










National Association of Theatre Owners

FACT SHEET IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY

-  The movie theater industry wants all deaf, blind, hard-of-hearing and visually impaired patrons to feel welcome in attending our cinemas and have access to a great experience at the movies—and we are working toward that goal every day.
-  NATO and its members have spent hundreds of millions of dollars and countless working hours on making movie theaters as accessible as possible to moviegoers with disabilities.
-  While captioning in the film era was prohibitively costly to movie theater owners and movie studios, the industry's conversion to digital cinema has unleashed a new generation of access-enabling technologies.
-  The pace of these innovations is accelerating access markedly. Over the past few years, digital technology has enabled the distribution of more movies than ever with captions and descriptions, as well as the rollout of a new generation of closed captioning and descriptive video devices. America's movie theaters are voluntarily installing these systems as fast as the manufacturers can produce them.
-  To spur innovation and promote greater access, NATO members have: (1) provided technical guidance, cinema testing locations, design requirements and other aid to access equipment companies; (2) organized hands-on demonstrations of prototype access equipment to representatives of the disabled community and industry participants; and (3) taken the lead public advocacy position in the movie industry to promote closed captioning and video description using newspapers, company and third-party websites, box office signage and other press materials.
-  A 2015 survey of NATO's membership showed that over 90% of screens accounted for in the survey are equipped with both closed captioning and audio description technologies. The screens in the survey represented the vast majority of NATO's member screens.
-  In 2014, NATO reached an historic agreement with advocates for the deaf and hard of hearing regarding access to these technologies in America's digital cinemas. This landmark joint position, if adopted by the Department of Justice in its rulemaking, will equip all digital cinemas in the U.S. with closed captioning and audio description technologies.