

White Cane Safety Day

The President of the United States proclaims **October 15th** as White Cane Day, to acknowledge the abilities of people who are visually impaired, and to promote equal opportunities as Americans.

It's also a reminder that laws in all 50 states require drivers to yield the right of way to people with white canes.

Fun Facts

- White canes are usually made from aluminum, fiberglass, or carbon fiber, and can weigh as little as seven ounces.
- White canes are white because of George A. Bonham. In 1930, Bonham, president of the Peoria Lions Club (Illinois), 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.
- In 1944, Richard E. Hoover, a World War II veteran rehabilitation specialist, developed the techniques used today for safe, independent travel.
- The first special White Cane Ordinance was passed in December 1930 in Peoria, Illinois. It granted blind pedestrians protections and the right-of-way while carrying a white cane.
- With proper training, people using the white cane can enjoy greater mobility and safety, as they travel independently in a variety of environments.

Are you interested in teaching people with a visual impairment how to travel safely? Stephen F. Austin offers the **only undergraduate** O&M training program in the United States. The program also offers O&M training at the graduate level for certification.