibility" at the beginning of the trail and on trail maps.
- If possible, trails should be designed in a circular fashion and end where they began.
- When designing the trail, take into consideration the water run-off of the area, and make sure the trail has a hard-packed surface, free from exposed roots, holes, and rocks. Trail surfaces should be firm and slip-resistant. Concrete, asphalt, and other paved pathways meet these criteria, although they could be aesthetically unpleasant. Crushed stone, such as decomposed granite or compacted roadbase, can form an accessible surface when properly designed and constructed. Wood decking may be used as an accessible surface; however, this can be expensive, and warpage must be controlled. Other materials, such as polyethylene, are also being manufactured, and work well for trail decking systems. Brick or other paving materials set in sand are not recommended because they can easily shift, causing

irregularities in the surface. Do not use wood chips or loose gravel, as they can be extremely slippery. Untreated soil is not recommended unless soil conditions permit. When wet, it may create a slippery surface or can be eroded. Some soils can be treated with a hardener, making the route easier for wheelchairs and strollers to negotiate while keeping the trail natural.

- Provide all-terrain wheelchairs for visitors to use on sandy or rocky trails.
- Wide and level rest areas must be provided at certain intervals depending upon the steepness of the trail.
- Rest areas should include benches with armrests and backs in addition to adjacent clear spaces, so users of wheelchairs can sit next to their companions. Rest areas should also be positioned so visitors can enjoy an interesting feature as they rest.
- At rest areas, consider providing shelter from the hot sun or rainfall. Some visitors with mobility impairments may have difficulty controlling their body temperatures and could suffer from heat-related ailments. These visitors will especially appreciate the availability of shade in the warmer regions of the state.
- If possible, provide accessible restroom facilities and drinking fountains along the trail. The lack of restroom facilities often inhibits people with mobility impairments from venturing out onto park trails. Be sure to indicate the location of these facilities at the beginning of the trail and on trail maps.
- Any facilities located on the trail, such as restrooms, drinking fountains, and picnic tables, should follow *2010 ADA Standards, California State Parks Accessibility Guidelines,* and *California State Accessibility Standards*.
- Trail panels and wayside exhibits should be placed so they can be easily read by visitors in wheelchairs. Refer to *California State Parks Accessibility Guidelines*, Section 18, for specific information on exhibits.
- Be careful not to “over-design” for accessibility. The trail should be kept as natural as possible. Use native materials for railings, curbs, etc.
- Remember, leashed service animals are allowed on trails.

Visual Impairments

- Position signs at the beginning of the trail to indicate its accessibility, obstacles that may be encountered on the trail, trail distance, and the difficulty rating of the trail.
- Trails should have a hard surface, free from obstructions, such as exposed roots, rocks, large holes, etc.
- Provide a distinctive edge on at least one side of the trail to cue visitors with visual impairments. This edge should differ from the surface texture of the trail, as well as textures outside the trail.
- Trails, walkways and aisles should be clear from protruding objects. Refer to *California State Parks Accessibility Guidelines*, Sections 33 and 41, for specific requirements.
- Offer a handout in Braille or in large print of the trail signage text.
- Record audio descriptions of trail signage and make them available for loan to visitors with visual impairments.
- Distinctive cane-detectable surface texture changes should be installed in the trail tread surface to alert visitors to the presence of interpretive displays and other site amenities.

- Interpretive trails can be outlined with rope to provide access to people with visual impairments. Rope outlines are not required. For some visitors with disabilities, ropes are even considered insulting.
- If, for some unavoidable reason, the trail crosses a road, there should be a change in surface texture beginning 5' before the trail meets the road, and extending to the road.
- A curb or a railing should be installed whenever there is danger of falling off the trail. Be careful not to "over–design" for accessibility. The trail should be kept as natural as possible. Use native materials for railings, curbs, etc.
- Provide interactive trail exhibits that involve all the senses. Do not label these as "for the blind" or "blind trail." Encourage all visitors to use the interactive exhibits.
- Remember, leashed service animals are allowed on trails.

Limited English Proficiency

- Develop handouts of the trail signage in an easy-to-read English format, as well as in different languages. For more information, refer to the *Publications Guidelines* section on page 167. Some Parks offer trail brochures in German, French, Spanish, Italian, Japanese, and Dutch.
- Trail signage should include illustrations to supplement the printed text.
- If possible, provide brochures or handouts of interpretive panel text in multiple languages.
- Provide visitor-activated message repeaters on the trail in different languages.

Older Adults

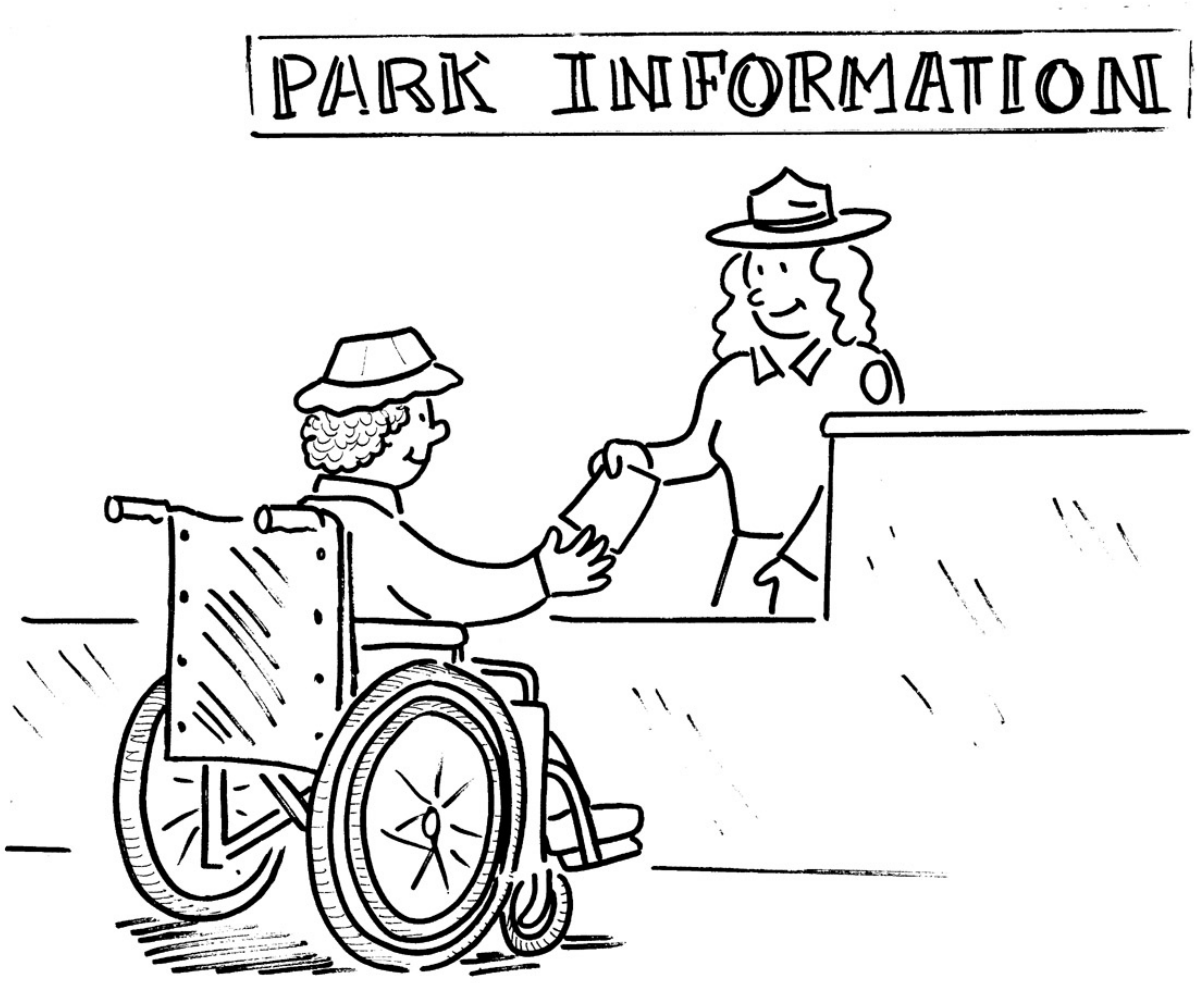
Older adults may have one or more of the disabilities previously mentioned, or none of them. The following are additional considerations for older adults:

- Some older adults need extra time to allow their eyes to adjust to drastic changes in light levels. Others may have difficulty seeing in dimly lit areas. For trails that pass through areas of poor lighting, such as a densely forested area, or that have extreme changes in light levels, signage should be placed before entering the area to warn visitors. Also, any obstacles should be removed. If most of the trail is in low-level light, you may want to instruct visitors to carry flashlights.
- If possible, provide accessible restroom facilities and drinking fountains along the trail. The lack of restroom facilities often inhibits older adults from venturing out onto park trails. Be sure to indicate the location of these facilities at the beginning of the trail and on trail maps.

Visitor Centers, Interpretive Centers and Museums

Visitor centers, interpretive centers, and museums are major attractions in state parks. Most visitors will go into a park's interpretive facility to orient themselves to their surroundings, to learn about the park's natural or cultural history, or to simply use the restroom. It is imperative that these structures and the exhibits and services they contain be accessible to all visitors.

Visitor centers are staffed facilities that help individuals become oriented to the area they are visiting. Often, they are the visitor's first stop in the park. Many centers provide a comfortable space where individuals can also relax and refresh themselves after their trip to the park. Most visitor centers include restrooms, drinking fountains, telephones, and first aid resources, along with an information area. Some visitor centers also contain interpretive exhibits and sales areas.



Interpretive centers and museums offer the comfort and information services of a visitor center, with a strong focus on park interpretation that highlights relevant themes. Many of the facilities have indoor and outdoor exhibits that include dioramas, artifacts, and plant and animal specimens, as well as replicas. Audio-visual programs may also be provided, allowing visitors to relax and watch a short film or slide show before (or after) exploring the park's natural and cultural features. Often, a visit to the interpretive center or museum becomes the highlight of a visitor's park experience.

Historic structure museums, also known as historic house museums, differ from other park museums. These facilities are also required to be accessible, but may, in some cases, follow alternate minimum requirements. More information is provided in the *Historic Structures and Sites* section on page 133.

The following requirements and suggestions are provided to assist the process of assessing and redesigning interpretive facilities to better accommodate all park visitors. This is not a comprehensive list of requirements. Refer to the *California State Parks Accessibility Guidelines* for detailed information.

Hearing Impairments

- Provide an assistive listening system to aid communication between park staff and visitors, and/or to supplement audio exhibits. Refer to the *Assistive Listening Systems* section on page 17 for more information. Where this equipment is offered, be sure to display the International Symbol of Access for Hearing Loss (shown here).
- All informational and interpretive signage should follow an easy-to-read format and display the proper access symbols. Refer to the *Publications Guidelines* section on page 167 for more information.
- Display a plan of the facility and/or a map of the park. This will help visitors find their way around, without having to ask. It will also aid the park staff giving directions or descriptions of the area.
- Emergency alarms should be visual, as well as audible. For information on alarms, refer to *California State Parks Accessibility Guidelines*, Section 1.
- Remember, service animals are allowed in all park facilities.

Mobility Impairments

- Evaluate the route from the parking lot to the interpretive facility. The route must be accessible to people using wheelchairs or other assistive devices. Stairs, curbs, steep slopes, and slippery surfaces may prove difficult for visitors with mobility impairments. It may be necessary to develop a route with ramps.
- If the interpretive facility is considered historic and is not readily accessible, such as a house museum, refer to the *Historic Structures and Sites* section on page 133 for special requirements and make sure that the programs and services offered within are also available in an accessible location.
- For information on information and sales areas, refer to *California State Parks Accessibility Guidelines*, Section 42.

- Sales items, such as books, maps, and souvenirs, should be easily reached by visitors using wheelchairs. See the diagram below for forward and side reach ranges of people using wheelchairs, and refer to *California State Parks Accessibility Guidelines*, Section 42.
- Visitor flow through the facility should be smooth. If possible, create a circular route to avoid situations where visitors must back up or turn around to get out.
- Ground and floor surfaces along accessible routes and in accessible rooms and spaces including floors, walks, ramps, stairs, and curb ramps, shall be stable, firm, and slip-resistant. (2010 ADA Standards 302.1)
- Refer to *California State Parks Accessibility Guidelines* for detailed information on measurements for walkways, corridors, ramps, slopes, etc.
- Seating with backrests and armrests should be provided in the interpretive center, visitor center, or museum. Seating provided outdoors should be located in areas with shade.
- Restrooms, drinking fountains, telephones, and other services provided at a visitor center need to be wheelchair accessible. Refer to US DOJ *2010 Accessibility Standards, California State Parks Accessibility Guidelines,* and *California State Accessibility Standards* for requirements and guidelines.
- Remember, service animals are legally permitted in all facilities.

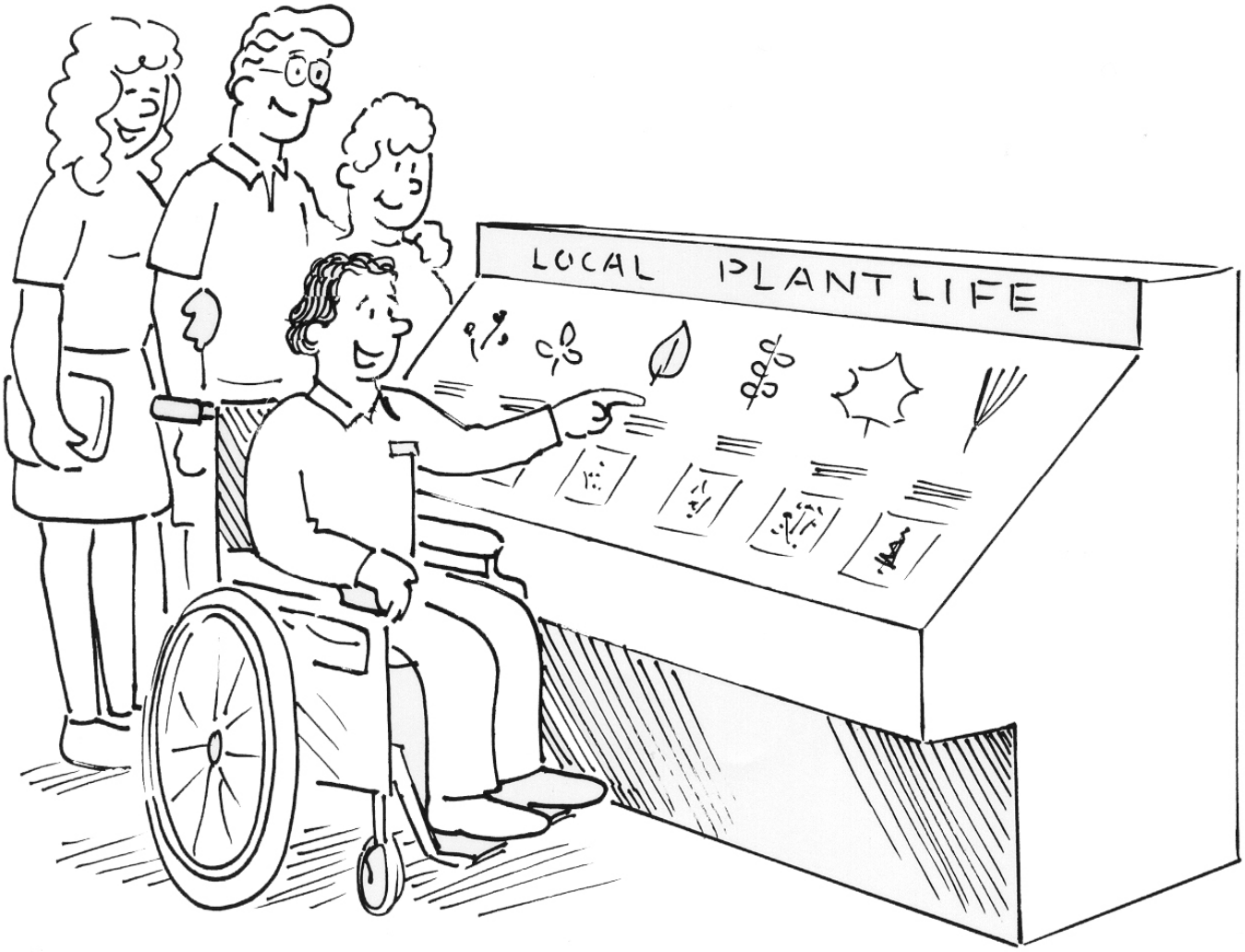
Visual Impairments

- Provide a tactile or talking map of the interpretive facility and/or surrounding park areas, illustrating trails, roads, restrooms, and points of interest.
- Signage must follow the guidelines specified in *California State Parks Accessibility Guidelines*, Section 35.
- If a trail serves as the main route to the interpretive facility, then a distinctive edge should be provided on at least one side of the trail, to serve as a cue for visitors with visual impairments. This edge should differ from the surface texture of the trail, as well as the textures outside the trail. Refer to the *Interpretive Trails* section on page 135 for more information.
- The interpretive facility should be bright and evenly lighted.
- Walkways and aisles should be clear from protruding objects. Refer to *California State Parks Accessibility Guidelines*, Section 33, for more information.
- For specific information about stairway requirements, refer to California State *Parks Accessibility Guidelines*, Section 38.
- Remember, service animals are legally permitted in all park facilities.

Exhibits

The main purposes of interpretive exhibits are to inspire visitors to explore, to learn, and to protect the area's natural, cultural, and recreational resources. Exhibits use many media, including encased objects, touchable objects, interactive games, natural history dioramas, models, historic setting vignettes, three-dimensional maps, text and computer programs, environmental monitors (weather, tides, earthquakes, etc.), microscopes, live animals and plants, and more.

Listed in this section are suggestions on how to make exhibits accessible and more enjoyable for people with disabilities. For specific information on exhibit requirements refer to *California State Parks Accessibility Guidelines*, Section 18.



Hearing Impairments

- Provide exhibits that involve all the senses. For example, consider having samples of dried foods pertaining to the time period or theme for visitors to smell.
- Provide an assistive listening system and transcripts of exhibits containing audible information. Refer to the *Assistive Listening Systems* section on page 17.

Learning Disabilities

- Interactive, touchable, and sensory exhibits are popular with all visitors. These exhibits can help reinforce written or audible information. A simple example is a display of local rocks for visitors to touch and feel, along with a printed description of each one.
- Exhibits should be well organized; visually and structurally.
- Assistive listening devices, such as hardwire or infrared systems that translate the exhibit text, can be helpful to visitors who may be unable to read. Refer to the *Assistive Listening Systems* section on page 17, for more information.
- Exhibit text should follow an easy-to-read format, as described in the *Publications Guidelines* section on page 167.
- Ask interpretive staff to demonstrate interactive exhibits or respond to questions.
- Avoid using fonts that may be difficult to read, such as script or ornate lettering. If using these fonts, also provide the text in an easy-reading sans serif font. Refer to the *California State Parks Access Guidelines* Section 18, II for more information.

Intellectual Disabilities

- Interactive, touchable, and sensory exhibits are popular with all visitors. Parks can easily provide objects such as cones, foliage, and footprint casts for visitors to touch and inspect.
- In some situations, it may be necessary to remind visitors which of the exhibits may or may not be touched, or use a barrier to protect artifacts that may not be touched.
- Ask interpretive staff to demonstrate interactive exhibits and respond to questions.
- Exhibit text should be easy to read, and a handout of exhibit information in an easy-to-read format should be supplied. Refer to the *Publications Guidelines* section on page 167 and the *California State Parks Accessibility Guidelines*, Section 18.
- Avoid using fonts that may be difficult to read, such as script or gothic; provide an accompanying text using an easy-reading sans-serif font.

Mobility Impairments

- Provide a captioned film, slide show, or photographs of exhibits that cannot be made accessible, such as historic buildings with multiple floors.
- For specific information on viewing zones, labels, horizontally mounted displays, and space for wheelchair access, refer to *California State Parks Accessibility Guidelines*, Section 18.
- Be aware of the types of fixtures used on interactive exhibits. Knobs, levers, handles, dials, etc., should be designed so they can be easily used by people with limited arm and hand movements.

- Take into consideration the forward and side reach of visitors in wheelchairs and adjust interactive exhibits accordingly. See *California State Parks Accessibility Guidelines*, Section 42.

Visual Impairments

- Tactile and sensory exhibits are especially helpful for visitors with visual impairments. A “touch table” with materials pertaining to the park can be an easy and fun exhibit to provide. Another idea is to arrange various objects (e.g., furs, rocks, bones, etc.) in “discovery” boxes. Then, invite visitors to explore with their hands in the boxes to try and guess the items they are touching. By lifting the lids, they could find the answers. The answers could also be provided in Braille for visitors who are visually impaired.
- Consider the lighting conditions of exhibits. They should be well and evenly lit. Reflective surfaces, glazed artwork, and shiny objects should be coordinated with appropriate lighting to allow exhibits to be viewed or read without glare.
- Exhibit text should follow the guidelines specified in *California State Parks Accessibility Guidelines*, Section 18.
- Provide examples of textures portrayed in paintings or photographs, such as straw, granite, or cloth, for visitors to touch and feel.
- Display a tactile relief map or make one available to visitors on request. This will assist visitors in orienting themselves to the park environment. A 3-D molded map can allow visitors to touch, feel, and better understand the mountains, valleys, and rivers.
- Keep magnifiers handy for visitors to examine photographs, signs, artifacts, fossils, and mounted specimens in the exhibits.
- Provide touchable models, either life-size or to scale, of rare or fragile objects that may not be touched. If the object is very large, reproduce a part of it so visitors can get an idea of its relative size.
- Enlarge photographs to allow visitors to see more detail. Use non-glare glass or a matte finish on the photographic paper.
- Arrange to have interpretive staff near the exhibit area to answer questions, to read aloud exhibit titles, or to guide visitors with visual impairments through the exhibits. Refer to *The Sighted Guide Technique* on page 31.
- Be familiar with techniques used to describe historic and natural settings and objects. Prepare written descriptive scripts for the most popular park attractions so that any staff member or volunteer can provide audio description as requested. Use these to characterize the exhibits for visitors. Refer to the *Methods of Description* section on page 31, for more information.
- Make an audio recording of exhibit display information in a common audio file format, such as MP3. Audio files could be given to visitors on CD, provided on a personal player available for loan at the exhibit, or made available for download to a visitor’s own personal player.
- Providing compact discs that contain written interpretive information stored in a common format, such as an Adobe PDF or Microsoft Word document, can also be helpful. Many people with visual disabilities have audible screen reading software that would allow them to listen to this interpretive information at home.

- Exhibit text and labels should be offered on request in large print (18-point font or larger) printed format.
- Offer additional informational resources in a reading list that pertains to an exhibit's theme. In this way, visitors may be able to take their park experience home through books in Braille, large print, or talking books available at local libraries.

Limited English Proficiency

- Provide audio explanations of the exhibits in English and other languages. Some parks offer audio tours in multiple languages.
- Printed copies of exhibit text should be offered in languages other than English.
- Arrange to have interpretive staff near exhibits to answer visitor questions.
- Whenever possible, develop exhibits that rely more on graphics and objects, rather than on text, to convey interpretive messages.
- A closer look or opportunity to feel an object may be more effective than verbal descriptions or printed explanations.

Older Adults

Older adults may have one or more of the disabilities previously mentioned—or none of them. In addition to some of the tips already mentioned, here are additional considerations for older adults.

- Remove potential barriers, which may cause accidents in areas with extreme changes in light. Some older visitors need time to allow their eyes to adjust to drastic changes in light.
- Cool colors, like green and blue, are not easily seen by some older visitors with increased eye lens density. Glare also can become a problem, as edges of counters seem to blend in with their background and make them hard to distinguish. Using contrasting colors on edges and large print signs printed on matte backgrounds will assist older individuals with this type of visual impairment.

Appendices

Tips and Techniques Tables

The following tables include most of the tips and techniques put forward in the Interpretive Programs and Interpretive Facilities sections of this publication. Rather than grouping these items by disability category, as those sections are structured, this table puts forward the tips and techniques in terms of program preparation and presentation. Although this table indicates which disability categories are served by the various techniques included herein, readers should note how many of these items are useful for serving all of our visitors, not just those with disabilities, which is why the last column in this table was included.

General Etiquette	Hearing Impairments	Learning Disabilities	Mental Retardation	Mobility Impairments	Visual Impairments	Ltd English Proficiency	Older Adults	All Visitors
Speak clearly and in a normal tone of voice. Try to project your voice from your diaphragm. Speak louder only if it is requested, and then try not to shout.								✓
If you have difficulty understanding a visitor who has a speech impairment, do not be afraid to ask them to repeat themselves. If you still do not understand, repeat the information you did understand, and ask them to repeat again.	✓	✓	✓			✓		
Address and treat adults with disabilities as adults.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
When giving directions or instructions, speak slowly and clearly and keep your sentences short.								✓
Offer assistance if it appears to be needed. If your offer is declined, do not insist. If your offer is accepted, ask how you can best help.								✓
Do not worry about using words like “hear” or “listen,” "run" or "walk," and "look" or "see" around people with hearing, vision or mobility impairments. These words are part of everyone's vocabulary.	✓			✓	✓			
If you know some sign language, use it--your attempts will be appreciated. However, in situations when an interpreter has been requested in advance, a certified professional must be hired.	✓							
Be aware that some visitors with disabilities may have service dogs accompanying them. Service dogs are allowed in park areas and facilities. Service dog users generally prefer that their dogs not be petted, led, or spoken to.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
With all visitors, there is a wide variation of abilities and limitations. Find out how you can best assist each individual.								✓

General Etiquette	Hearing Impairments	Learning Disabilities	Mental Retardation	Mobility Impairments	Visual Impairments	Ltd English Proficiency	Older Adults	All Visitors
Be aware that an individual with a learning disability may stare at you or stand close to you when you speak. This individual may be displaying over-attentiveness, or may be trying to block out competing noises.		✓						
If inappropriate behavior is displayed, the problem should not be ignored but instead discussed calmly. Accusations may only cause stress and make the situation worse.								✓
Never pick up or carry a person with a mobility impairment unless they have requested it and you have had specific training on how to do so, except in cases of emergency. Make sure all other options have been exhausted.				✓				
Do not lean or hang on a visitor's wheelchair or other mobility aid. These are considered part of their body space.				✓				
When speaking for more than a few minutes with individuals using wheelchairs, consider kneeling or sitting down so they do not have to look up at you.				✓				
Never take mobility aids away from visitors unless they request it. Having their mobility aids nearby makes individuals feel more independent and secure. This includes people using crutches.				✓				
Slippery or uneven surfaces may pose problems for visitors, especially those walking with assistive devices. If a wheelchair is available, offer it to them. If not, offer assistance, or show them an alternate route.								✓
Do not make general assumptions about the abilities or limitations of an individual with a disability. Let the individual decide what he or she can and cannot do.								✓
Look directly at visitors when speaking to them; do not talk through an intermediary. Try not to turn away while you are talking to them.								✓

General Etiquette	Hearing Impairments	Learning Disabilities	Mental Retardation	Mobility Impairments	Visual Impairments	Ltd English Proficiency	Older Adults	All Visitors
When offering assistance to a visitor with a vision impairment, you may want to lightly touch the individual on the shoulder as you begin speaking, so he or she is aware that you are talking to them.					✓			
Be aware of cultural differences. Gestures or body movements do not universally communicate the same meaning or may be considered disrespectful.								✓
Make an effort to correctly pronounce visitors' names.								✓
Be patient with visitors. Do not interrupt them or finish their sentences.								✓
Avoid using the word "elderly" because it implies frailty and helplessness, which most older adults are not.							✓	

Advance Information/Preparations	Hearing Impairments	Learning Disabilities	Mental Retardation	Mobility Impairments	Visual Impairments	Ltd English Proficiency	Older Adults	All Visitors
If you are notified beforehand that one or more persons with a learning disability will be on your tour, try to find out what kinds of characteristics are represented, if any, and how you can best assist them.		✓						
If requested, arrange to have a sign lanugage interpreter, language translator or bilingual interpreter present during your program or available at the park site. (Keep in mind that you may need to shorten your presentation to allow time for the translator.)	✓					✓		
On short notice, ask a bilingual family member or friend of the visitor to translate for you. Or, if you think that will be too disruptive, arrange for a private tour.						✓		
Try to speak with visitors beforehand to determine how to meet their needs at your program.								✓
Choose programs appropriate for your audience's age. Program content does not need to be at a lower comprehension level, just communicated in a variety of ways.								✓
If the entire audience consists of visitors with learning disabilities or mental retardation, you should consider limiting the program to 30 minutes, with only one or two primary ideas.		✓	✓					
When publicizing the program, indicate the level of accessibility of the program, as well as of the facility where it will be presented.								✓
If requested in advance by a visitor with a hearing impairment, arrange for an oral or sign language interpreter.	✓							

Setting Considerations	Hearing Impairments	Learning Disabilities	Mental Retardation	Mobility Impairments	Visual Impairments	Ltd English Proficiency	Older Adults	All Visitors
Provide adequate lighting for reading, drawing, or craft activities.								✓
Allow visitors with hearing impairments to sit up front so they can hear better, watch the oral or sign language interpreter, or facilitate speech-reading.	✓							
Choose an area with minimal background noise and distractions for your program.								✓
Beforehand, evaluate the facility or area where the program will be presented. It needs to be accessible to wheelchairs, and wheelchair seating requirements should be met.				✓				
Be aware of the line-of-sight of individuals in wheelchairs or seated in chairs. The video screen should be placed at a height that does not require the audience to tilt their heads backward to see, as some visitors may have limited muscle movement in their necks and shoulders.				✓			✓	
Beforehand, evaluate the location where the program is to be presented. Plan a route to the room or area that is accessible for the entire audience. Remove any obstacles or protruding objects that may be encountered. Make sure wheelchair seating requirements are met.								✓
A spotlight on you and/or a sign language interpreter may be needed in a dark room or at nighttime.								✓
Position yourself so you are facing a light source. This allows visitors to see your face and will help facilitate speech-reading.								✓
If possible, provide an amplification system to improve communication between you and your visitors.								✓
Make sure emergency evacuation routes are accessible to all visitors.								✓

Setting Considerations	Hearing Impairments	Learning Disabilities	Mental Retardation	Mobility Impairments	Visual Impairments	Ltd English Proficiency	Older Adults	All Visitors
Provide seating with backs and armrests. Remember, not all visitors are able to stand for an extended period of time or sit on the floor, or able to get up and down from that position easily. For outside programs, seating in the shade is preferred. Some visitors with mobility impairments cannot regulate their body temperature and may be susceptible to heat-related ailments.								✓
Be aware of lighting conditions and, where possible, minimize glares on glass.								✓

Presentation Techniques	Hearing Impairments	Learning Disabilities	Mental Retardation	Mobility Impairments	Visual Impairments	Ltd English Proficiency	Older Adults	All Visitors
Read aloud exhibit or trail signage.		✓	✓		✓	✓		
Demonstrate an activity or task before asking program participants to perform it.								✓
Make sure you have the visitors' attention before beginning to speak. You may need to lightly tap individuals with visual impairmens on the shoulder or wave to get their attention. Be sure your audience understands what was just said before continuing.								✓
When giving directions, make sure you give them from the visitors' point of view. For example, do not say, "The restroom is to my right." Instead say, "The restroom is to your left." It may also be helpful to point in the direction to which you are referring, or draw out a map.								✓
Directions or information should be provided step-by-step. Be sure the information is fully understood. If necessary, repeat information using different words, or a draw a map or diagram.								✓
Provide visitors with a general orientation to the area by describing its prominent features.					✓			
Tell visitors with visual impairments if you are leaving briefly; they may not be aware that you have walked away. Conversely, note when you have returned, and with whom.					✓			
Before you begin walking with a visitor with visual impairments, say where you are going. For example, "We are going into the library, and there are five steps leading to the door." Be prepared to move more slowly through an area than you might ordinarily.					✓			
Be very specific when giving directions or describing an area. Be sure to discuss any obstacles that may be encountered.								✓

Presentation Techniques	Hearing Impairments	Learning Disabilities	Mental Retardation	Mobility Impairments	Visual Impairments	Ltd English Proficiency	Older Adults	All Visitors
When speaking for translation or for a sign language interpreter, use simple sentences, pause for the interpreter after each thought, and avoid the use of colloquialisms, idioms, and slang, as they are not easily translated.	✓					✓		
If necessary, pantomime your message. This may be the only way to communicate with some visitors who have limited English proficiency. Use facial expressions and hand and body movements. Draw pictures, if needed, to communicate your message.	✓					✓		
Be sure to allow extra time between slides for visitors to see the images you have explained. Some visitors may be watching you and speech-reading, or they may be watching the sign language or oral interpreter.	✓							
When working with a sign language interpreter, try to use short sentences. A subject-verb-object sentence structure is best, because it is the same syntax of American Sign Language. For example, say, "The snake ate the mouse," not, "The mouse was eaten by the snake."	✓							
Always face the audience while speaking.								✓
Avoid sweeping arm movements or moving around while speaking, as this may distract some visitors.								✓
Inform the audience of the length of the program and the location of the exits, and permit them to leave early. If necessary, make prior arrangements to have a staff member escort them back to the starting point, or to their campsite for an evening program. For longer presentations, consider scheduling a break. Notify the audience before the presentation begins that an intermission can be expected.								✓
Avoid "over-stimulating" visitors with learning disabilities. An overload of visual, auditory, or tactile stimulation can easily confuse some individuals.		✓						

Presentation Techniques	Hearing Impairments	Learning Disabilities	Mental Retardation	Mobility Impairments	Visual Impairments	Ltd English Proficiency	Older Adults	All Visitors
Information should be grouped together in an organized fashion, given step-by-step, and reinforced through repetition.								✓
Discuss ideas in basic terms and avoid abstractions.		✓						
Make smooth transitions in presentations. Jumping from one subject to another may cause confusion.								✓
Encourage audience participation whenever possible. This will reinforce information and increase interest in your program.								✓
Look for visitors to indicate they wish to answer a question before calling on them.								✓
Some individuals with learning disabilities have difficulty understanding the concept of historical and calendar time. If this information is included in your program, use different ways of explaining or demonstrating it.		✓						
Explain new or difficult words and concepts.								✓
In a program that involves discussion, repeat questions from the audience. Some visitors may not have heard the question being asked, may have forgotten the question, or may not have been paying attention. Once lost from the conversation, they may lose interest in the presentation.								✓
Do not dismiss a question as being irrelevant. Sometimes, poor language skills confuse what the individual may be trying to say. Try your best to relate the question or answer to the subject.								✓
In areas where programs are to be presented without seating, suggest to visitors using wheelchairs that they sit in front of the audience, so they can see and hear better.				✓				
Suggest to visitors with visual impairments that they sit up close to the front of the audience.					✓			
Wait for the group to settle before you begin the program.								✓

Presentation Techniques	Hearing Impairments	Learning Disabilities	Mental Retardation	Mobility Impairments	Visual Impairments	Ltd English Proficiency	Older Adults	All Visitors
While presenting a program, use very descriptive words, and include as much detail as you can. Emphasize textures and colors of objects or the topography of areas; otherwise, they could be overlooked.								✓
During a slide presentation, point to objects as you refer to them, so visitors can more easily follow along.								✓
Read aloud any written information displayed in the program.		✓			✓	✓		
Repeat information in different ways. Use different words, gestures, and objects to convey interpretive information.								✓
Offer to meet with visitors after the program to answer any questions, or to repeat information.								✓
After a program in darkened conditions, some visitors may need extra time to allow their eyesight to adjust to the changes in light. Before leaving, take a few minutes to review the presentation they just saw, or use this time for questions and answers. This will give them the additional time they may need.								✓
Pose questions to the entire audience to encourage involvement.								✓
Skits and songs with hand and body motions are a great way to involve the audience. Do not assume visitors with disabilities cannot or do not want to participate; let them make the decision.				✓			✓	
Relate new information to something familiar to your audience.								✓
It is important that you demonstrate any activity or concept before asking the audience to participate. Make sure everyone understands the movements before beginning.								✓

Presentation Techniques	Hearing Impairments	Learning Disabilities	Mental Retardation	Mobility Impairments	Visual Impairments	Ltd English Proficiency	Older Adults	All Visitors
Choose program activities that involve partners and that do not single out individuals. Some individuals may not want to become involved due to fear of embarrassment. Positive reinforcement may encourage future involvement.								✓
Do not exclude people using communication boards or books from discussions. Be sure to give them the extra time they may need.				✓				
If you have a visitor who is using an electric wheelchair, wait until the noise of the wheelchair has stopped before you begin speaking.				✓				
Look for visitors to indicate they wish to answer a question before calling on them. Asking them to respond before they are ready may cause unnecessary embarrassment.								✓
When distributing written materials, explain them for those who may not be able to read them.		✓			✓	✓	✓	
If you are pushing a visitor using a wheelchair, do not deliver program information while walking. This individual may not hear you. It may be necessary to seek assistance from another staff member to push the wheelchair, while you present your program.				✓				
Give clear, verbal direction to the group when moving from one area to another. Once at your destination, provide a general orientation to the whole area, including atmosphere and visual details.					✓			
Before beginning the walk or tour, describe the route that will be taken, and give a brief overview of the resources that will be interpreted along the way.								✓
Too much information may cause confusion and could result in disinterest in the tour or talk. Keep the program focused around your theme.								✓
Try to keep the size of the tour group small.		✓	✓					

Presentation Techniques	Hearing Impairments	Learning Disabilities	Mental Retardation	Mobility Impairments	Visual Impairments	Ltd English Proficiency	Older Adults	All Visitors
It may be necessary to remind the tour group of the park's rules.								✓
Prearranged rest breaks should be announced at the beginning of the tour, and additional breaks should be accommodated, if requested. Also, inform the group of the location or absence of restrooms and drinking fountains along the tour.								✓
Offer an optional "leisure tour," a separate tour available to anyone who wants to proceed at a slower pace.				✓	✓		✓	
During walks or tours, allow extra time between points of interest or exhibits. People with assistive mobility devices may need additional time to move about.				✓			✓	
Avoid long or fast-paced walks.		✓	✓	✓			✓	
Do not talk as you demonstrate an activity or task. The audience may be concentrating on your movements or the object, and not on your words. Give information before or after the demonstration.	✓	✓	✓			✓		
If possible, when demonstrating a skill, allow a visitor with a visual impairment to hold your hands as you work, while at the same time explaining in detail what you are doing.					✓			

Program Tools	Hearing Impairments	Learning Disabilities	Mental Retardation	Mobility Impairments	Visual Impairments	Ltd English Proficiency	Older Adults	All Visitors
Involve all the senses in your program. Incorporate interpretive materials pertaining to the theme of your program that may be smelled, heard, touched, and tasted. Information provided in this way reinforces learning and increases interest in your program.								✓
Have pencils and paper handy to communicate with visitors who are hearing impaired, to draw maps, and to use symbols to communicate with visitors with limited English proficiency.								✓
Inform visitors of any assistive listening systems or devices available at the facility.								✓
Present films that are captioned, or provide a transcript for those films that are not captioned.	✓							
Incorporate items that may be touched and that pertain to the theme of the program. Models, plant and animal specimens, and dioramas add another dimension to verbal explanation.								✓
Include new or difficult words and concepts and their definitions in a handout, along with suggestions for additional reading. Individuals may want to learn more about the subjects presented.								✓
Handouts supplied to the audience should be in large, dark print (a 12-point, sans-serif font) and on a light matte background. Be prepared to explain the contents of handouts for those who are unable to read them. Written materials that are distributed regularly to visitors should also be available in an alternate format, such as printed in an 18-point sans-serif font and/or in Braille.								✓
Provide the narrative of your program in an audiodescription format.					✓			
Offer films, videos, or slides narrated in different languages.						✓		

Program Tools	Hearing Impairments	Learning Disabilities	Mental Retardation	Mobility Impairments	Visual Impairments	Ltd English Proficiency	Older Adults	All Visitors
If visitation warrants it, provide programs in different languages or provide transcripts of the programs in different languages.						✓		
Have an outline of your program available, so visitors can more easily follow along.								✓
Project title slides or song slides on an A/V screen during your program. This will help visitors in following along in the program.								✓
When incorporating items that may be touched into your campfire program, be aware of the audience's capabilities and limitations. You or another staff member may need to hold the object for the visitors, while they look at it.				✓				
If all attempts to make an area of the park site accessible are unsuccessful, provide a film, slide show, or photographs of those public areas not accessible by wheelchair.				✓				
Magnifiers should be available to use on photographs, signs, or exhibits, or to take on outdoor walks. The whole group can benefit and enjoy hand lenses by taking a closer look at the detail of historic and natural objects.								✓
Use enlarged photographs to allow visitors to see more detail.								✓
Use life-size or scale models of objects that may not be touched.								✓
Provide a tactile relief map of the area. This involves the senses of touch and sight, while allowing visitors to see where they are going on their tour or walk.								✓
Provide visitors with a simple map of the area or floor plan(s) of the building, indicating where you will go and what you will see while on tour. This will stimulate curiosity and interest in your program.								✓
Offer self-guided printed or audio tours for those who wish to proceed at their own pace.								✓

Publications Guidelines

The following recommendations will make your publications more readable and understandable to all visitors, including those with disabilities. These are general recommendations and should be used in conjunction with the specific information provided in *California State Parks Accessibility Guidelines*, Section 30, and Departmental Notice No. 2007-04.

The Accessibility Section must have an opportunity for review and comment on all new or reprinted publications, per Departmental Notice 2007-04. This includes park brochures, entrance station handouts, interpretive guides, posters, announcements, newsletters, etc. Please submit items for review at least two weeks in advance of your desired return deadline. Expedited review may be requested, but cannot be guaranteed. Please allow time for necessary design changes prior to printing. Accessibility reviews will cover content on accessible features, font, contrast and other standards contained in the California State Parks Accessibility Guidelines. To avoid major redesign of publications, creators should consult California State Parks Accessibility Guidelines Section 30, at the onset of publication development.

When writing:

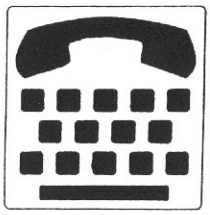
- Keep sentences short.
- Use a subject-verb-object sentence structure. For example, say, "Jack London wrote *The Sea Wolf*," instead of, "*The Sea Wolf* was written by Jack London."
- Avoid complex sentences.
- Avoid using slang or jargon or colloquial expressions because they may be difficult for visitors to understand.
- Use words like "barrier free" or "accessible." Do not use words like "special" or "facilities for the handicapped."

When designing:

- **Never print with anything less than a 12 point font**. Written materials should also be available on request on compact disk and/or in large print with dark ink on a light matte background. An 18 point font is recommended, however, a smaller font may be necessary for long publications.
- Type styles with serifs (ornamental attachments or extenders on letters) are difficult to read and must not be used.
- Italics are harder to read than upright fonts for persons with low vision and must not be used. For titles, foreign terms or short quotes, consider using quotation marks or boldface or an alternate font. If space permits, you may use italics as long as you also provide an upright version of the italicized text. For a person with low vision, these features cause the letters to more easily run together causing the type to appear blurred. Often, when an alternate format version of a publication is requested (and announcement of such availability should be printed in the item to be published), the alternative is produced by copying the standard use publication to a satisfactory enlargement. Therefore, typeface in

block style, is a good choice. Examples include Arial, Helvetica, Tahoma, Verdana, and Novarese. Increasing boldness or narrowing can diminish the readability of even these acceptable styles.

- Margins between columns of text should be at least 7/8”. With a smaller margin, the columns may appear to run together, causing visitors to read straight across instead of reading individual columns. Outside margins should be at least 1/2” wide.
- Include in all publications any available TDD or TTY relay number, as well as the statement, “Prior to arrival, visitors with disabilities who need assistance should contact” and then list a contact name and phone number.
- Use the International Symbol of Accessibility, the International Symbol of Access for Hearing Loss, and/or TTY, (all are shown below) where applicable.



Written materials for interpretive programs should include:

- An outline of the tour or talk.
- A map of the area.
- Definitions of new or unusual words.
- A brief history of the topics, including names or places.
- Suggestions for books or other resource materials relating to the theme.
- Pictures or graphics pertaining to the subject.
- The level of difficulty, distance, and time required for the walk or tour. It is highly recommended that program publicity contain a description of exactly what will be required on the part of participants. For example, “This interpretive walk will cover a 1.5 mile distance. Although no stair climbing is necessary, there is a short, although significant, en route grade of approximately 9 percent. The trail is subject to nearly continual sunlight, however, a shaded bench is available mid-way. Restrooms are available only at the trail departure point.”

Parks Accessibility Guidelines

As stated in its introduction, the *California State Parks Accessibility Guidelines* "embody a compilation of accessibility standards, recommendation and regulations for compliance with accessibility laws. Many sections relate to the physical environment and serve as a resource for planners, designers, contractors and maintenance staff. There are also sections that apply to programs and presentations that service to inform rangers, interpreters and volunteers. The Guidelines are the primary tool provided by the California State Parks Accessibility Program to accomplish its mission of providing guidance in creating universal access to California State Parks."

The *Parks Accessibility Guidelines* (formerly titled "*Access to Parks Guidelines*") underwent major revisions in 2006 and again in 2009. The handbook will continue to be updated as new information is available and new federal and state laws and interpretations of laws are put in place. With that in mind, readers of *All Visitors Welcome* should ensure that they are referencing the most current version of the Guidelines, which can be accessed through the State Parks website at www.parks.ca.gov/accessibility.

Resource Directory

The organizations and companies listed below are included for informational purposes only. California State Parks does not endorse the products of any of these companies. This listing is intended to be used in conjunction with the companies and organizations included in the State Price Schedule for Adaptive Equipment and Services for Persons with Disabilities, available at www.pd.dgs.ca.gov/pricesched/adaptive/default.htm.

Government Agencies

California State Independent Living Council
916 445-0142 (voice)
866 745-5973 (TTY)
916 445-5973 (fax)
www.calsilc.org

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
800 669-4000 (voice)
800 669-6820 (TTY)
www.eeoc.gov

U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division Disability Rights Section - NYAV
800 514-0301 (voice)
800 514 0383 (TTY)
202 307-1197 (fax)
www.ada.gov

Advocacy and Assistance Organizations

General

International Center for Disability Information
304 766-2680 (voice)
304 766-2680 (TTY)
www.icdi.wvu.edu
contact@icdi.wvu.edu

Mainstream, Inc.
800 582-1428 or 785 266-6422 (voice)
785 266-2113 (fax)
www.mainstreaminc.net
mainstrm@inlandnet.net

National Center on Accessibility
812 856-4422 (voice)
812 856-4421 (TTY)
812 856-4480 (FAX)
http://ncaonline.org/

Hearing Impairments

Center on Deafness-Inland Empire
909 359-5200 (voice and TTY)
909 359-5112 (fax)
Lifesigns: (909) 359-5297 (voice or TTY)
www.codie.org

Deaf Community Services of San Diego, Inc.
619 398-2441 (voice)
619 398-2440 (TTY)
619 398-2444 (fax)
www.dcsofsd.org
info@dcsofsd.org

Deaf Counseling, Advocacy and Referral Agency (DCARA)
510 343-6670 (voice)
877 322-7288 (TTY)
510 483-1790 (fax)
www.dcara.org

Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults
516 944-8900 (voice)
516 944-7302 (fax)
www.helenkeller.org/national

Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center
202 651-5031 (voice/TTY)
202 651-5109 (fax)
clerccenter.gallaudet.edu

National Association for the Deaf (NAD)
301 587-1788 (voice)
301 587-1789 (TTY)
301 587-1791 (fax)
www.nad.org
NADinfo@nad.org

Hearing Loss Association of America
301 657-2248 (voice)
301 913-9413 (fax)
www.hearingloss.org

Learning Disabilities

Learning Disabilities Association of America
412 341-1515 (voice)
412 344-0224 (fax)
www.ldanatl.org
info@ldaamerica.org

Learning Disabilities Association of California
949 673-3612 (voice)
www.ldaca.org

National Center for Learning Disabilities
888 575-7373 or 212 545-7510 (voice)
212 545-9665 (fax)
www.ncld.org

Intellectual Disabilities

The Arc (For people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities)
202 534 3700 (voice)
202 534 3731 (fax)
www.thearc.org

California Association for the Retarded
916 498-1635 (voice)
916 498-1385 (fax)
www.carforchoice.org

Mobility Impairments

Arthritis Foundation
800 283-7800 (voice)
www.arthritis.org

Epilepsy Foundation of America
800 332-1000 (voice only)
www.epilepsyfoundation.org

Muscular Dystrophy Association, Inc.
800 572-1717
www.mdausa.org

National Association of the Physically Handicapped
800 743-5008 (voice)
www.naph.net/

National Easter Seals Society
312 726-6200 or (800) 221-6827 (voice)
312 726-4258 (TTY)
312 726-1494 (fax)
www.easter-seals.org

National Multiple Sclerosis Society
800 344-4867
www.nationalmssociety.org

United Cerebral Palsy
202 776-0406 (voice)
800 872-5827 (voice)
202 776-0414 (fax)
www.ucp.org

Visual Impairments

American Council of the Blind, Inc.
800 424-8666 (voice)
202 467-5081 (fax)
www.acb.org
info@acb.org

Associated Services for the Blind
215 627-0600 (voice)
215 922-0692 (fax)
www.asb.org
asbinfo@asb.org
(also has a Braille press)

Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults
516 944-8900 (voice)
516 944-8637 (TTY)
516 944-7302 (fax)
www.helenkeller.org/national

Lighthouse International
800 829-0500 or 212 821-9200 (voice)
212 821-9713 (TTY)
www.lighthouse.org
info@lighthouse.org

The Metropolitan Washington Ear, Inc.
Audio Description, Inc.
301 681-6636 (voice)
301 625-1986 (fax)
www.washear.org
information@washear.org

National Federation of the Blind
410 659-9314 (voice)
410 685-5653 (fax)
www.nfb.org
nfb@nfb.org

Older Adults

National Council on the Aging, Inc.
202 479-1200 (voice)
www.ncoa.org
info@ncoa.org

Product and Service Suppliers

Assistive Listening Systems

Associated Sound
916 649-8040 (voice)
916 649-0243 (fax)
www.associatedsound.com

Auditory Instruments, Inc.
714 874-8445 (voice)
714 842-5915 (fax)
www.auditoryinstruments.org

Centrum Sound
408 736-6500 (voice)
408 736-6552
www.centrumsound.com
centrumweb@aol.com

Nady Systems
www.nady.com

Phonic Ear, Inc.
453 917-7101 (voice)
453 927-7900 (fax)
www.phonicear.com
customerservice@phonicear.com
(Company can refer you to a retailer in your area.)

TELEX Communications, Inc.
952 884-4051 or 877 863-4166 (voice)
952 884-0043 (fax)
www.telex.com
info@telex.com
(Company can refer you to a retailer in your area.)

Captioning

National Captioning Institute (NCI)
703 917-7600 (voice and TTY)
703 917-9853 (fax)
www.ncicap.org

Sign Language or Oral Interpreters

Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc.
703 838-0030 (voice)
703 838-0459 (TTY)
703 838-0454 (fax)
www.rid.org
info@rid.org

TTYs

Telecommunications for the Deaf, Inc.
301 589-3786 (voice)
301 589-3006 (TTY)
301 589-3797 (fax)
www.tdi-online.org
info@tdi-online.org

Barrier-Free Walkways

Superdeck
800 355-4093
www.superdecksystems.com
info@superdecksystems.com

Audio Tours

Antenna Audio, Inc.
415 332-4862 (voice)
415 332-4870 (fax)
www.antennaaudio.com
inquiry@antennaaudio.com

Vista Group International
203 852-5557 (voice)
203 852-5559 (fax)
www.vistagroupinternational.com
info@vistagroupinternational.com
(Soundstik® systems, audio subtitles, multi-language audio tours)

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