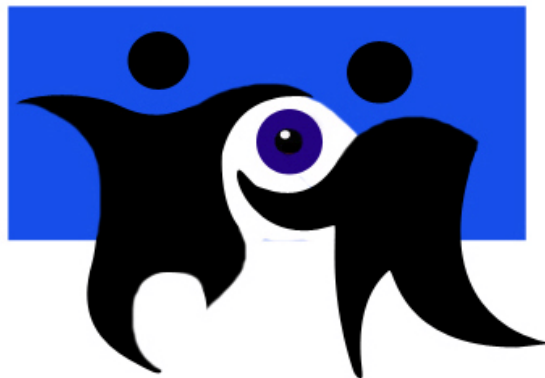


# Guiding a person with a vision impairment

**blind sports victoria**  
sport and recreation specialists



**BLIND SPORTS VICTORIA**

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# Introduction

The advice provided in this how-to-guide will help you feel more confident in guiding a person with a vision impairment around your club, facility or in the general community,

Your offer of assistance will usually be welcomed, however some people may not require assistance at that time, so don't be offended if your offer is declined .

## Blind Sports Victoria

Blind Sports Victoria is a State Sporting Association that promotes and advocates the inclusion of blind and vision impaired people in sport and active recreation.

BSV conducts programs, education awareness and training to help sporting clubs and organisations to include blind and vision impaired people in all aspects of sport and active recreation.

# What is sighted guiding?

Sometimes people who are blind or vision impaired find it useful to be guided in order to move from one place to another.

Sighted guiding is when a sighted person provides assistance to a person with a vision impairment. When this occurs the person with impaired vision holds onto the sighted person's arm as they walk along.

This booklet suggests some guidelines that can be helpful, but it is always best to ask individuals which method they are most comfortable with, as each person may have their own preference as to how they like to be guided.

# How to....

## **Making contact**

- Speak to make contact by introducing yourself
- Ask the person if they require assistance, and if so, how
- If the person asked for the sighted guide technique, then ask which side they wish to be guided on, stand alongside the person and let them take your arm
- If the person is seated allow them to stand up unassisted unless they request your help

## Correct guiding position

- The person takes hold of your arm just above the elbow, four fingers on the inside and the thumb on the outside;
- You should keep your arm relaxed and close to your body
- You should remain half a step ahead of the person you are guiding
- Give brief clear verbal instructions eg. change of surface; approaching steps; overhanging branches etc
- If you have to leave the person you are guiding at any time, let them know you are leaving and leave them in contact with a solid object, e.g. a wall

## Correct guiding position





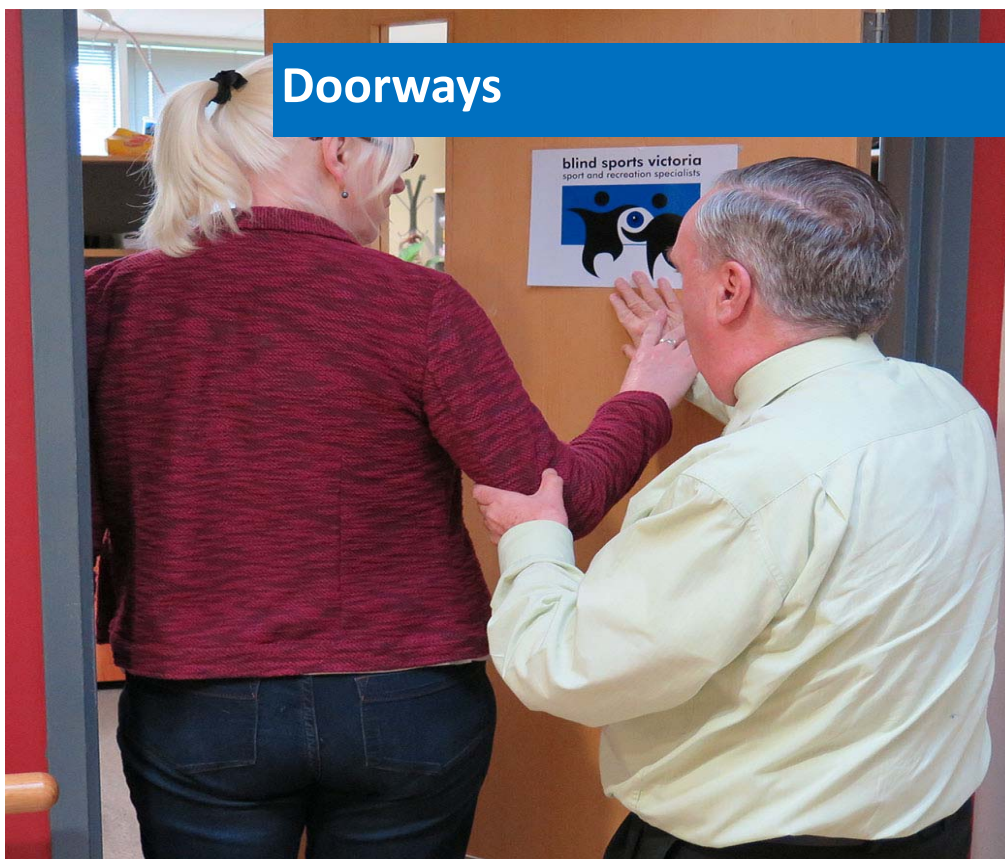
## Narrow spaces

- Tell the person you are guiding that you are approaching a narrow space or crowded area .
- Move your guiding arm towards the centre of your back to indicate that they need to walk behind you. The person should step in behind you while still holding your arm.
- When you have passed through the narrow space or crowded area bring your arm back to its usual position by your side.



# Doorways

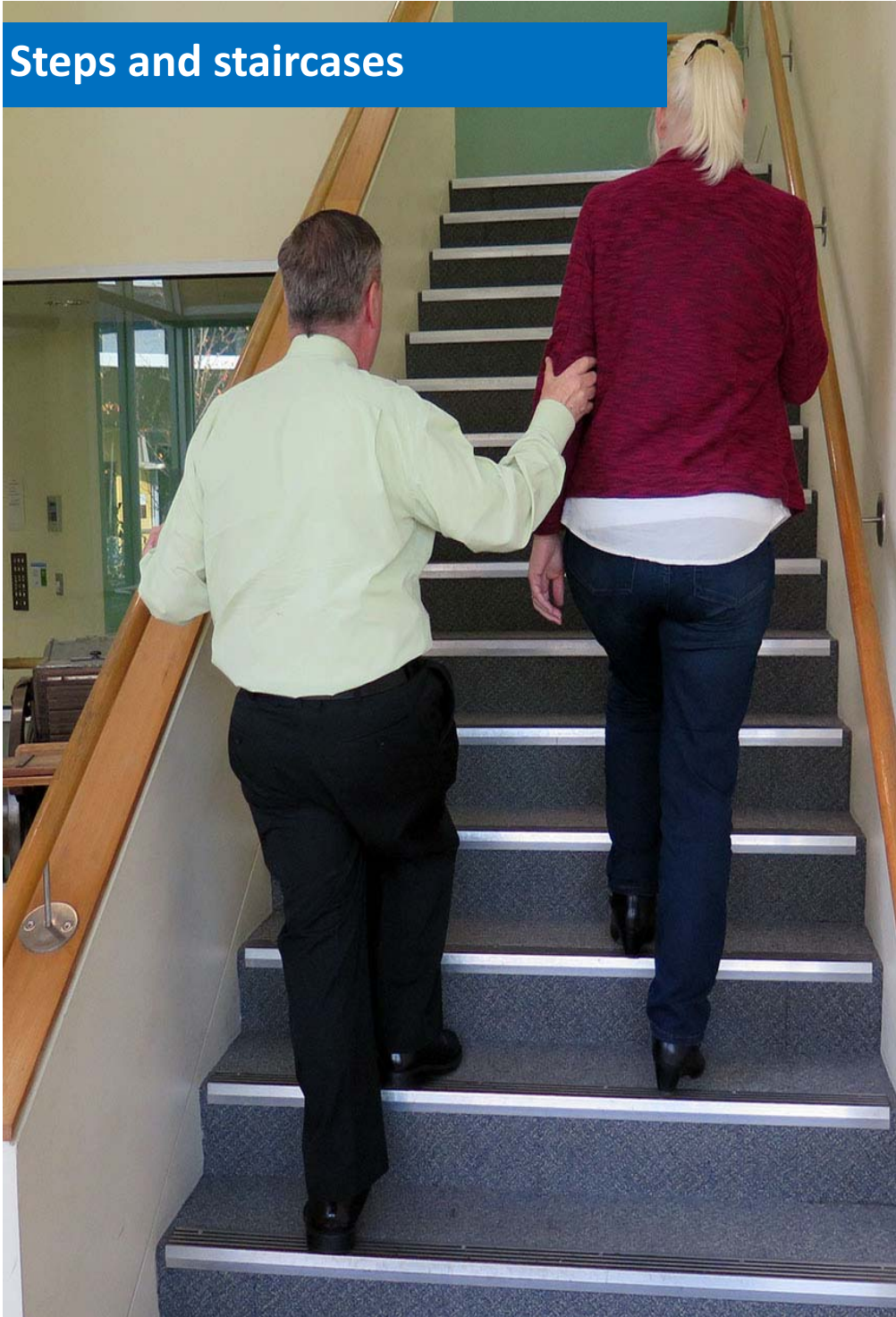
- As you get close to the door, explain which way it opens. When passing through a doorway, ensure the person you are guiding is on the hinged side of the door.
- Open the door and walk through, allowing the person you are guiding to hold the door open and close it behind you using their free hand.



## Steps and staircases

- Always approach steps and staircases straight on, and not diagonally.
- Stop at the first step and tell the person you are guiding whether the steps go up or down. Ask if they would like to use the rail and if necessary, change sides
- Start walking when the person is ready, remaining one step ahead of them. Tell them when you are approaching the last step or a landing. Tell them when they are at their last step.

## Steps and staircases



## Sitting on a chair

- On approaching a chair, place the person's hand on the back of the chair and tell them if the chair is at a table.
- Let them know if the chair has wheels or is lower than normal.



## Getting into a car



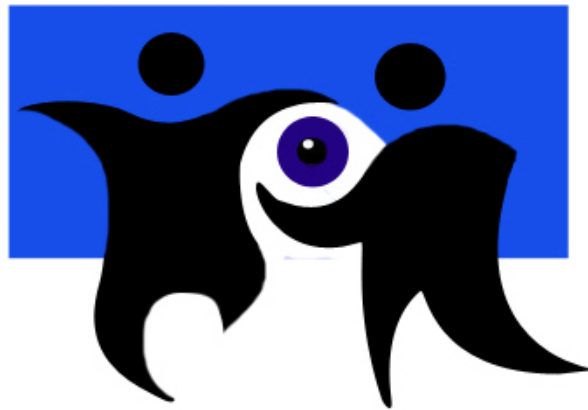
## Getting into a car

There are two options to assist someone when entering a car.

1. You can place their hand on the door handle for the person to open and close the door themselves, or
2. Let them know you are opening the door and place one of their hands on the roof and the other hand on the top of the door. It is very important that if you are closing the door that you tell them.

When the person exits the vehicle, please ensure you inform them of any potential hazards

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**For further information:**

Blind Sports Victoria

454 Glenferrie Road

Kooyong VIC 3144

Phone: 03 9822 8876

[info@blindsports.org.au](mailto:info@blindsports.org.au)

[www.blindsports.org.au](http://www.blindsports.org.au)