



GET IN THE
**HEARING
LOOP**

A Guide to Understanding Hearing Loops

Get in the Hearing Loop is a
communication access program of the
Hearing Loss Association of America



We dream of a world where people with hearing loss can thrive each day with communication access, full inclusion, and equal participation in all aspects of life, everywhere they go.

Through education, advocacy, and consultation services, the Get in the Hearing Loop (GITHL) program has laid the groundwork for a national movement of loop enthusiasts who are promoting communication access and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), one loop at a time.

How Do Hearing Loops Work?

Hearing loops, or induction loops, are a type of assistive listening system (ALS) that transmit sound directly to a listener's telecoil-enabled hearing aids or cochlear implants for improved clarity and understanding. Hearing loops deliver intelligible, distortion-free speech and sound in environments where distance, ambient noise and challenging acoustics otherwise make

listening and understanding with hearing aids and cochlear implants virtually impossible.

Technically known as audio frequency induction loop systems (AFILS), hearing loops consist of a special amplifier and a hidden copper wire that transmits sound through a magnetic field. The wire creates a "looped zone" in any

size venue, from a large auditorium to a taxi. The wire sends the magnetic signal to any hearing device within the zone that is equipped with a telecoil. A telecoil, or t-coil, is a small wire inside a hearing aid or cochlear implant that allows it to become a wireless receiver.

The Telecoil Imperative

Telecoils provide people with hearing loss what wheelchair ramps provide people with mobility challenges—access. They are an essential gateway to hearing aid compatible assistive listening for people with hearing aids and cochlear implants. Telecoils receive the magnetic sound signal inside looped venues and also enable listening via infrared and FM system signals with the use of a neckloop.

Most hearing aid models—81 percent—come with either a telecoil or offer it as an option (all cochlear implant processors made today have them). When buying a hearing aid, consumers should always ask that a telecoil be included and that the audiologist or dispenser activates the telecoil program at the time of fitting and also explains its use. (Note, although one can access a telecoil via an assistive listening device (ALD), such as a neckloop, it is much easier if the t-coil is installed in the hearing aid.)

Hearing Loop Access for People without a Hearing Aid or Telecoil

Hearing loop systems serve all people with hearing loss who wish to improve their ability to understand speech and sounds. As with FM and infrared (IR) systems, hearing loops also offer accessibility via portable receivers and headphones or earbuds.

Hearing Loops Are a Top Choice for Hearing Access

Hearing loops are the most user-friendly of the assistive listening options and the first choice for many people, offering benefits for individuals and venues alike.

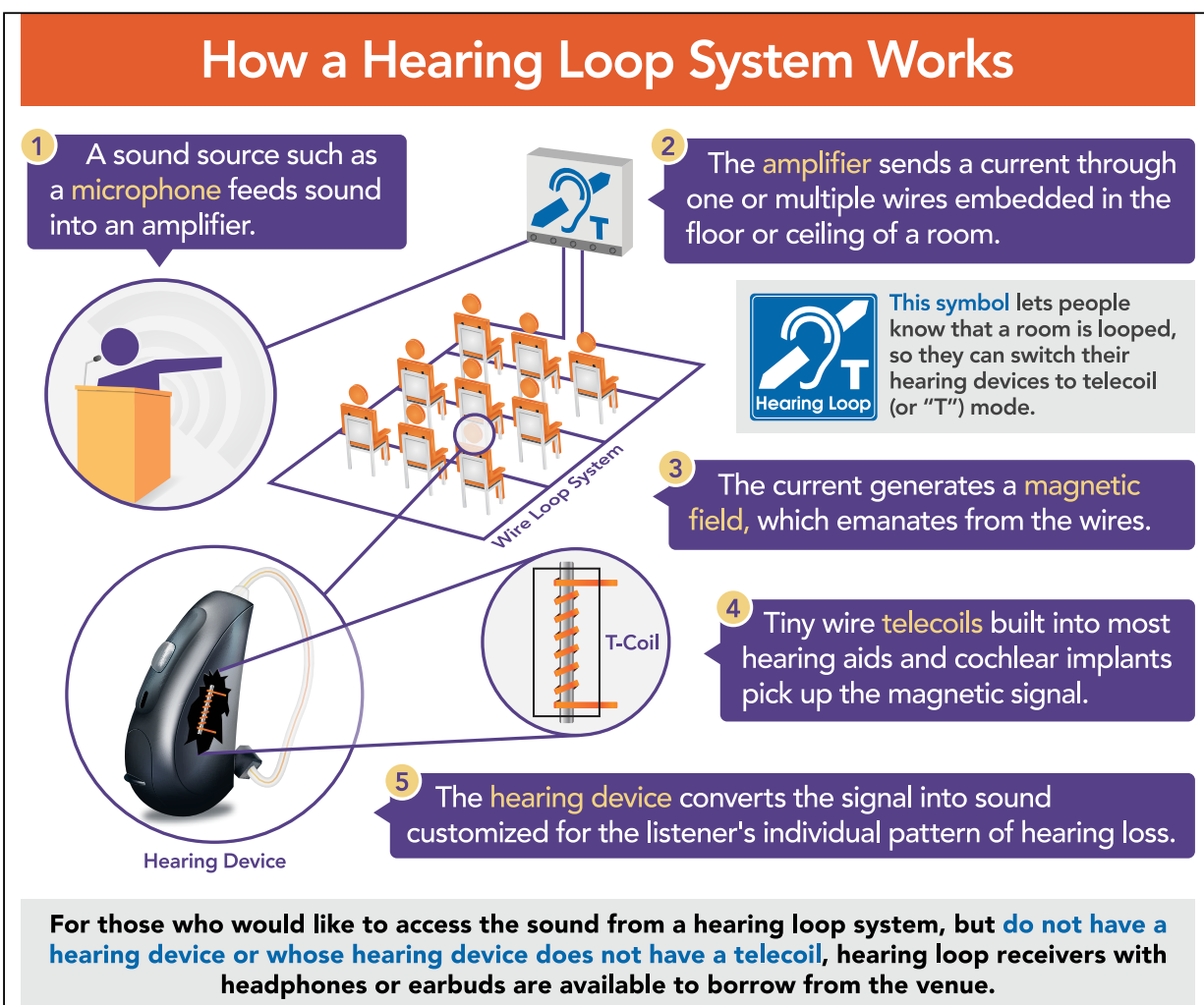
For individuals with hearing loss, hearing loops provide:

- easy, immediate and discreet communication access for people with hearing loss
- universal hearing aid compatibility
- more inclusive and hearing-friendly communities.



Hearing loops also offer significant advantages for venues:

- **Cost Effective:** Hearing loop systems require minimal maintenance. And, because most users can connect to hearing loops directly, venues can reduce the assistive listening equipment needed for people without telecoil-enabled devices.
- **Maximum Impact:** Once installed, hearing loops are always active—meaning they can accommodate any number of users simultaneously and without any additional action on the part of the venue.
- **ADA Compliant:** Hearing loop technology meets the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) for assistive listening systems. It is the only assistive listening technology that automatically provides hearing aid compatibility via telecoils.
- **Universal Access:** Hearing loop systems can help anyone who communicates orally, regardless of their level of hearing ability. They are the universally-accepted standard for hearing access.



Hearing loop systems provide better communication access by transmitting sound directly to telecoil-equipped hearing aids, cochlear implants or other assistive listening devices. (Graphic courtesy of OTOjOY)



- **International Standards:** Facility managers and decision makers should choose only trained and experienced loop installers who are willing to provide references. Installers should confirm that the installation meets the international standard IEC 60118-4 as developed by the IEC (International Electrotechnical Commission). This standard defines the strength of the magnetic field, the frequency response, and methods of measuring these requirements. It also specifies the maximum levels of electromagnetic background noise.

The Get in the Hearing Loop Program

Many people are not yet aware of hearing loops or other technologies that can improve communication access and public engagement or how they can enrich the lives of people with hearing loss, their families, friends, colleagues, and even communities.

The Get in the Hearing Loop (GITHL) program is changing that...one loop, one advocate, one ADA request at a time.

Get in the Hearing Loop, a communication access program of the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA), is dedicated to providing and promoting community education, advocacy on behalf of people of hearing loss, and consultation services to help venues of all kinds successfully implement hearing loop technology.



This universal symbol lets you know there is a hearing loop installed in the room or venue.

The Get in the Hearing Loop program:

- educates community and local government leaders about the need for hearing loops
- provides information to places of worship, audiologists, public and private venues and other organizations about hearing loops and hearing loss
- advocates for city and state laws that improve the lives of people with hearing loss.
- offers workshops, toolkits, videos, articles, and more to inspire and guide anyone interested in communication access, including event planners, installers, venue managers, decision makers, civic leaders, audio-visual techs, advocates, funders, and of course, people with hearing loss
- requests communication access via hearing loops at a wide variety of venues
- consults closely with installers to ensure loop installations meet universal IEC standards.

Each hearing loop helps build our nation's accessibility infrastructure, creating more hearing-friendly communities. We envision a world where hearing loops and communication access are an automatic, enduring part of our daily lives.

For more information about hearing loops and the Get in the Hearing Loop program, visit hearingloss.org/programs-events/get-hearing-loop or email GITHLinfo@hearingloss.org.

Hearing Loss Association of America

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