Planes, Trains and Automobiles: Travel Tips for People with Hearing Loss

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What we’re going to cover

• Travel by Plane
• Travel by Train
• Travel by Automobile
• ALDs
• What to Pack
• Power Supplies
• Lodging
• What to do in case of Emergency

Travel by Plane
Checked Luggage Scanner

• This machine is stronger than carry-on bags
• May affect processor or map

Travel by Plane
X-ray machine

• Don’t put your equipment directly onto conveyor belt or in the plastic bins
• May generate static electricity
• Place spare processor in its case or inside another bag – switch off and remove battery

Travel by Plane
Walk-through Metal Detector

• You CAN walk through with one, or even two, hearing aids or ear level CI processors
  – In fact, the TSA suggests keeping your HA or CI on
• Body-worn CI processor has more metal and may set off alarm
  – If you are going to take off your processor, make sure to inform the TSA staff

Travel by Plane
Walk-through Metal Detector

• MAY hear distorted sound when walking through scanner
  – Turn down your volume
  – Carry your ID card

• Can ask for a full body pat-down of your person and a visual and physical inspection of the exterior component while it remains on your body
Disability Notification Card for Air Travel

Travel by Plane
Getting ready to board the plane

• When you check in, let them know that you have hearing loss and see if they can put that in your traveler profile
• Sign up for alerts to go to your cellphone/Smartphone
• YOU are responsible for letting the gate staff know that you have hearing loss
  – Very important for last minute gate changes, delays or cancellations
  – Often forget 😞

Travel by Plane
On the plane

• HAs and CIs will NOT interfere with the plane’s navigational instruments
  – Can keep on the entire time even when they ask to "turn off all electronic devices" during takeoff and landing

• Listening to music or watching movie during flight
  – Use your connectivity options or bring a set of headphones
  – We still need captioning!

Travel by Air
Communication

• If traveling alone, inform your seat partner that you have hearing loss in the event of emergency announcements
• Inform the flight attendant
  – Gate announcements
  – Emergency announcements
• Consider use of ALDs
• Check for your equipment before de-planing

Travel by train
At the station

• While waiting to board the train, be sure to let a gate attendant know you have hearing loss in case of changes, delays or cancellations

• Be very visually aware of your surroundings, especially near train track intersections

Travel by train
Communication

• If you are traveling alone, consider telling someone that you have hearing loss in case of a public announcement
• Consider use of ALDs
  – Trains can be very noisy!
Travel by Automobile

**Communication**
- “Wow – deaf people can drive?!?!?”
- Strategic seating
- Consider an extra wide rearview mirror
- PLEASE pull over for texting, emailing or extended conversations
- Turn on light for better lipreading
- Consider use of ALDs

ALDs (Assistive Listening Devices)

- Lapel microphone
  - Clip on other person’s seatbelt
  - Clip it on your leg for listening to car audio if speaker is in the car door
- Personal ALD or FM system
- Loop system

Hands-free access to phone or media player

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wired neckloop</th>
<th>Wired induction earhook(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bluetooth neckloop</td>
<td>Bluetooth induction earhook(s)</td>
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What to pack

- ASSUME YOUR LUGGAGE WILL BE LOST
  - “What do I need to keep my hearing aid/cochlear implant going?”
  - Put these items in your carry-on
  - Extra CI equipment
    - Charger (for outlet and for car), batteries, alternative power options
    - Cables, earhooks, headpieces, spare processor
  - Extra HA equipment
    - Batteries, charger (if using rechargeable batteries)
    - Earmold blower
    - Cleaning tools for wax

- Drying system
  - If electric, don’t forget a converter if traveling internationally!
- Zip-lock plastic bags
- Water-resistant hat or cap, padded pouch
- Printed copy of your hearing aid settings or map if you will be gone a long time
  - This way if you need a replacement, the audiologist doesn’t have to work from scratch
- Phone number to your manufacturer’s Customer Care/Service
- Paper and Pen in case your HA or CI isn’t working

Power Supplies

- Check with your manufacturer to confirm overseas compatibility of your charger
  - Most have transformers (gets you to the right voltage) – all you need is the correct sized plug
Lodging and the ADA

- Hotels and motels must also provide built-in communication features in a certain percentage of guest rooms. These features include:
  - Visual alarms in guest rooms that are connected to the building’s emergency alarm system.
  - Visual notification devices in guest rooms to alert persons with hearing impairments to incoming telephone calls and door knocks or bells.
  - Electrical outlets to facilitate the use of text telephones.

- These communication features are required in hotel facilities built or altered after the effective date of the ADA. They are also required in hotel facilities built before the effective date of the ADA to meet the ongoing obligation to remove physical and communication barriers to the extent possible without much difficulty or expense. Hotels and motels may also use portable visual alarms and communication devices to satisfy these requirements (ADA Standards 9.3.2).

http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/hotelcombr.htm

Lodging

- Let them know that you are deaf in case of emergency – they can do this in your profile
  - Consider not using the bolt lock
  - Consider giving them permission to enter your room
  - If traveling with someone else, give them one of your room keys
  - Your headpiece magnet, cell phone and cell phone case can demagnetize the strip on the hotel key

Lodging

- Considering bringing your own alarm – clock, watch, cell phone, PDA
  - Closed captioning can be tricky
    - May need to ask for the specific TV remote, not the universal remote that is provided

Lodging

- “Use it or lose it”
- Request it when you make your reservation (i.e., ahead of time)
- May need to describe to hotel staff
- Check to make sure it works
- Can contain visual fire alarm, TTY, vibrating alarm clock, strobe light door knocker
- Ask for “Accessible Room”
  – Caveat: does not mean all of the items above are present

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What to do in case of emergency

- Driver’s License
  - Each state website should have information for “Persons with Disabilities”
    - e.g., “Application for Illinois Disabled Person Identification Card”
  - Register for your Emergency Contact Database
    - This is where I entered information about being deaf
  - Ask for a caduceus sticker
  - Research any kind of deaf identification
  - Code on your driver’s license
  - Special visor card

What to do in case of emergency

- Patient Emergency Identification Card
  - Contact your manufacturer or look in the materials you received at initial stimulation
  - Keep next to (or in front of) your Driver’s License or State ID
- ID jewelry or portable medical record storage
  - Google “medical alert jewelry”

Information to include

- “Deaf”, “deaf” or “hard of hearing”
- Use “cochlear implant(s)” or “hearing aid(s)”
- Specific to CI recipients:
  - NO MRI
  - NO MONOPOLAR CAUTERY
  - Name and phone number to CI surgeon/clinic

True or False?

- It’s better to leave all of your accessories (e.g., batteries, cables) in your checked baggage
- Power supplies are universal
- You can walk through a metal detector with your ear-level processor
- All hotels have ADA kits, know where they are and how they work
- All cochlear implants are MRI compatible
- It’s a good idea to keep your medical ID card next to your driver’s license
- ALDs are a great way to hear better in noisy environments