



NEW YORK CITY TAXI & LIMOUSINE COMMISSION

Improving Service for People with Hearing Loss:

Enhanced Audio Communication RFI Update
Induction Loop Pilot Proposal

October 11, 2007

Potential New Technologies

- TLC has been approached by passengers and advocates who are interested in seeing specific assistive technologies in taxicabs.
- To properly evaluate these suggestions, TLC needs to learn more about methods, technologies, benefits, functionality, and costs.
- TLC issued a Request for Information (RFI) to explore various technologies and solutions as well as measure potential benefits.

RFI Responses:

From Citizens

- Nine (9) responses, all supporting the inclusion of assistive technology for people who are hard of hearing in taxis.

From Advocacy Groups

- *League for the Hard of Hearing*
 - Supports Induction Loop technology in taxis.
- *The Hearing Access Program*
 - Provided information on Induction Loop technology and supports installing it in taxis.

From Manufacturers

- *Oval Window Audio* (Colorado)
 - Manufacturer of induction loop systems.
- *Assistive Audio* (Ohio)
 - Agent/distributor of Ampetronic brand Induction Loop systems.

Staff Recommendation:

Pilot Program

- Assistive Audio has proposed a pilot program using induction loop technology.
- Additional manufacturers might be interested in providing induction loop technology or other assistive hearing devices for taxicabs.
- Extensive testing, including passenger and driver surveys (as well as continued discussions with manufacturers and installers) would be required to properly evaluate the systems.
- The Commission should examine the outcomes of the pilot program after 6-12 months of testing.

Induction Loop Systems

- Transmits sound directly to properly equipped hearing aids.
- Transmissions can be picked up by a Cochlear Implant or any Hearing Aid equipped with a “T-coil”.
- In common use in public buildings and attractions in the United Kingdom, Scandinavia, and Israel.
- About 50% of American users of hearing aids would be able to use Induction Loops while keeping their present hearing aids.
- Already have a presence in NYC at institutions such as the New-York Historical Society and Temple Emanu-El.

Assistive Audio, Inc.

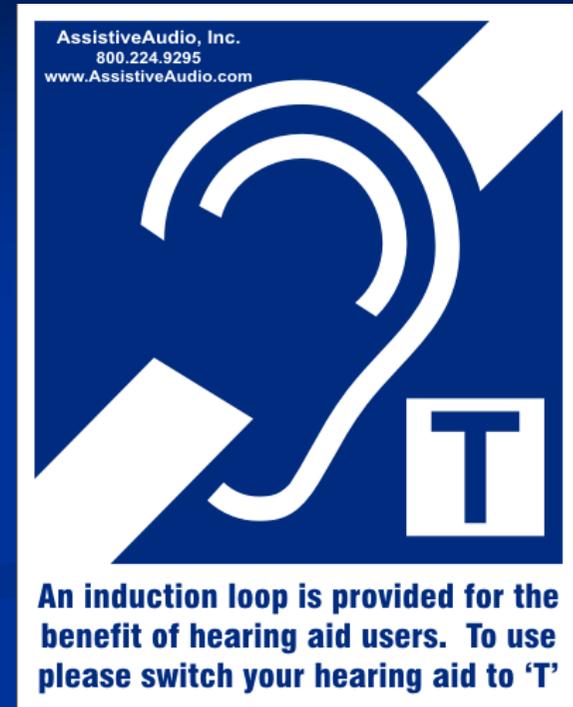
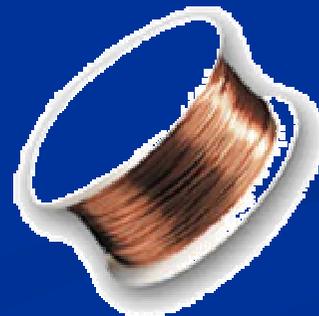
- Based in Toledo, Ohio.
- Sole agent and distributor of Ampetronic systems in the USA.
- Experienced in installation.
- Able to provide 10 systems to volunteer taxi owners.
- System cost is about \$300 per unit.

Induction Loop Systems

- An Audio Frequency Induction Loop System (AFILS) has 3 primary components:
 - An induction loop amplifier.
 - A loop cable installed in the listening area which carries the signal from the amplifier to the telecoil in the hearing aid.
 - Inputs consisting of a microphone or other sound sources to amplify through the loop.

Components of an Induction Loop System

- Induction Loop Amplifier
- Microphone
- Loop Cable
- Signage



Pilot Proposal

- 6-12 Month installation and evaluation period.
- Up to 15 cabs allowed per manufacturer.
- Inspection and evaluation for safety by TLC's Safety and Emissions division.
- Approval of an interior decal or PIM display with the internationally-recognized "ear with T" symbol indicating the presence of an Induction Loop.
- Testing would include gathering information on:
 - Owner satisfaction
 - Driver satisfaction
 - Passenger satisfaction
 - Focus groups and real-life road testing
 - Usefulness for people with hearing loss





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