



# A GUIDE TO INDUCTION LOOP LEGISLATION

Induction loop systems are used to assist the hearing impaired by transmitting amplified sound, i.e., music, speech, etc, to hearing aids. Demand for them is set to soar due to new legislation aimed at preventing discrimination against disabled people. This document provides a brief overview of new and existing legislation, standards and schemes which refer to induction loop systems and their installation.



## BS8300 (2002)

British Standard BS8300 is the code of practice for the design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people. The standard recommends that "a hearing enhancement system, using induction loop, infra-red or radio transmission, should be installed in rooms and spaces used for meetings, lectures, classes, performances, spectator sports or films, and used at service and reception counters where the background noise level is high or where glazed screens are used" (9.3.2). It pinpoints the following areas for consideration: seated waiting areas; ticket sales and information points; fitness suites and exercise studios; churches; crematoria and cemetery chapels, educational, cultural and scientific buildings.

• Copies of BS8300 can be viewed at your local reference library or purchased from the British Standards Institute, Customer Services Dept., 389 Chiswick High Road, London, W4 4AL. Tel: +44 (0)20 8996 9000. Web: [www.bsi-global.com](http://www.bsi-global.com)

## THE DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT (1995)

The aim of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) is to stop discrimination against disabled people including the hearing impaired. The Act was extended in September 2002 to cover education in schools and colleges and will be strengthened further in October 2004 as the Disability Rights Commission's (DRC) new Code of Practice comes into effect.

Under the Act, all UK service providers, i.e., companies or organisations offering goods, facilities or services to the general public, must make 'reasonable' adjustments to ensure they do not unlawfully discriminate against disabled people. Employers must also take measures to ensure that existing and potential employees are not disadvantaged in the workplace.

Examples of 'reasonable adjustments' include the provision of auxiliary aids, such as induction loop systems, to enable a deaf or hard of hearing person to access goods, facilities or services where it is impossible or unreasonably difficult for them to do so. At present, service providers do not have to make permanent adjustments to their buildings. However, from 1 October 2004, permanent adjustments must be made and organisations that fail to make adequate provision for the disabled could face prosecution. Some examples of service providers covered under the Act are:

- Telecommunications and broadcasting organisations
- Public utility companies, such as gas, electricity and water suppliers
- Leisure centres, football stadia, national parks and health clubs
- Bus and railway stations, airports and travel agents
- Shops, hairdressers, post offices, banks and building societies
- Hotels, restaurants, cinemas, theatres and pubs
- Hospitals, waiting rooms and clinics
- Solicitors' offices, courts, churches and mosques

The DRC advises service providers to take steps now to prepare for their extended obligations.

• For more information on the Disability Discrimination Act, visit the DRC's website at [www.drc-gb.org](http://www.drc-gb.org)

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## BUILDING REGULATIONS PART M1 : ACCESS TO AND USE OF BUILDINGS (2000)

Current building regulations for England and Wales state that newly erected or substantially reconstructed non-domestic buildings should make reasonable provision for people to gain access to and use their facilities (Requirement M1).

In particular, the regulations state that reasonable 'aids to communication' should be provided for the hearing impaired in auditoria, meeting rooms, reception areas, ticket offices and at information points.

One of the aims of Requirement M1 is to ensure all people can participate in proceedings at lecture/conference facilities and entertainment, leisure and social venues. According to the regulations, aids to communication will satisfy {part of} this requirement if 'a hearing enhancement system is installed in rooms and spaces designed for meetings, lectures, classes, performances ... and at service or reception counters when they are situated in noisy areas or behind glazed screens' (section 4.36/4.36b)

The regulations acknowledge that a person with a hearing disability needs to receive a signal that is amplified in both volume and signal-to-noise ratio and that induction loop, infrared, radio and sound field systems can provide this advanced level of sound (section 4.35, Design Considerations).

- Part M1 of the Building Regulations can be viewed at the website of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister at [www.odpm.gov.uk](http://www.odpm.gov.uk)

## THE CARE STANDARDS ACT (2002)

The Government's new Care Standards Act demands that care homes in England provide certain adaptations and equipment for residents, including:-

'facilities, including communication aids (e.g. a loop system), and signs to assist the needs of all service users, taking account of the needs, for example, of those with hearing impairment, visual impairment, dual sensory impairments, learning disabilities or dementia or other cognitive impairment, where necessary.' (standard 22.6).

These requirements apply to all care homes providing accommodation and nursing or personal care for older people in England. Regular inspections of homes and enforcement of the new legislation will be carried out by the new Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) which took over the social care functions previously carried out by the National Care Standards Commission on 1 April 2004.

- For more information on the Care Standards Act and the new Commission for Social Care Inspection, visit the CSCI's website at [www.csci.org.uk](http://www.csci.org.uk)

## THE ENGLISH TOURISM COUNCIL'S NATIONAL ACCESSIBLE SCHEME (2002)



The English Tourism Council's National Accessible Scheme aims to increase accessibility for guests who are mobility, hearing and visually impaired. Participation in the scheme is not compulsory, but those who do participate are given recommendations which include the provision of auxiliary aids in serviced and self-catering accommodation to help satisfy the requirements of the DDA.

'Best practice' recommendations include the fitting of a counter or portable loop system to assist hearing impaired guests on booking/arrival and the installation of room loops in bedrooms. Other best practice recommendations are that consideration be given to providing a TV listening aid and room loop in television lounges and that induction loops be 'part of the standard equipment' in conference, entertainment and banqueting areas.

All establishments participating in the scheme are regularly assessed to ensure they meet the required standards and receive a nationally recognised rating they can use to promote their facilities.

For more information, visit [www.tourismtrade.org.uk](http://www.tourismtrade.org.uk)

## FURTHER READING

All information on this datasheet is given in good faith. Please note, full copies of the Standards, Acts and Schemes referred to can be purchased or viewed in their entirety from the organisations and/or websites listed at the end of each section.

Other documents you may wish to reference include BS7594 (1993): The code of practice for audio-frequency induction loop systems (AFILS) and BS60118-4 (1998): Magnetic field strength in audio-frequency induction loops for hearing aid purposes, both of which are available from the British Standards Institute (address overleaf).

## MEETING THE STANDARDS

SigNET manufacture a wide range of cost-effective induction loop amplifiers, many of which are available in kit format for ease of specification, purchase and installation. For further details, please contact our Sales Desk on 0191 417 4551.