

Why the White Cane?

A Closer Look

Chances are good you've come across someone using a white cane as an assistive device – maybe you've passed someone on the street or seen it in a movie or TV show. You probably haven't considered this humble tool and how it plays a role in the lives of those navigating the world with low vision or blindness.

Here are 7 facts and figures on use of the white cane!



3 to Choose From

There are actually 3 different kinds of white canes. There's the standard mobility cane, used to navigate. There's the support cane, used by people with visual impairments who also have mobility challenges. And there's the ID cane, a small, foldable cane used by people with partial sight to let others know they have a visual impairment.



TSA Much?

Yes, it's legal to take a white cane through security at an airport, according to TSA. But it has to go through the X-ray machine.



Good Thinking!

In 1930, George A. Bonham, president of the Peoria Lions Club, watched a man who was blind attempting to cross a street. The man's cane was black, and motorists couldn't see it. So, Bonham proposed painting the cane white with a red stripe to make it more noticeable. The idea quickly caught on around the country.



Stripes Too?

Not all canes are all white. A cane with alternating red and white stripes signifies that the user is both deaf and blind.



Tech-Enabled Canes

Technology-assisted white canes have sensors built in and are capable of helping the user determine the dimensions, range and height of the objects around them.



That's Pretty Special

Orientation and mobility specialists, who help those with visual impairment learn to navigate their world, are required to spend a minimum of 120 hours blindfolded to better understand the challenges of the visually impaired and blind. These specialists-in-training are tested on locating objects, navigating a path and identifying their environment.



Not Everyone's Caned Up

Most people who are visually impaired don't use a white cane. According to the Perkins School for the Blind, only 2% to 8% do. The rest rely on their useable vision, a guide dog or a sighted guide.



[Learn about](#) how Metrolina Association for the Blind's specialist work with clients every day to better navigate their worlds!