

# Basics for Individuals Who Need Special Assistance





## BASICS FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO NEED SPECIAL ASSISTANCE FOR EVACUATION

*This includes but is not limited to individuals with one or any combination of permanent, long-term or temporary conditions or disabilities such as:*

*Mobility impairments; visual or hearing impairments; medical conditions; cognitive impairments; physically challenged; using assistance devices/guide animals/motorized scooters; or any other condition that impedes or prevents themselves or others from safely evacuating or descending a stairwell without assistance.*

## THANK YOU!

FOR ADDING YOURSELF TO YOUR BUILDING'S RJWESTMORE ONLINE FIRE LIFE SAFETY TRAINING SYSTEM™  
"SPECIAL ASSISTANCE" LIST

Now emergency responders, property management/fire safety director know you need assistance during an evacuation.

- Property management/fire safety director have automatically been notified via email that the list of "Individuals Who Need Special Assistance" during an evacuation has been updated.
  - This CONFIDENTIAL information is only available to property management/fire safety director. In some locations (or where code requires it) authorized individuals in the local fire department also have access to the "Special Assistance" list to help them more quickly respond and assist you.

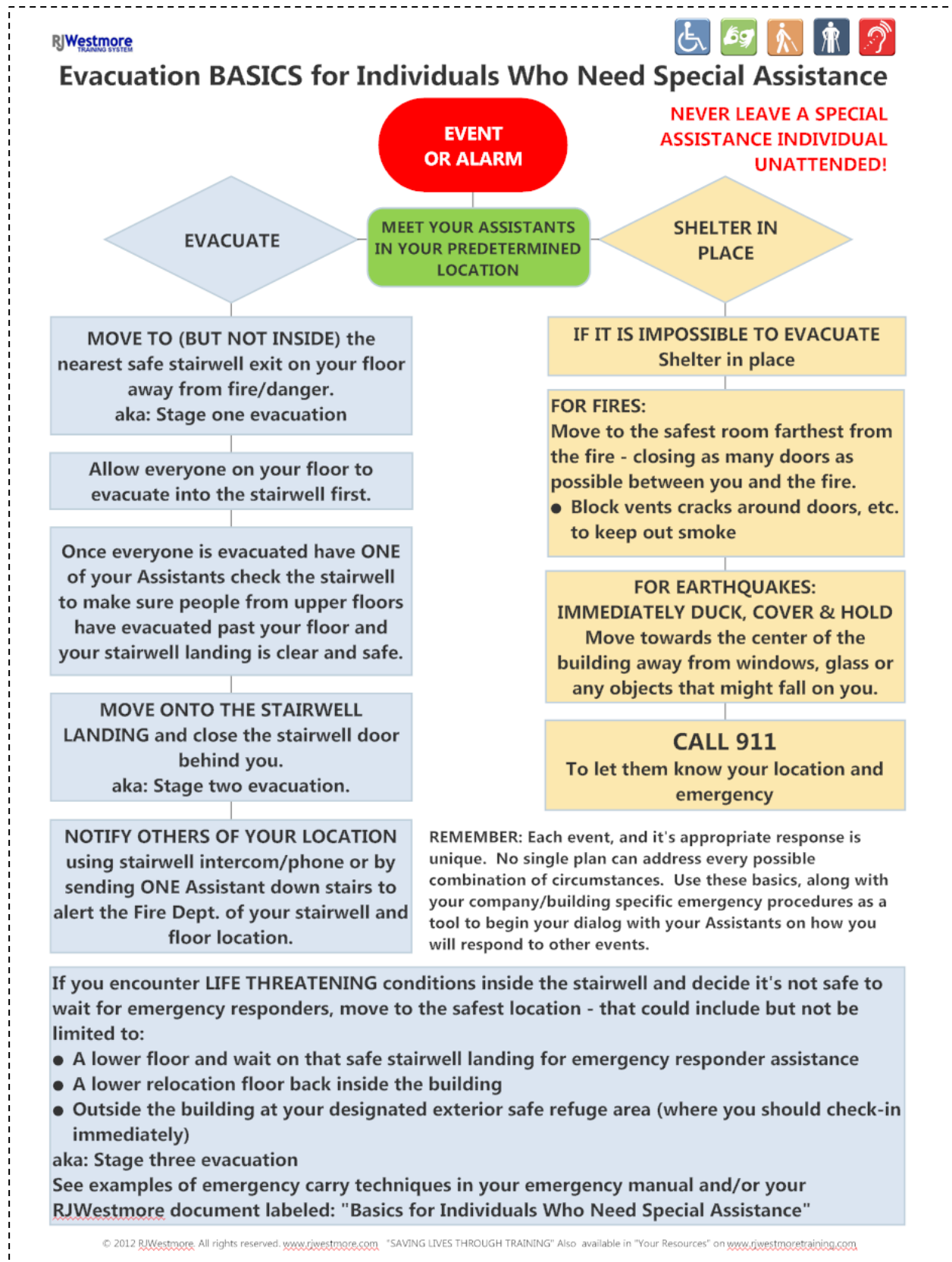
**Please print out and read this document yourself and give a copy to everyone you ask to assist you during an evacuation or emergency.**

The following pages will cover:

- Quick reference decision tree
- Basic guidelines for your safety as a person who needs Special Assistance
- Responsibilities of individuals who volunteer to assist you
- Lift and carry techniques



## QUICK REFERENCE DECISION TREE





## BASIC GUIDELINES FOR YOUR SAFETY

*“Remember, emergencies never read the plans written to address them”* Robert Westmore ©1996  
*So, plan for the worst and expect the best!*

At RJWestmore we know that there is no one plan that can address every possible combination of circumstances. This is especially true for individuals with disabilities. You can't just plan for people with disabilities; you have to plan **with them** for your plans to be effective.

- For additional information please also download and read the “Evacuation Guide for Individuals with Disabilities” from the NFPA within the “Your Resources – Forms, Lists & Guidelines” section of your RJWestmore homepage [www.rjwestmoretraining.com](http://www.rjwestmoretraining.com)

**Remember**, fire and non-fire evacuation procedures may be different. Everyone should know how to react and respond appropriately and always listen for any special instructions.

Each person's unique disability must be considered during the creation and practicing of building specific emergency response plans. Their needs should be addressed and planned for by their company and the building they occupy.

**PLEASE NOTE:** It is the responsibility of each disabled individual to know what special needs they have and to communicate them (directly or through their caregiver) to their company and building management **BEFORE AN EMERGENCY** so everyone can plan accordingly.

## NOW THAT YOU HAVE ADDED YOURSELF TO THE “SPECIAL ASSISTANCE” LIST, WHAT SHOULD YOU DO NEXT?

**MAKE SURE TO CONTACT YOUR COMPANY AND BUILDING PROPERTY MANAGEMENT/FIRE SAFETY DIRECTOR (EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM MEMBERS) TO LET THEM KNOW YOU ARE ADDED TO THE LIST AND MAKE THEM AWARE OF YOUR PARTICULAR SPECIAL NEEDS**

- The names and contact information for these individuals are on your RJWestmore Online Training System homepage [www.rjwestmoretraining.com](http://www.rjwestmoretraining.com)

**IDENTIFY AT LEAST TWO PEOPLE WHO ARE WILLING AND ABLE TO COMMIT TO HELP YOU DURING AN EVACUATION**

- **Your Assistants literally hold your life in their hands so choose wisely!**
  - Depending upon your disability, you will need at least one primary and at least one alternate person to assist you.
    - **USE ONE PRIMARY ASSISTANT PLUS AT LEAST ONE ALTERNATE IF:**
      - You can evacuate and descend a stairwell without impeding others, at their same pace without mobility assistance but need someone to help you open



doors, provide visual, sound or cognitive guidance, etc. along the evacuation path.

▪ **USE TWO PRIMARY ASSISTANTS PLUS AT LEAST TWO ALTERNATES IF:**

- You are mobility impaired, (i.e. in a wheelchair or other condition(s) and you cannot evacuate, descend a stairwell or be moved without impeding others or without the assistance of at least two assistants. Because you should never be left unattended, even if you do not need to move off your floor, at least one assistant will need to stay with you while the other goes for help.

**REMEMBER** - Identify and train your Assistants **BEFORE AN EMERGENCY**.

Depending on your specific emergency plan, your Assistants might be referred to as:

- Special Assistance Monitors
- Floor Buddy's
- Escorts, etc.

**MAKE SURE ALL YOUR ASSISTANTS KNOW AND AGREE TO THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Please make sure you and your Assistants participate in the planning, reading and practicing of your building specific emergency plans, drills and procedures. Verify that each person has:
  - Completed all their RJWestmore Online Training System™ training modules.
  - Printed out and read the entire Occupants (or Fire/Floor Warden if applicable) Emergency Procedures manual; including any evacuation and safe refuge maps, etc.
    - Maps, Manuals and Plans are available under the "Your Resources" section of your RJWestmore Online Training System™ homepage.

In combination with those plans here are some other basic guidelines:

**THINGS YOUR ASSISTANTS MUST KNOW AND AGREE TO**

- Designate a meeting place
  - Explain to all your Assistants and alternates how and where to meet you and where you will need to be moved.
- Identify the level of physical effort you require to be moved.
  - offering an arm or shoulder of assistance for guidance
  - opening and closing doors along the evacuation path
  - participating in carrying you in a wheelchair/office chair down the stairs or operating a stair-decent device
  - physically carrying you down the stairs
- Explain to them that they will be delaying their own evacuation to stay with you until emergency responders arrive or you all move together to a safe location.
- Individuals without mobility impairments that can evacuate safely without impeding others but need additional assistance will move with the help of their Assistant to a safe location and check in.
- Individuals with mobility impairments that require two assistants should:
  - **Move to (BUT NOT INSIDE)** the nearest safe stairwell exit on your floor away from fire/danger.  
*Sometimes referred to as STAGE ONE EVACUATION*
    - **You and your Assistants should know in advance where all the exits and/or stairwells are on your floor.**



- You and your Assistants should not impede the evacuation of others. Don't block stairwell doors or hallway.
      - During evacuation, allow everyone to enter the stairwell first.
      - Once everyone is evacuated off your floor, have one of your Assistants check the stairwell to make sure people from upper floors have evacuated past your floor and your stairwell landing is clear and safe.
- **Move onto the stairwell landing** and close the stairwell door behind you. (If you feel it's not safe to wait outside the stairwell or you are instructed to do so) *Sometimes referred to as STAGE TWO EVACUATION.*
  - NOTE: Most stairwell landings are designed to provide you a temporary safe refuge area in the event of fire. *(This will not necessarily be the case in the event of other emergencies like earthquakes, etc.)*
    - Every building is unique so always verify what stairwell safety features your building utilizes. These should include some combination of the following:
      - 2 hour fire rated stairwell doors
      - Pressurized stairwells (positive pressure to keep smoke out of the stairwell)
      - Phone/Intercom (to communicate with security/emergency responders)
      - Evacuation chair (generally for emergency responder use or if properly trained, for others to move special assistance individuals when it is not safe to wait on the stairwell landing)
      - Separate stairwell vestibules
- **Notify others of your location.** *(Even though you have added yourself to the individuals who need "Special Assistance List" you never know what conditions or circumstances may exist elsewhere in the building.)*
  - For buildings with stairwell phones/intercoms:
    - Use the phone/intercom to alert security/emergency responders of your condition, floor and stairwell location
  - For buildings without stairwell phones/intercoms (or during phone/intercom malfunction):
    - Send one of your two Assistants down stairs to notify property management/emergency responders that you and one Assistant are waiting on floor \_\_\_ in stairwell \_\_\_\_\_.
      - **REMEMBER – DO NOT leave the physical challenged person UNATTENDED.**
- **If you encounter LIFE THREATENING conditions** inside the stairwell and determine **it's not safe to wait** for emergency responders to assist you, move to the safest location that could include but not be limited to:
  - A lower floor and wait on that safe stairwell landing
  - A lower relocation floor back inside the building
  - Outside the building at your designated exterior safe refuge area (where you should check-in immediately) *Sometimes referred to as STAGE THREE EVACUATION*
  - For buildings with Evacuation Chairs: (for use by emergency responders or other properly trained personnel)
    - Have your properly trained Assistant's utilize the safest method (i.e. evacuation chair) to move you to a safer location.
  - For buildings without Evacuation Chairs:



- Have your Assistants utilize the safest and most effective movement method below (based on timing and conditions) to move you to safety.

Additional consideration should be given to the needs and methods of notification and evacuation or sheltering in place for individuals during other natural or man-made disasters where traditional fire alarms, strobe lights and other notification devices may not be activated. These would include but not be limited to:

- Tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, tsunamis, severe weather, wildfires, mudslides, earthquakes, etc.
- Civil disturbance, active shooter, violence in the workplace, terrorism, etc.
  - For additional information on these and many other topics like:

- **DISASTER PREPAREDNESS FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM**
- **SIGN LANGUAGE FOR EMERGENCY SITUATIONS**

Please refer to the “Your Resources” section of your RJWestmore homepage [www.rjwestmoretraining.com](http://www.rjwestmoretraining.com)



## BASICS FOR MOVING INDIVIDUALS WHO NEED SPECIAL ASSISTANCE FOR EVACUATION

If you encounter **LIFE THREATENING conditions** inside the stairwell and determine **it's not safe to wait** for emergency responders to assist you, use the safest method below to move to a safer location that could include but not be limited to:

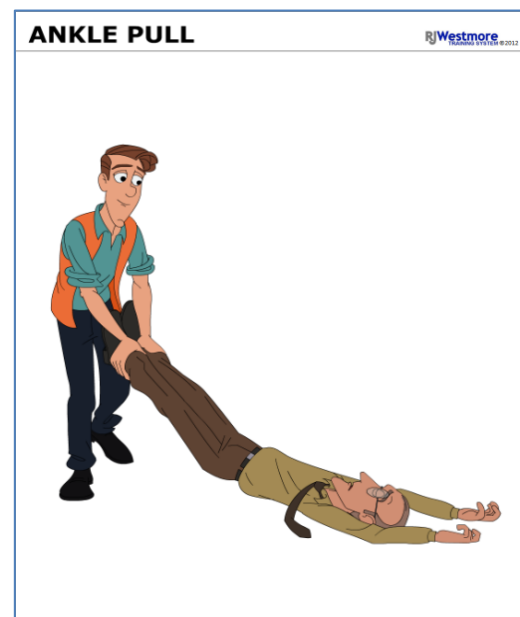
- A lower floor and wait on that safe stairwell landing
- A lower relocation floor back inside the building
- Outside the building at your designated exterior safe refuge area (where you should check-in immediately)

## ONE RESCUER TECHNIQUES

### ANKLE PULL

The ankle pull is the fastest method for moving a victim a short distance away from danger over a **SMOOTH** surface.

1. Grasp the victim by both ankles or pant cuffs
2. Pull with your legs keeping your back straight. **DO NOT** pull with your back
3. Keep the pull as straight and in-line as possible
4. **NOTE** that the victim's head is unsupported and may bounce over bumps and surface imperfections





## ONE RESCUER TECHNIQUES (cont.)

### SHOULDER PULL

The shoulder pull is preferred to the ankle pull because it supports the victim's head. The downside is that it requires the rescuer to bend over at the waist while pulling.

1. Grasp the victim by the clothing under the shoulders
2. Pull from both sides of the head for victim head support
3. Keep the pull as straight and in-line as possible

#### SHOULDER PULL

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### BLANKET PULL

This is the preferred method of dragging a victim.

1. Place the victim on the blanket using the "logroll" or the three-person lift
2. Place victim's head about 2 feet from one corner of the blanket
3. Wrap the blanket corners around the victim
4. Pull with your legs keeping your back straight. DO NOT pull with your back
5. Keep the pull as straight and in-line as possible

#### BLANKET PULL

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### ONE PERSON LIFT AND CARRY

This method only works well with a child or very light person.

1. Place your arms under the victim's knees and around their back
2. Keep back straight and bend legs slowly

#### ONE-PERSON LIFT

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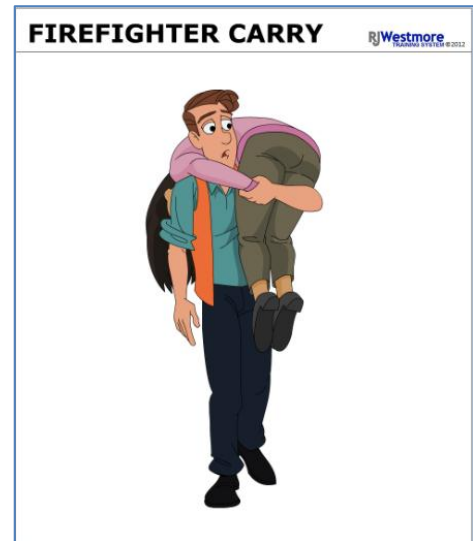


## ONE RESCUER TECHNIQUES (cont.)

### FIREFIGHTER CARRY

This technique is for carrying a victim longer distances. It is very difficult to get the person up to this position from the ground. Getting the victim into position requires a very strong rescuer or an assistant(s).

1. The victim is carried over on shoulder
2. The rescuer's arm, on the side that the victim is being carried, is wrapped across the victim's legs and grasps the victim's opposite arm



### PACK-STRAP CARRY

When injuries make the firefighter carry unsafe, this method is better for longer distance than the one-person lift.

1. Place both the victim's arms over your shoulders
2. Cross the victim's arms, grasping the victim's opposite wrist
3. Pull the arms close to your chest
4. Squat slightly and drive your hips into the victim while bending slightly at the waist
5. Balance the load on your hips and support the victim with your legs



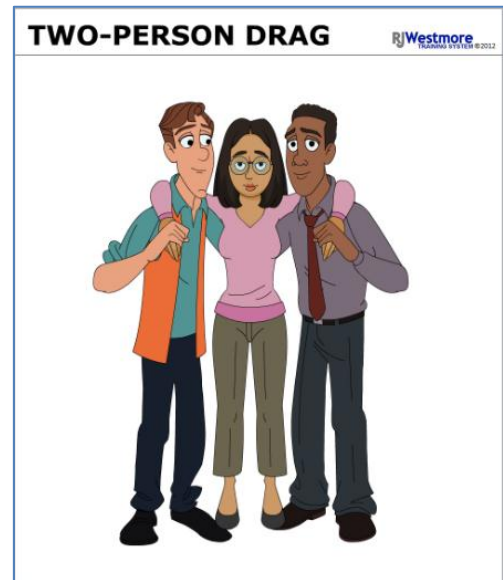


## TWO RESCUER TECHNIQUES

### TWO-PERSON DRAG OR HUMAN CRUTCHES

For the **CONSCIOUS** victim this method allows the victim to swing their leg (or assist with a good leg) using the rescuers as a pair of crutches. If the victim is **UNCONSCIOUS** this is a quick and easy way to move a victim out of immediate danger.

1. Start with the victim on the ground
2. Both rescuers stand on either side of the victim's chest
3. The rescuer's hand nearest the feet grabs the victim's wrist on their side of the victim
4. The rescuer's other hand grasps the clothing of the shoulder nearest them
5. Pulling and lifting the victim's arms, the rescuers bring the victim into a sitting position.
6. The **CONSCIOUS** victim will then stand with rescuers assistance
7. The rescuers place their hands around the victims waist
8. For **UNCONSCIOUS** victims, the rescuers will grasp the belt or waistband of the victim's clothing
9. The rescuers will then squat down
10. Place the victim's arms over their shoulders so that they end up facing the same direction as the victim
11. The rescuers will use their legs to then stand with the victim
12. The rescuers then move out, dragging the victim's legs behind



### FOUR-HANDED SEAT

This technique is used for carrying a conscious and alert victim moderate distances. The victim must be able to stand unsupported and hold themselves upright during transport.

1. Position the hands as indicted in the illustration
2. Lower the seat using your legs (not your back) and allow the victim to sit
3. When the victim is in place, stand using your legs and keeping your back straight



## TWO RESCUER TECHNIQUES (cont.)

### TWO-HANDED SEAT

This technique is for carrying a victim longer distances. This technique can support an unconscious victim as well.

1. Pick up the victim by having both rescuers squat down on either side of the victim
2. Reach under the victim's shoulders and under their knees
3. Grasp the other rescuer's wrists
4. From the squat, stand using your legs and keeping your back straight
4. Walk in the direction that the victim is facing



### WHEELCHAIR EVACUATION

In wheelchair evacuation for individuals in NON-motorized wheelchairs or scooters.

1. Release brake. One rescuer grasps the wheelchair handles and gently leans the chair backwards from behind
2. The other rescuer faces the chair and holds onto the front foot rest supports (or parts that are securely attached to the main frame) to steady the wheelchair and help control the descent
3. Both rescuers coordinate and work together to gently, slowly and safely descend the stairs.
4. Rescuers utilize the wheels of the wheelchair to descend the stairs without having to lift the wheelchair





## OFFICE CHAIR EVACUATION

If for some reason you cannot use the disabled individuals wheelchair you can utilize a sturdy office chair. This technique also works for people who use motorized wheelchairs or scooters as they are too heavy and awkward to safely negotiate down the stairs.

1. Transfer the physically challenged individual to a sturdy office chair
2. One rescuer gently leans the chair backwards from behind
3. The other rescuer faces the chair and holds onto the front legs of the chair. Both rescuers lift the chair simultaneously and control descent by bending their legs and keeping their backs straight

## VISUALLY IMPAIRED GUIDANCE ASSISTANCE

Don't feel uneasy when thinking about assisting a person who is blind or visually impaired. In an emergency situation they will obviously welcome your assistance.

Here are some helpful suggestions:

1. Identify yourself
2. Speak in a normal and comfortable tone. Do not shout. Most people who are blind can hear very well
3. Look at and speak directly to the person
4. Remember that your gestures may not be noticed as clues to what you are conveying
5. Let the person take your arm just above your elbow with the thumb on one side and fingers on the other pointing straight ahead. You can guide with either the right or the left arm, which can either hang straight at your side or bend at the elbow
6. The person follows a half step behind you at a pace which is comfortable for both of you
7. To sit, bring the person into contact with the chair. Describe which way the chair faces
8. Say *right* and *left* when giving directions based on the way the person is facing
9. Six feet before reaching a obstacles like steps, curbs, etc., tell the blind person you are approaching an obstacle. Approach stairs so their free hand is closest to the chair rail and let them know if you're going up or down.
10. Inform the person if you need to stop and put the person in contact with an object such as a wall or piece of furniture if you need to separate.
11. For narrow areas the rescuer moves their forearm and hand behind them on their lower back with elbow at 90-degree angle palm facing outward. The blind person will take the cue and slide their hand down to your wrist and move directly behind you.
12. If the person utilizes a guide dog, Do not pet, feed or distract a dog guide from doing its job





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*If you have additional input that would benefit others and improve these basic guidelines please email us at [support@rjwestmoretraining.com](mailto:support@rjwestmoretraining.com)*

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