

## RCW 18.35.310 Hearing instruments—Notice—Rules Assistive Devices.

### Washington State law requires hearing care provider to educate consumers about the benefits of Telecoils and Bluetooth technology before purchasing hearing aids.

Noisy restaurants, theaters, large meeting rooms or simply places with poor acoustics can expose the shortcomings of some hearing aids; this is where assistive listening systems (ALS) and Bluetooth technology can help. ALS are publicly installed systems that expand the usefulness of hearing aids by bridging the gap between you and the sound source. Many hearing aids also come with Bluetooth accessories that can help you hear in one-on-one situations.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) acknowledges the difficulty that people with hearing loss may have understanding sound in places where audible communication is needed. The ADA requires venues to provide ALS where there is audio amplification, such as government and civic venues, theaters, lecture halls, and transportation hubs. The law even requires the ALS used be hearing aid compatible. These required accommodations are free, but often need to be requested. Look for the 'big ear' hearing access symbol and/or ask the venue for information.

ADA compliant systems include Hearing Loops, FM, and Infrared (IR) systems. To connect easily and effectively to one of these systems through your personal hearing aid, your device ideally must have a built-in telecoil. Without a telecoil, the sound will not be amplified based on your personal hearing loss.

#### Bluetooth

Bluetooth technology lets you create a wireless connection to electronic devices near you. Bluetooth-enabled hearing aids provide a more personal listening experience while you are on the phone, listening to music, watching TV, and working on your computer. For instance, you can control the TV volume for your hearing aids separately from the TV volume others hear. And because sound is sent straight to your hearing aid, sound clarity is increased. You may also be able use your smartphone as a remote control for your hearing aid. Your hearing health care provider can tell you about the use and benefits of remote microphones with Bluetooth-capable hearing aids.

#### Hearing Loop Systems (also known as Induction Loop Systems)

Hearing aids with a built-in telecoil, or T-Coil, can connect directly with hearing loop systems. All you have to do is activate the T-Coil program in your hearing aids and sound from a stage or pulpit streams wirelessly into the hearing aid. There is no need to borrow a receiver. Loop systems are versatile, preferred by experienced hearing aid users, and are available in our state and around the country. Even non hearing aid users can use the loop system with a receiver and headphones. To connect to a loop system, some hearing aids may require an accessory. Facilities with hearing loops display the signage on right. Visit [www.loopseattle.org](http://www.loopseattle.org) for more information.



#### FM or IR systems



Some public facilities, such as theaters and houses of worship systems, have installed FM or Infrared systems. These systems will help you hear better by bringing the sound you want to hear directly to your ears. FM & IR systems require the user to wear a portable receiver with headphones or coupled to the telecoil in a hearing aid by way of a personal neckloop. Portable receivers must be borrowed from the venue and picked up at a service desk. While this may sound inconvenient – these systems can help you hear with much greater clarity and enjoy a religious service or show. Signage should be prominently displayed but lack the letter "T."

If you feel your hearing aids could use a boost in certain private or public situations, whether at the theater, in the classroom or just watching TV, talk to your hearing care provider; they can help you find a solution that suits *your* needs.