

# Recommendations to help

tourism providers in welcoming people with disabilities during a health crisis such as COVID-19



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A fair and sustainable tourism for all



# Introduction

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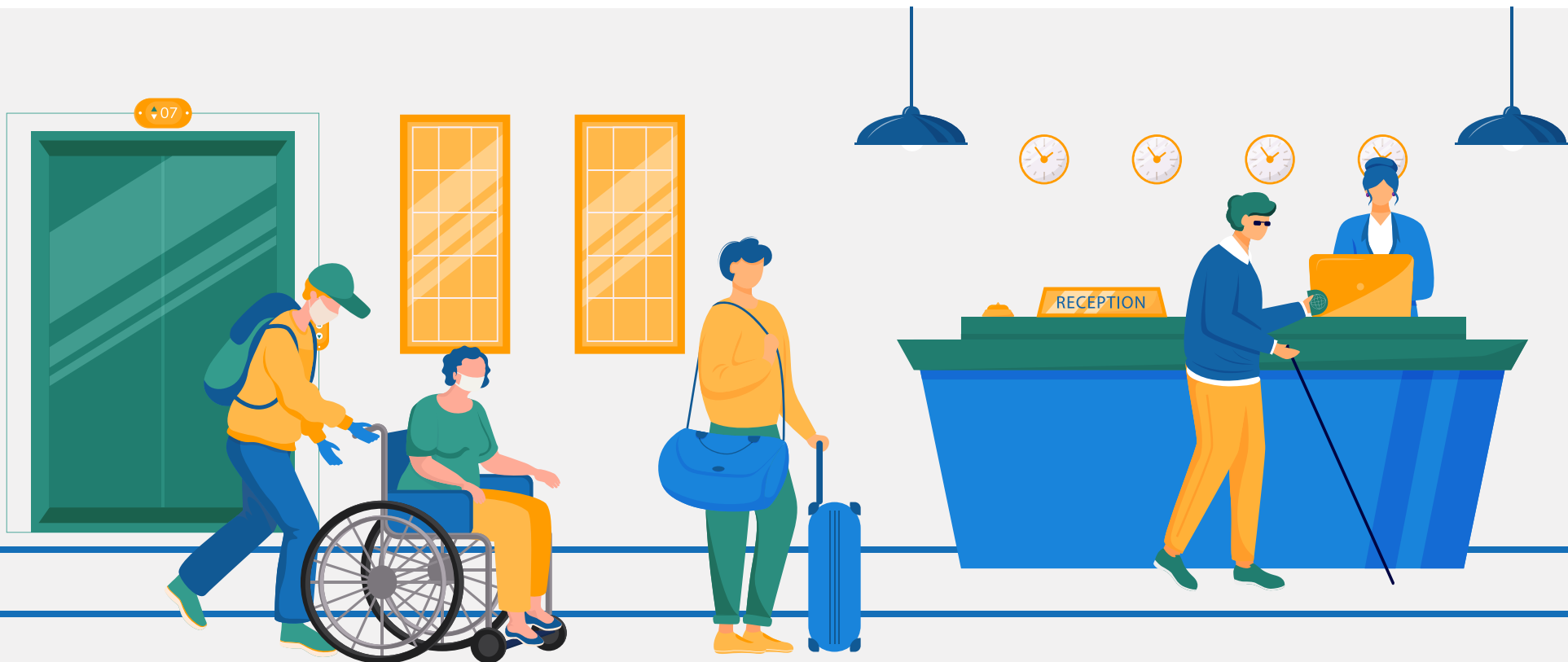


The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities states that all possible measures must be taken to ensure the safety and protection of persons with disabilities, particularly in health emergencies, as is the case with Covid-19.

Tourism is an important industry. The current economic crisis has forced all countries to establish health protocols in order to ensure the reopening of this sector. This can only be achieved by providing good conditions of safety for everyone.



Generally speaking, protocols have been designed, but few of them have taken into account accessibility and the particularities of customers with disabilities and medical/health related conditions. The Working Group dealing with Accessible Tourism within the International Social Tourism Organisation (ISTO), composed of representatives of different organisations around the world, suggests that these protocols be accompanied by the recommendations as detailed below. These should lead to a greater inclusion of people with disabilities within the tourism sector.



# General recommendations for the care of people with disabilities

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It should be noted that under no circumstances can these recommendations replace national or territorial regulations.

ISTO recommends consulting the protocols implemented in each country including those issued by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Tourism.

The following recommendations may vary according to the evolution of the pandemic and are intended as a guide only to promote the inclusion of people with disabilities within the tourism sector.



In order to ensure the health security of people with disabilities, the following general recommendations should be taken into account:

## 01 Train all stakeholders within the tourism sector

on welcoming and caring for people with a disability, cognitive disorder, or medical/health related condition according to the regulatory standards of each country but also by applying these recommendations.

## 02 Apply the care protocols taking into account people

with a disability, cognitive disorder, or medical/health related condition including the measures to be taken in case there is a suspicion of COVID-19.

## 03 Have a clear, simple and adapted communication policy

for the various groups of people with a disability, cognitive disorder, or medical/health related condition.



## 04 Inform, via all means of communication

of the accessibility conditions of tourist services, and include information on the established adapted sanitary measures.

## 05 Give the possibility to pay in cash or by card

avoiding movement within the establishment.

## 06 Give people with a disability the possibility of cutting queues

(if appropriate) and ensure the presence of seats for any easily fatigued person.

## When people with disabilities come to you, don't forget to:

- Talk to that person directly and not to the person accompanying them.
- Ensure that accessible spaces, which can be used by people with needs, are maintained.
- Clearly explain the health measures which must be followed with regard to their technical aids, such as wheelchairs, crutches, assistance dogs, etc.
- Clean and disinfect any type of equipment or support material which may be provided to the person with a disability, medical/health related condition before and after use; including the key to the accessible toilets.

The establishment of safe distances (i.e. the spaces between the tables in a restaurant) will make it easier for a person using a wheelchair to move around.

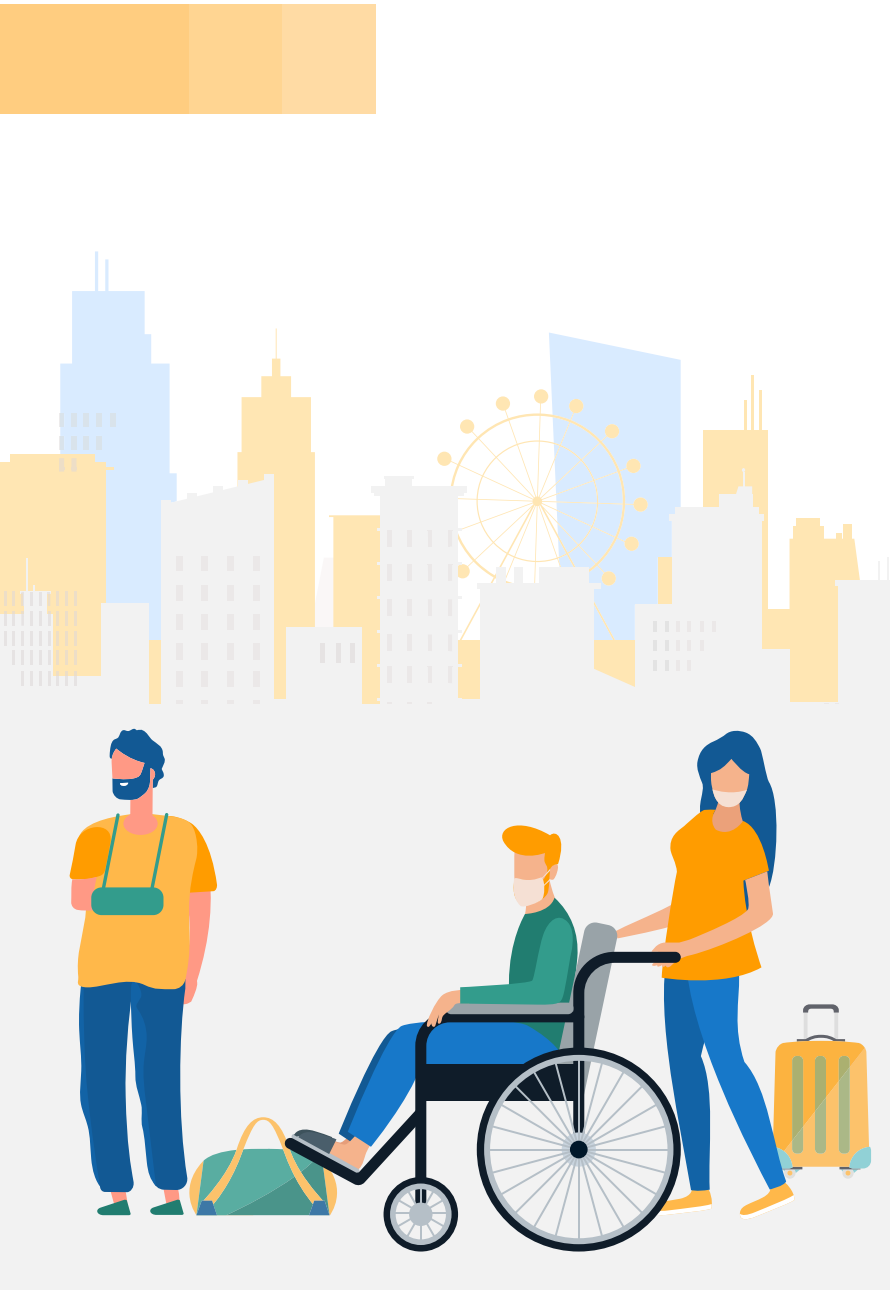


# Specific recommendations for people with a mobility impairment



The COVID-19 protocols require that hands be disinfected with hydro-alcoholic gel or soap and water at the entrance to the establishments. It is recommended that the disinfectant gel be accessible and

usable by everyone (wheelchair users, those with restricted growth, people without mobility in their upper and/or lower limbs, etc.).



### Surface cleaning



01

People with a mobility impairment generally need to make contact with items such as grab bars, handrails, use a call bell, etc., so cleaning of these items, as well as locks, handles, keyboards, etc., should be more frequent.

### Hand disinfection



03

If the person with a disability needs help to overcome an architectural barrier, he or she should first be asked how to provide this support, keeping in mind all health safety measures.

It is recommended that hands are washed and/or disinfected before and after providing assistance.

If the establishment has a lift, it is important to keep it in working order.

### Wheelchair disinfection



02

Wheelchair users are in contact with the ground via their tyres, just as able-bodied people are in contact with the ground via their shoes. If a disinfection mat is present, it must be passable by a wheelchair.

Some wheelchair users travel with a companion dog. It is recommended not to touch the dog.

### Support material disinfection



04

It is important to remember that anyone with restricted growth may also need support equipment such as stools, ladders or bars, which should be disinfected before and after use.



# Specific recommendations for people with a visual impairment

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In the presence of a person who has a severe visual impairment, do not forget to identify yourself, to warn of your arrival and departure, to avoid physical contact and to respect the recommended safety distance, to give clear and concrete indications such as left, right and to avoid imprecise words such as here and there. It is recommended to be exhaustive in the description of spaces and routes.

People with a visual impairment may use technical aids such as white canes or guide dogs. In addition, they also use their hands extensively to explore and guide themselves; it is therefore recommended that no one touches the cane or the dog and that they disinfect the surfaces of the elements they use for orientation more frequently and rigorously.

If a person with a visual impairment wishes to be guided, offer the shoulder instead of the elbow (the elbow is the recommended place for sneezing and coughing). It is therefore advisable to avoid this part of the body.

Any information that the establishment wishes to provide (e.g. restaurant menus, museum information, etc.) must be made accessible by any necessary means (website, social network platforms, etc.). It is also possible to present the health instructions in large print on plastic-coated paper which can be cleaned after use.



# Specific recommendations for people with a hearing impairment

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## It is recommended to use transparent masks

It is recommended that staff use transparent masks and/or visors or elements such as a sign, a sheet of paper or a mobile phone, in order to prevent the person with a hearing impairment from touching the same objects as the staff and therefore ensure compliance with health regulations.

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## It is recommended to have a language interpreter

If a sign language interpreter is not available, a video call with a trusted person will be facilitated.

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## It is recommended to use illustrated documents

It is recommended to promote the use of documents illustrated by pictograms or drawings, either digital or laminated printed, which can simplify the message, respecting physical distances and health safety measures.

# Specific recommendations for people with a cognitive disorder

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People with a cognitive disorder need concrete, clear and simple information expressed in short sentences. They need more time to understand. Therefore, they need to express themselves calmly and without stress.

It is recommended to use documents illustrated with pictograms or drawings, digital or printed and laminated, which facilitate understanding, respecting physical distances and health safety measures. The use of documents that are easy to read and understood is preferred.





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