

# Hearing Accessibility in Broadcasting

The Canadian Hard of Hearing Association

Broadcasting Accessibility Quick Tips

## Why accessibility matters



Because of their hearing loss, many people have difficulty understanding the speech and sounds of television. They may *hear* the words being spoken, but not understand them. Background noise, music, and overlapping speech make it difficult to hear words clearly or identify sound effects. Actors with obscured faces and voice-over narration make speechreading impossible. Captioning is an important accessibility function that fills in the missing information.

## Captioning

Captioning is text interpretation of television's audible words and sounds. The text is displayed on the screen, identifying the speaker, sound effects and icons for elements such as music.

Captions are also helpful in noisy environments such as restaurants and gyms, doctors' offices and other locations where it is difficult to hear, or if TV audio must be muted. Captioning provides an extra benefit to people learning English or French as a second language by making it easier to follow the dialogue.

Some TV remotes have a CC button that activates captioning. Not all smart and digital TV remotes have a CC button, and use a menu in the TV to turn on the captioning. The TV remote is used to open a designated menu within the setup options.

To activate captioning with these remotes, **consult the operating manual provided with the remote and/or television.**

The two most common types of captioning are Open and Closed Captioning:

- **Open captioning (OC)** appears on the screen automatically, it cannot be turned off, and the appearance of the text is set. This is often used in documentaries or films designed to be accessible
- **Closed captioning (CC)** appears on the television screen when enabled, and is coded into all broadcast television programming in Canada.



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## Transcripts

Some radio stations offer transcripts online for select, non-music based programs. However, some stations only provide transcripts upon request after the program has aired.

Transcripts can help if a person listened to a program, but didn't understand part of it. However, they are produced at the end of a broadcast. For programs that include an interactive call-in show, a transcript will only be available after the show is finished so it would not be of benefit to a person with hearing loss during the program.

Transcripts for radio programs can be obtained either from the broadcaster's website or by direct request. Broadcasters may also direct listeners to a third-party company responsible for producing the transcripts.

Look for an email address associated with the broadcaster's Transcripts and Recordings Department or their Accessibility Department if available, specify the date and time the program was aired, as well as the name of the program and subject.

Contact the broadcaster as soon as possible after the broadcast, as transcripts may not be available indefinitely.

Transcripts are intended for personal use, and cannot be shared or distributed publicly without proper authorization.

### **Have a question or want to learn more?**

Visit the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association Broadcasting Accessibility Project website:

<http://chha.ca/baf/index.php>

Or, if you have an accessibility question about your television, radio or content on the internet, just

### **Ask the Expert!**

Visit the Ask the Expert webpage to pose your question:

<http://www.chha.ca/chha/ask-expert.php>



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