



Information and communication: Hearing augmentation on conveyances

Provisions in the Transport Standards do not provide equitable access to information to people who are deaf or who use hearing aids and are on-board conveyances. Passengers with hearing impairments may be unable to see a visual display or miss or misunderstand system messages. There is an opportunity to provide improved hearing augmentation systems that cover a greater area of the interior space of a conveyance.

Reform options

Maintain current requirements in the Transport Standards

Transport Standards section 26.2 Public address systems - conveyances, would remain unchanged and no additional guidance would be issued.

Non-regulatory option

Guidance would be provided for hearing augmentation systems in conveyances to encourage the installation of hearing augmentation systems in conveyances that have service related PA announcements, including:

- People with disability should be able to receive service-related information being broadcast on a conveyance PA system in real time, including via a magnetic induction system or other technological system for hearing aid users.
- If a public address system is installed:
 - any magnetic induction system should comply with AS1428.5 (2021) *Design for access and mobility, Part 5, section 3.2*
 - message broadcasts should be received in 100 per cent of the area covered by the public address system.
- Symbols and diagrams should be used to indicate hearing augmentation system coverage.
- Operators and providers should consider the impact of interference from other strong electrical fields on hearing augmentation systems.

Regulatory option

Transport Standards section 26.2 Public address systems – conveyances, would be amended to include the following (including any requirements retained or amended from the status quo):

Option 1

Requirements of the Transport Standards would be amended to include **if a public address system is installed**:

- People who are hearing impaired or have a hearing impairment must be able to receive a message equivalent to the message received by people without a hearing impairment.
- Conveyances that have hearing augmentation systems must identify this with the international symbol for deafness.
 - If a public address system is installed and satisfies Transport Standards section 26.2 (a) Public address systems — conveyances, a magnetic induction system must comply with AS1428.5 (2021) *Design for access and mobility, Part 5: Communication for people who are deaf or hearing impaired, section 3.2*.
- The message broadcast in via the hearing augmentation system must be received in:

Sub-option 1

100 per cent of the area covered by the public address system.

Sub-option 2

80 per cent of the area covered by the public address system.

These requirements would apply to conveyances, including buses, coaches, ferries, trains, trams and light rail.

Option 2

Requirements of the Transport Standards would be amended to include **if a public address system is in operation**:

- People who are hearing impaired or have a hearing impairment must be able to receive a message equivalent to the message received by people without a hearing impairment.
- Conveyances that have hearing augmentation systems must identify this with the international Symbol for Deafness.
 - If a public address system is installed and satisfies Transport Standards section 26.2 (a) Public address systems — conveyances, a magnetic induction system must comply with AS1428.5 (2021) *Design for access and mobility, Part 5: Communication for people who are deaf or hearing impaired, section 3.2*.
- The message broadcast in via the hearing augmentation system must be received in:

Sub-option 1

100 per cent of the area covered by the public address system.

Sub-option 2

80 per cent of the area covered by the public address system.

These requirements would apply to conveyances, including buses, coaches, ferries, trains, trams and light rail.

Case study

Sunila relies on her hearing aid for communication. In crowded, noisy environments such as peak hour train travel she finds that hearing what is being said on PA systems is often quite difficult due to the high ambient noise. As her hearing aid is equipped with a telecoil, it can pick up PA announcements broadcast over an induction loop system while eliminating ambient noise.

Sunila's experience today

Sunila is riding home on the train and hears a message broadcast over the carriage PA system. It is not the usual next stop announcement but rather seemed to be about a service disruption or alteration. The crowded and noisy carriage made it too difficult for Sunila's hearing aid to pick up a clear message. Unfortunately the carriage does not have an induction loop system so Sunila's hearing aid telecoil is of no assistance. A little embarrassed, she asks another passenger what was said over the PA. The person explains that track work will be carried out over the weekend and rail buses will run between certain stations.

Sunila's experience under the proposed reforms

Sunila is riding home on the train and hears a message broadcast over the carriage PA system. The message is quite clear as Sunila has turned on her telecoil switch and so can hear the message broadcast over the PA system and its associated induction loop while excluding ambient carriage noise. Sunila understands that track work on the weekend will mean a rail bus alternative and factors this into her travel arrangements.

Have your say

Public consultation on the Stage 2 reform of the Transport Standards will open from 15 March to 9 August 2022.

For further information:

- **Website:** www.infrastructure.gov.au
- **Call:** 1800 621 372
- **Email:** DisabilityTransport@infrastructure.gov.au
- **Survey:** <https://edm.infrastructure.gov.au/survey.php?sid=28684&name=hearing-augmentation-on-conveyances>