

# TIPS FOR PEDESTRIANS WITH LOW VISIBILITY

## KNOW THE STREET BOUNDARY CUES

The American Council of the Blind provides great advice for the visually impaired on how to detect when they've reached a crosswalk or sidewalk/street boundary. More resources from the American Council of the Blind can be found here: [acb.org/blind-low-vision-resources](https://www.acb.org/blind-low-vision-resources)



## STICK TO ROUTES WITH ACCESSIBLE PEDESTRIAN SIGNALS:

- Accessible pedestrian signals (APS) can use audible, tactile, vibrotactile, and/or visible methods to provide crossing information to people who are blind, visually impaired, or deaf at traffic signals.
- To assist the visually impaired, there can be a buzz or beep to indicate when it is safe to cross. Crossings may also have vibrotactile “walk” indications with a raised arrow on the crosswalk pushbutton that vibrates during the walk interval.
- Know which routes in your area provide APS and when possible use them over routes that don't have them.
- Listen for the “walk” indication tones before crossing.

## WHITE CANE USERS

White cane users can influence drivers with behaviors that make you more likely to be noticed or indicate your intention to cross.

- Cane Movement (cane flag): The pedestrian displays their white cane to his/her left and then, at the beginning of the WALK signal, raises the tip waist-high and moves it across to the right and back down again.
- Open hand (hand up to signify WAIT): Pedestrian displays their white cane with one hand and extends his/her other arm towards the drivers with their palm up, facing the driver.
- Move one step forward (reversible step): Pedestrian with a white cane takes a single step into the street while moving the cane. This is called the reversible step because the pedestrian can take a step back if they are not confident vehicles will yield.

## WHITE CANE MOBILITY TRAINING

Mobility training can help you learn to use your white cane safely and efficiently. Training can give you the skills to move safely through indoor and outdoor environments, cross streets, and much more.

# ORIENTATION AND MOBILITY

## **ORIENTATION AND MOBILITY (O&M) IS A PROFESSION SPECIFIC TO BLINDNESS AND LOW VISION THAT TEACHES SAFE, EFFICIENT, AND EFFECTIVE TRAVEL SKILLS TO PEOPLE OF ALL AGES:**

“Orientation” refers to the ability to know where you are and where you want to go, whether you’re moving from one room to another or walking downtown for a shopping trip. “Mobility” refers to the ability to move safely, efficiently, and effectively from one place to another without tripping or falling. Mobility also includes things like safely crossing the street and using public transportation.

A Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist (COMS) can help you develop or re-learn the skills and concepts you need to travel safely and independently within your home and community. COMS provide services across the lifespan, ranging from teaching infants and children in pre-school and school programs to helping adults in a variety of community-based and rehabilitation settings.

## **A COMS CAN TEACH SKILLS IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:**

- Sensory development, or maximizing all of your senses to help you know where you are and where you want to go.
- Using your senses in combination with self-protective and other techniques to move safely through indoor and outdoor environment.
- Using a cane and other devices to walk safely and efficiently.
- Soliciting and/or declining assistance.
- Finding destinations with strategies that include following directions, using landmarks, and compass directions.
- Techniques for crossing streets, such as analyzing and identifying intersections and traffic patterns.
- Problem-solving skills to determine what to do if you are disoriented or lost and need to change your route.
- Using public transportation and transit systems.



**For a referral, contact your social or vocational rehabilitation counselor.  
Scan the QR code to find a partial list of COMS.**