



hearingloss.org

POSITION PAPER

Telecoils and Hearing Loops

Synopsis: HLAA supports the inclusion of telecoil technology in all hearing aids and cochlear implants as well as the installation of high quality, well-maintained hearing loop assistive listening systems in public spaces such as ticket counters, auditoriums, houses of worship, classrooms, theaters, concert halls, airports, train stations, and public transportation.

Despite significant advances in hearing aid and cochlear implant technology, people with hearing loss cannot adequately hear in many public spaces when there is too much background noise or the voices are too far away. The most common adjunctive solutions—FM or infrared assistive listening devices (ALDs)—typically require the user to wear a large, stigmatizing, and cumbersome hearing device in addition to or as a replacement for their own devices. As a result, ALDs are underutilized and people with hearing loss cannot participate fully in many areas of public life.

The combination of telecoils and hearing loops offers an easy-to-use, effective and dignified solution for people with hearing loss. Telecoils—simple magnetic coils—can be found in most hearing aids and in nearly all cochlear implants. Hearing loops are a straightforward connectivity technology that enables sound to be “broadcast” wirelessly directly to the telecoil in a hearing device, delivering clear sound directly to the wearer’s hearing aid or cochlear implant that is free of the effects of background noise, distance and reverberation.

Simple loops enable people with hearing loss to hear, for example, a pharmacist provide instructions for a prescription. More sophisticated loops—installed in a meeting room in a municipal building—enable people with hearing loss to participate fully in their government. These are only two of many examples of the exceptional utility of hearing loops and telecoils.

HLAA encourages the development of universal wireless connectivity for assistive listening technologies, solutions that are fully compatible with all hearing devices from all manufacturers. However, at present, and for many years to come, no wireless audio technology (including Bluetooth) is as usable, flexible, or as easy for consumers with hearing loss to use as telecoils and hearing loops. Therefore, HLAA supports the inclusion of telecoil technology in all hearing aids and cochlear implants as well as the installation of well-maintained hearing loop systems in public spaces that meet or exceed IEC 60118-4, the international standard for loop installations.

Adopted February 2018, to be reconsidered February 2022.