

# A Guide to Understanding Hearing Loops



GET IN THE  
**HEARING  
LOOP**

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

Hearing Loss Association of America  
301.657.2248 • [hearingloss.org](http://hearingloss.org)



*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 transmits sound directly to a listener's telecoil-enabled hearing aid, cochlear implant or bone conductive device—hearing instrument—for improved clarity and understanding. Hearing loops deliver intelligible, distortion-free speech in environments where distance, ambient noise



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and challenging acoustics otherwise make listening and understanding with hearing instruments virtually impossible.

Any hearing device with a manually accessible telecoil becomes a wireless receiver in the hearing loop. Hearing loops work in any size venue

or location, from a large auditorium to a taxi or an elevator.

## The Telecoil Imperative

Telecoils are to hearing loops what ramps are for people who use wheelchairs. Telecoils provide communication access and are the essential component needed to wirelessly connect to hearing loops. Telecoils can also connect to FM or Infrared assistive listening systems via a receiver and a neckloop.

Most hearing aid models—an estimated 70%—come either with a telecoil or as an option—most cochlear implant processors made today have them. When buying a hearing aid, the consumer should always ask that a telecoil be included. When being fitted with the hearing aid, the consumer should ask the audiologist or the hearing instrument specialist to activate the telecoil and demonstrate how to turn on the telecoil program.

## Hearing Loop Access for People Without a Hearing Aid or Telecoil

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

## Hearing Loops are Used Worldwide 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 a telecoil in their hearing instrument, hearing loops provide:

- easy, immediate and discreet communication access
- universal hearing aid compatibility
- opportunities for greater participation and inclusion in the community

## Hearing Loops Also Offer Significant Advantages for Venues

- **Cost Effective:** Compared with other systems, a hearing loop will save money for a venue through reduced staff time, maintenance and equipment costs.
- **ADA Compliant:** Hearing loops meet the ADA requirement for an assistive listening system that provides hearing aid compatibility.

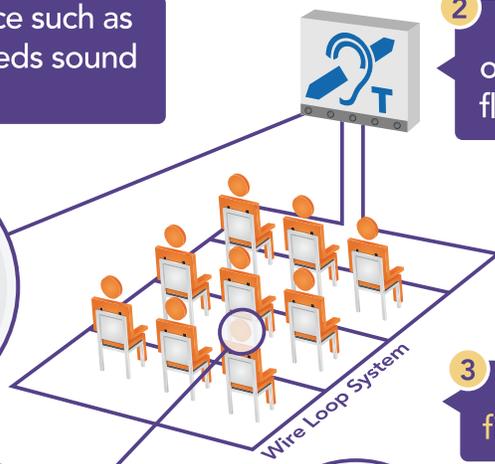
- **Instant Access:** Only a hearing loop will allow an unlimited number of people who have hearing instruments with telecoils access to a low latency signal without the need to borrow and return venue-provided equipment.
- **Universally Accessible:** Hearing loops are used nationally and internationally for hearing access.

## How a Hearing Loop System Works

1 A sound source such as a microphone feeds sound into an amplifier.



2 The amplifier sends a current through one or multiple wires embedded in the floor or ceiling of a room.



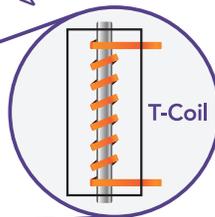
This symbol lets people know that a room is looped, so they can switch their hearing devices to telecoil (or "T") mode.

3 The current generates a magnetic field, which emanates from the wires.

4 Tiny wire telecoils built into most hearing aids and cochlear implants pick up the magnetic signal.



Hearing Device



T-Coil

5 The hearing device converts the signal into sound customized for the listener's individual pattern of hearing loss.

For those who would like to access the sound from a hearing loop system, but do not have a hearing device or whose hearing device does not have a telecoil, hearing loop receivers with headphones or earbuds are available to borrow from the venue.

*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 Standard:** Venue 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 Electro-technical Commission (IEC) standard 60118-4. 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 electro-magnetic 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, 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 with hearing loss, and consultation services to help venues of all kinds to successfully implement hearing loop technology.

The Get in the Hearing Loop program:

- educates community and local government leaders about the need for hearing loops
- advocates to city and state government for improved communication access for people with hearing loss
- provides information about hearing loss and hearing loops to places of worship, audiologists, public and private venues and other organizations
- 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, audiovisual technicians, 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 hearing loop installations meet the universal IEC standard

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/GITHL](https://hearingloss.org/GITHL) or email [GITHLinfo@hearingloss.org](mailto:GITHLinfo@hearingloss.org).

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