



Accessibility in the Police Work during the COVID-19 crisis

**Guidelines and highlights for an accessible and
sensitive service**



What is unique in the way that people with disabilities and the elderly cope with the situation?

- People with disabilities and the elderly are often in the risk groups due to illnesses, injuries etc.
- Absence of support systems (including family and friends) which these groups need more than most
- Known to experience loneliness more often than the average citizen these feelings are intensified during times like this
- Most of the medical and mental treatments are not taking place
- The transition to remote service is difficult for them due to a technological gap or lack of accessibility



General guidelines for an accessible and sensitive service

1. The basics for an accessible service are: sensitivity, patience and kindness
2. Introduce yourself and offer your help.
3. Don't force your help on someone. Ask if they need help.
4. A person with a disability does not look for special treatment but for consideration for his/her needs.
5. Talk to the person directly and at eye level, as equals.
6. Listen to the request/desire of the person and try to fulfill them if possible.
7. Remember there are cases where the disability is visible and cases where it is not visible.
8. A person with a disability comes sometimes with a care-giver. Talk to the person and not to his/her care-giver.
9. The aids are part of the person's personal space. Don't touch them, lean on them or move them without his/her permission. Common aids are wheelchairs, walkers, crutches, white cane, guide dog, glasses, hearing aids and more.
10. For every questions or problem, ask the accessibility coordinator of the police for guidance



Guidelines for an accessible service for a person with visual disabilities

- Introduce yourself and your role
- Offer help and ask how to help
- Describe how many people are present and what you do
- Avoid touching the aids such as the white cane or the guide dog



At the police station

- Ask the person how to guide him/her without touching him (for example by speaking)
- Guide and accompany the person while he/she is in the police station
- Allow the entrance of the guide dog
- Make sure that the pathways are free of any obstacles
- Help the person by speaking to him and keep a distance between you and the rest of the people present
- If possible, make sure to have a copy of the questionnaire with enlarged fonts for the visitor of police facilities
- Offer to read to the person the questionnaire for visitors of police facilities or other information and assist in filling out documents.
- A person can ask you for the document in braille, enlarged letter or to read it out loud.

Guidelines for an accessible service for a person with visual disabilities

(Continued)

In the public space

- Call the person's attention by using your voice (no gestures)
- Make sure that the person knows that you are referring to him/her
- Assist the person verbally to keep the distance between you and the rest of the people present

Arriving to a house/private business

- Explain what you do: "I am filling out the form that confirms that you are at home"
- If there is a use of written information, read it to the citizen
- The person is allowed to take with him aids and/or a guide dog



Guidelines for an accessible service for a person with hearing disabilities

Hearing disabilities are often not visible - If the person does not respond to you, he/she doesn't hear you, stand in front of him/her make a hand gesture to establish eye contact. A person with hearing disabilities reads lips – if you are wearing a mask, try to communicate in the following ways:

- Speak slowly and clearly and raise your voice if needed (don't yell).
- Use writing on a piece of paper or on your phone to help communicate and show it to the person.
- Use a "captioning in real time" application or a remote translation center of the Institute for the deaf

At the police station

- Writing can be done on a paper or on the screen
- Make sure that the hearing assistance tools (such as the induction loop) are working and are turned on.
- Continue the communication by writing (sms, words)
- Try to keep a quite surrounding or talk to him/her in a more quite place



Guidelines for an accessible service for a person with hearing disabilities

(Continued)

In the public space

- The person will not stop or react to you when you call him/her or when you use speakers, you need to make a sign and try to establish eye contact.
- If the person has difficulties to hear, move away from noise and ask how he/she would like to communicate.
- It is recommended to use from the beginning writing tools with explanations or guidelines.

Arriving to a house/private business

- It is possible that the person will not hear the phone/ intercom/knocking on the doors – try to use text messages.
- It is possible that the person will ask to use a translation to sign language or an application for captioning on his/her phone.
- Allow the person to take with him/her technological aids that help him/her hear.



Guidelines for accessible service for people with mental, cognitive, communicative disabilities (autism, speech disability)



These disabilities are not recognizable, due to the crisis people with these disabilities and elderly might be more in distress, confused, stressed and anxious. For these populations the deviation from routines increases stress, anxiety and troubles functioning

- Attention! According to Israeli Regulations people with mental and cognitive disabilities and autism, can leave the house for a distance over 100 meters with someone accompanying them. You can ask for a document confirming his/her disability (certification of disability, certification for exemption for queues or any other medical documents)
- Speak to the person and not to the one accompanying him/her. Explain in an easy and clear manner the instructions and the reason for showing the identification card/document. It is important to remember that there isn't always a document attesting the disability.
- Be sensitive and patient when speaking to a person that seems under pressure, in distress, confused or behaves in an unusual way – introduce yourself and try to calm him/her
- Know that the police uniform with protective gear and certain instruments can be deterrent

Guidelines for accessible service for people with mental, cognitive, communicative disabilities (autism, speech disability)

(Continued)

- Speak to the person in an easy language and in short sentences
- The person can ask questions many questions and repeat himself a couple of times, answer with patience and give him/her a feeling of security
- Explain in a clear way to the person what he/she needs to do, what will happen and how long it will take.
- It is recommended to prepare ahead written material with simple explanations and guidelines.
- Enable the person to use a guide animal, or a calming object - something that calms him/her down.
- When transferring him/her to another policeman try to help, accompany him/her, make an introduction and explain the situation/need.
- When checking a person that seems "lost", offer help – speaking and accompanying will help.
- Offer the person to get in touch with someone that can help/therapist or a family member and update them if needed.
- Avoid making assumptions, pressure him/her or finish his/her sentences.



Remember your actions has significant and ongoing influence on people with these disabilities

Guidelines for an accessible service for a person with physical mobility/elderly

At the police station

- Use an accessible registration counter or an accessible room.
- Make sure that the accessible bathrooms are open and free of any objects and obstacles.
- Offer the person with a disability in his hands to help filling out the documents.
- Offer and organize an accessible chair with handles for elderly people and people with a disability in walking.
- Avoid touching the aids such as wheelchair, crutches or cane.



Arriving to the house/private business

- While making a house call know that it is possible that it will take longer for people with physical disabilities/elderly to get to the door/balcony/window to enable visual identification.
- If the person is unable to provide visual identification by getting to door/window/balcony try alternative ways like for example video over the phone.
- If the person needs to come with you:
 - Make sure that he/she takes with them aids/medicine and whatever else he/she might need.
 - Understand and arrange with the person possible medical requirements.
 - If the person has a care-giver that assists him/her – allow the care-giver to accompany him/her and help.
 - Allow the person the use of guide animals.
 - Evacuate the person that uses a wheelchair in an accessible vehicle adjusted for wheelchairs.
 - Inform the family members





Policemen,

During these challenging times please make sure to provide service which is -

Professional, accessible, patient and sensitive

If you encounter a problem that has to do with accessibility, which this guide doesn't answer, please contact the

[Police Accessibility Coordinator](#)





Access Israel

About Access Israel

Access Israel is the leading non-profit organization in Israel whose main mission is to promote accessibility and inclusion to improve the quality of life of people with all types of disabilities and the elderly.

Since 2016 Access Israel is a Special Advisor to UN-ECOSOC on accessibility and inclusion.

Access Israel's projects have been awarded as Best Practices in various international platforms.

Access Israel is very active globally encouraging sharing of information and expertise in order to make sure we promote the UN SDGs and the basic concept of leaving no one behind.

The contents of this Presentation were developed by Access Israel as a resource tool.

The contents of this Presentation do not represent or constitute full emergency protocols, but are provided to serve as a resource tool to assist you in working with, assisting and saving the lives of persons with disabilities and the elderly.

This resource presentation does not, and is not intended to, constitute legal advice; instead, all information, content, and materials available in this presentation is for informational purposes only.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

