

## Guiding a blind person

- You should always ask first if a blind person needs some assistance.
- Do not take hold of the white cane or guide dog - breaking their or their guide dog's concentration can be very dangerous.
- Be precise when giving directions – "go straight ahead about 100 steps" is much clearer than "over there".
- If you think help is needed, drive past the pedestrian first before stopping so your car does not block them from the view of other traffic.
- Ask them which side they'd like to be guided on (or stand on the opposite side of their cane or guide dog).
- Let them take your arm above the elbow (your arm can be straight or bent). They will then walk about half a pace behind you following your movements up or down steps or around obstacles.
- Keep your arm close to your body so that the person you are guiding can follow your movements.
- Before stepping off or onto a kerb or stairs, pause and tell the person you are guiding that is about to happen – "two steps down" or "a flight of stairs up".
- Let them know that you are leaving them. It can be embarrassing to be left talking to thin air!

## Getting in and out of cars

You don't need to physically help someone who is blind or has low vision get in a car, simply:

- Guide them to the passenger's side of the car.
- Tell them which way the car is facing.
- Place the hand of your guiding arm on the door handle and let them slide their hand down your arm to it.
- When your passenger is getting out of your car you should first check that the area is clear and safe for them to exit. Then offer your arm and guide them to a place where they can orientate from.
- Do not push a low vision or blind person in front of you – they cannot see what is coming, you can.

For more information please contact the Royal NZ Foundation of the Blind:  
phone 0800 24 33 33 or email: [general@rnzfb.org.nz](mailto:general@rnzfb.org.nz)