

# Glossary

The following glossary includes common terminology in O & M training and definition, to terms used in the O & M guidelines. It should not be considered an exhaustive listing of O&M-related terms.

**Access Ramp:** A slope which allows a wheelchair to enter or exit a location.

**Adaptive Mobility Device:** A device designed to facilitate independent movement for some students who cannot initially use a long cane for travel. In most cases, adaptive mobility devices are replaced with the use of a long cane at some point in training.

**AER:** Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired, an organization for professionals working with individuals who are blind/visually impaired, birth through adulthood.

**Arc Definer:** A device designed to give feedback to a blind student regarding arc width while moving when learning the touch or constant cane techniques.

**ACVREP:** The Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals is an independent and autonomous legal certification body in three disciplines including Orientation and Mobility.

**Berm:** The strip of cement found in parking lots which stops the tires of a parked car from going any further forward.

**Blended Curb:** Where the street and sidewalk are at the same level and there is no drop-off.

**Clearing:** The process of ensuring the safety of an area either with a sweep of the cane tip on the ground or with a sweep of the hand on a surface.

**COMS:** ACVREP Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist

**Constant Contact Technique:** Using the cane in a side-to-side motion maintaining continual contact of the cane tip with the walking surface as the cane clears the area ahead of the forward foot.

**Curb Trailing:** Using touch technique along the curb face.

- a. Using two-point curb trailing by touching the street with one arc and the top of the curb with the other arc.
- b.
- c. Using three-point curb trailing by touching the street, the curb face, and the surface beyond the curb.

**Diagonal technique:** Using the cane held diagonally across the body as protection and to gather information.

**Direction Taking/Parallel Alignment:** Getting a straight parallel line or course from a fixed object or a sound to better facilitate traveling in a straight line (toward a desired objective).

**Directionality:** The ability to differentiate between another person's left and right, and to judge the position of objects in the environment relative to one's own body.

**Drop-off:** A step down such as a curb or stair.

**Drop-off Lesson:** A training procedure in which students are taken to a point within the boundaries of a familiar environment and are instructed to independently determine their location. They then find a specific destination by evaluating environmental landmarks and clues available while traveling.

**Echolocation:** Auditory skill of locating opens along a wall or other surface by recognizing the absence of sound waves.

**Flagging:** Moving the cane back and forth in an arc position with the tip down before stepping off the curb when crossing a street to give more warning of one's intention to cross.

**Hines Break Technique:** A systematic method of disengaging unwanted or incorrect sighted guide assistance.

**Human Guide Technique:** Guiding a person with a visual impairment in a recommended manner.

**Identification Cane Technique:** Utilization of the long cane by a person with low vision in order to be recognized by others as having a sighted assistance.

**Kinesthetic Sense:** The ability of the mind to perceive the location or relationship of parts of the body as they are moving, without using any other sense to check.

**Laterality:** Knowing one's own left and right sidedness.

**Light Perception:** The ability to distinguish light from dark.

**Midline Axis:** An imaginary line, roughly corresponding to the verticality of the spinal column, used as a referent for orienting the movement of the body's extremities in symmetrical patterns.

**Null Point:** Position in which the eyes are turned where nystagmus is dampened or minimal.

**Object Perception:** The ability to auditorally or visually detect the presence of an object or wall without direct contact.

**Offset Intersection:** An intersection in which two 90° turns are required in order to continue traveling in the same direction on one of the streets.

**Orientation:** The cognitive process of utilizing the senses in establishing one's position and relationship to all other significant objects in one's environment (e.g., knowing where one is in space).

**Orientation and Mobility:** Knowing one's spatial relationships to the features of the travel environment and keeping track of those relationships (e.g. mental or spatial mapping, familiarization with the layout of a room, etc.) while moving safely, efficiently, and comfortably within that environment.

**Orienteering:** Navigation around a course or space in a timed or untimed period using clues, landmarks, and other techniques (e.g., maps, compass, electronic devices) to locate a specific point. A modification of competitive orienteering can be used as a teaching method to make orientation more enjoyable for the student.

**Pre-Cane Device:** A term previously used to describe an adaptive mobility device.

**Press/Release Pressure:** A technique for applying resistance to the movement of a limb in order to increase the subject's awareness of the movement; pressure is applied, then released, then applied again.

**Proprioception:** The ability of the mind to perceive the location or relationship of parts of the body in stationary positions without the need to use any other sense to check.

**Recovery:** The process of reorienting one's self in the environment.

**Room Familiarization:** A technique used to provide a student with a systematic procedure for independently examining an unfamiliar room and for developing a clear understanding of the spatial relationships of objects within the room.

**Scanning:** A systematic procedure using auditory, visual, and tactile cues to obtain information and ensure the safety of an area.

**Search Pattern:** A systematic method for recovering a dropped object.

**Self-Protective Techniques:**

- a. Forearm Protective Technique: Protecting the upper part of the body during travel.
- b. Lower Body Protective Technique: Protecting the waist, hip, and upper leg areas of the body during travel.

**Shoreline/Guideline:** A line formed by the meeting of two surfaces, in either plane or texture. The line gives the traveler direction and/or location (e.g., grass and sidewalk edge, blacktop and cement of a parking area or gas station).

**Sound Echo:** A sound which is reflected from an object in the environment, such as a building or wall.

**Sound shadow** An object in the environment which is between the sound and the traveler.

**Squaring off** Placing one's backside against an object in order to obtain a perpendicular line of direction.

**Tactile Defensiveness:** Acute sensitivity to kinds of touch.

**Tactile Map:** A three dimensional or raised line representation of a specific location in the environment (e.g., a map of a residential training area, school campus).

**Tactile model:** A three-dimensional representation of a generic concept or environmental situation (e.g., a model of an intersection, a model of a revolving door).

**Three Point Touch Technique:** Using the cane to locate an objective on a higher plane by moving the cane in three motions' a regular arc away from the vertical surface, and the other arc on the higher horizontal surface (e.g., traveling in the gutter along a curb to locate a sidewalk after crossing).

**Touch and Drag Technique:** Using the cane to follow a guideline or shoreline of a different texture to locate an intersecting surface (e.g., sidewalk) or to regain a parallel line of travel by maintaining the tip's contact with the ground during the arc toward the ground being followed.

**Touch and Slide Technique:** Using the cane to locate drop-offs (e.g. curbs, stairs) or texture changes by keeping the can tip on the ground and letting it slide slightly forward when making the arc of the touch technique to provide more feedback.

**Touch Technique:** Using the cane in a rhythmic side-to-side motion making.

**Two Point Touch Technique:** A low, flat arc to clear the area for the traveler's next step, as the cane tip contacts the walking surface on the opposite side of the forward foot.

**Trailing:** Using the cane and / or the hand to lightly follow along a surface (e.g., wall, lockers, desk, tables) for one or all of the following reasons:

1. to determine one's place in space
2. to locate specific objectives
3. to get a parallel line of travel.

**Verification Cane Technique:** A modified diagonal cane technique utilized by some persons with low vision. The user determines the amount of contact the can tip has with the ground based on the need for verification of obstacles, surfaces, and drop offs. The technique is also used to identify the person as visually impaired.