

# General Guide for Players with Access Needs

---

## Contents

Introductions and overview .....	2
Before the Game .....	3
Packing .....	5
Staying overnight .....	6
At the event .....	7
After the game .....	8
Glossary.....	9

## **Introductions and overview**

This Guide is aimed primarily at players but is also applicable to people who are crewing. Keeping in mind that access needs can vary person to person these are meant as general suggestions. Many of these suggestions are useful to players without access needs but are particularly beneficial to those with access needs.

## Before the Game

- Read through the games Equality & Diversity and/or Accessibility statement in advance of the game.
  - Make note of any special rules pertaining to access needs i.e. non-combat rules
  - If a game does not have an accessibility document this is a good time to contact the game organisers and ask for them to make clear their policy and rules regarding accessibility.
- For games with a large number of crew it is a good idea to check who the point-of-contact is for accessibility needs as this may differ from the main organiser or person taking bookings.
- When booking make sure to include your access needs clearly.
  - Include anything you are comfortable sharing even if you aren't sure how it would impact LARP. Sometimes there are circumstances or accommodations you may not have considered.
  - If you are concerned about confidentiality ask the Organisers to clarify who has access to player information.
  - If the booking form does not have a space for access needs then email the organisers directly with the info.
- Similarly be sure to include any allergy information and dietary requirements.
  - Include everything you feel comfortable disclosing – there may be some things you don't anticipate in advance.
  - If possible include a note on severity of your allergy or intolerance so that organisers can plan accordingly i.e. make sure there are no nuts on site; know that red food colouring is fine if not ingested.
- Check the dates and put them in your diary!
  - Set an advance notification on your phone or calendar if you are likely to get confused about dates.
- Check your medication and order any prescriptions ahead of time.
- Plan your time ahead of the game
  - Many people benefit from a short period of rest right before the game.
  - Check that any kit or props you order will be delivered in enough time.
- Organise your travel.
  - Consider how much kit you need to carry
  - Ask for car shares in advance: even if people don't have a spare seat they may have space for a heavy or awkward bag.
  - Booking public transport in advance saves money and reduces last minute stress
  - Don't forget the return trip
- Read through any documents or rules relating to your character ahead of time
  - Write out notes of important elements. You can make these IC if you want or keep them OC if that's easier
  - If writing out notes isn't an option you can always print off relevant pages or download to a phone or tablet
  - Make a note of your own character skills and important details (like their name!)
  - Asking organisers for clarification of rules ahead of time can reduce stress at the event

- When creating your character consider if you want your character to share your disability or health issues.
  - This is not necessary even if you have a visible disability. It is OK to keep that completely OOC if you want and ignore it IC.
  - If you do choose to incorporate it in to your character think about what IC language may be appropriate to use.
- Have a look at your footwear and make sure it is suitable for the conditions and in good repair
  - Remember that it is better to prioritise safe, suitable, comfortable footwear over IC footwear.
  - Don't forget cleaning and re-proofing

## Packing

- Make a packing list that you can check off as you go. Keep it in your bag as you can then check it off again before you go home to make sure you haven't left anything behind.
- Always pack extras of important medication in case things get lost or damaged or you find yourself delayed getting home.
- Put things you need to look after your well being in a separate bag or easily accessible
  - This might include medication, heat packs, underwear, toiletries etc.
- Take a plastic bag or dry bag to shove dirty, damp or muddy clothes or kit in so you don't get your dry stuff dirty and wet too
- Pack at least one more pair of socks than you think you'll need. You always want to have a pair of dry clean socks available in case of terrible weather.
  - Clean dry socks mean clean dry feet. This really helps your body stay at a comfortable temperature which makes chronic illness management easier.
- Pack snacks and a water bottle. Though there is probably food and drink available at the event it is useful to have snacks and a drink readily available especially if you need to regulate blood sugar or for managing medication.
- Designate a place for OOC essentials such as wallet, phone, house keys so they are easy to find at the end of the event when you need them.
  - Do the same for medications
- Make sure you have packed any mobility aids or other things you need such as bandages and knee supports. It is best to pack them even if you aren't sure you will need them.

## Staying overnight

- If you are going to an overnight event check what bedding you will need (or if you need to bring your own tent).
  - You may want to pack your own or extra pillows for greater comfort i.e. a memory foam pillow that helps reduce pain.
  - Over estimate your blankets – it is easier to have too many blankets or warm things and be able to shed them or not use them than it is to have too few warm things and find yourself cold and uncomfortable.
- If you are taking a tent make sure you know how to put it up and if you will need help doing so.
  - Check you have all the poles, pegs and pieces you need
- Find out if there is specific accessible camping and where that will be located.
  - Find out if there is a crew person who is able to help with putting up your tent.
- When asking for accommodation be sure to include anything you need for sleeping
  - An accessible room or room for a carer
  - A lower bunk or single bed
  - Requirements for shared rooms i.e. single gender, small groups and quiet rooms.
  - In cases of shared accommodation see if there is the option to assign/choose beds and roommates ahead of time.
- If you need power sockets for any access aids check where they are located as soon as you arrive at the venue, to avoid scrambling later.
  - Be particularly aware of plug sockets in bedrooms if you need devices such as CPAP machines. Make sure power cords reach where you need them.
- Consider if a hotel or hostel is an option if you are unable to camp or the accommodation offered is not suitable.
  - You may be able to reduce costs by sharing with other players.
  - Make sure you have the transport necessary to get from hotel to venue
  - Check the check in and out times ahead of time and know where you can store any luggage if you need to check out before the end of the game.

## At the event

- You may want to set reminders or alarms on your phone or watch for when you need to eat or take medication. It can be difficult to keep track of real world time at events.
  - You may want to speak to the organisers to let them know that you may need to use IC devices to manage your health.
- Consider carrying a clearly OOC pouch for OC medications or other things for managing your condition such as stim toys.
  - Depending on the style of game you may be able to leave a stash of medical things with a first aider, in the kitchen or in the crew room for easy access.
- If needed check where bathrooms are located for ease of access
  - If you need to stay near to a bathroom for mobility, gastrointestinal or other issues you may want to remind a crew member what general location you need to stay in
    - This helps them to make sure plot relevant to you doesn't happen too far away.
- At the start of a catered event you may wish to speak to caterers to remind them of any special requirements or to check if there is anything you need to be aware of.
  - It may be helpful to confirm meal times and note the location of any free snacks and drinks
  - If you have special dietary needs which require a separate plate being made up for you, you can check the logistics of this ahead of mealtimes.
  - If you need to refrigerate any special food or medications make sure they are labelled clearly, find out where to store them and make sure kitchen staff are aware that they can't be moved and you will need access.
    - It is reasonable to ask a crew member to help with this if you find these interactions difficult.
- If you have a trusted friend you are playing with, let them know of any accommodations you have or need, especially if these mean that things may be happening differently to normal.
  - If you are comfortable doing so you can let them know of any difficulties you may encounter and any help you will need for example help communicating, fetching a drink so you can take meds, helping you to a seat.
    - "I will not need any extra help." Is perfectly reasonable, too.
- Carry hand sanitiser or soap in case the venue/site toilets are lacking. Good hygiene prevents communicable diseases like colds and stomach bugs.
  - Avoid drinking out of shared containers to reduce the spread of bugs.
- Check in with Crew or Refs to make sure accommodations are being met
  - Find out about any last minute changes that may have happened.
  - Ask them for an approximate schedule for the event to help you plan your energy, meds or other needs.
    - This may involve notifying your OOC about things that would be involving your character
  - Ask for an update on any outdoor terrain if that's applicable, especially if the weather has been bad.



## After the game

After game routines are going to vary a lot person to person and depending on your needs and situation. However here are some things you may want to consider.

- Even if you can't unpack everything, take out toiletries and medication as soon as you get home so that you have them available to use.
- When you are able to unpack and wash things putting them away again either in a bag ready to go or in organised piles/boxes/bags that are separated by character or kit type can make packing next time easier.
- Make sure you have easy to prepare food in the house for when you return. Alternatively have some money set aside so that you can order take out.
- If you work or have other commitments try and book a day off following the event to recover or give you time to readjust to "normal" life and tidy things away.
  - Even able bodied people experience "event crash" – a period of exhaustion – following a weekend long game. This is exaggerated in many disabled and chronically ill players even those who don't usually have energy or "spoon" issues, simply because of the amount of unusual stress placed on the body.
  - You may need to expect that your physical recovery time is going to be longer than that of able bodied or "healthy" players. This can be aggravating, but planning for it reduces frustration.
- If you are playing an emotionally or psychologically intense game you may experience a mental or mood crash after an event. This is something many people experience but can be harder on those who are neurodivergant or have mental health issues.
  - Plan self care in advance whether that is quiet time, socialising and "frothing" with other players, or being around people who weren't at the event.
  - Some players find that writing fic or IC letters soon after an event can help mitigate this emotional fatigue.
  - Be kind to yourself. Remember that even though it was "just a game" you still put your body and brain into some very tough situations to deal with. Biochemistry doesn't always know the difference between a game and the real world.
- If your game has a Downtime or other requirements for between events (such as character advancement) check when the deadlines for completion are and anything you will need to do.
  - Give yourself plenty of time to do them and contact an organiser if you need help
- Rest.
- If you sustained any injury during the event make sure they are properly taken care of after the event. It can be easy to overlook minor things in the excitement of an event so take some time to do good first aid afterwards.

## Glossary

**OOC/OC** – Out of Character, when you are not roleplaying as your character. May also refer to a physical area of the game which is not considered part of the game setting and is for OOC use.

**IC** – In Character, when you are roleplaying as your character. May also refer to physical areas that are designated for IC use.

**Uptime** – The time during an event when your characters are in play

**Downtime** – Time before or in between events in which you are not roleplaying. May also refer to specific actions or mechanisms that a particular game has i.e. character advancement; letters to NPCs

**Crew or Refs** – people who help run the game in addition to the main organisers.