**White Cane Law**

 The white cane law’s purpose is to protect pedestrians with disabilities and has developed over the years to include the deaf, guide dog users, walker users, wheelchair individuals, and anyone else with an obvious disability. Each state varies in their wording of the law. However, the purpose is the same: **Protect the rights of disabled pedestrians.**

 Does the cane have to be white? No. As you study the white cane law in each state, most refer to a person who is blind carrying either a white cane or an upright stick. Some laws just say cane. Some states say cane, walker, guide dog, or wheelchair with an obvious disability or impairment. *For example, here is Colorado’s “white cane law:”*

“Colorado Revised Statute 42-4-808 says that “any pedestrian, other than a person in a wheelchair, or any driver of a vehicle who approaches a person who has an obviously apparent disability of blindness, deafness, or mobility impairment shall immediately come to a full stop and take such precautions before proceeding as are necessary to avoid an accident or injury to said person. A disability shall be deemed to be obviously apparent if, by way of example and without limitation, the person is using a cane or crutches, is assisted by an assistance dog, as defined in section 24-34-803 (7), is being assisted by another person, is in a wheelchair, or is walking with an obvious physical impairment.”

For the sighted community, when a person is walking and using a long cane, regardless of the color, and is using their mobility technique of swinging the cane to and fro, it is obvious that the person is blind. If a person does not recognize that, it will not matter what color a cane is, what color the dog’s harness is, and so forth.

**So, am I protected under the law if I use a cane that has accented designs or is multi-colored?**

Yes. Again, the purpose of the law is to protect and give rights to disabled pedestrians. If you are injured or hit by an oncoming vehicle, the color of your cane, dog harness, or the type of wheelchair you have is irrelevant.

Learn more in this article written by [Dona Sauerburger](http://www.visionaware.org/section.aspx?SectionID=133&TopicID=517&DocumentID=6007)…

[**“Does the Cane Have to Be White to Be Effective?”**](https://aphconnectcenter.org/visionaware/living-with-blindness-or-low-vision/getting-around/cane-travel/does-the-cane-have-to-be-white/)

**Canes for Outdoor Travel**

When used properly, a cane can provide information and protection regardless of its color—it does not have to be white to be effective. Most canes used by blind people are white, but they are also available in red, black, yellow, and blue.



Canes from AmbuTech are now available in several colors (Credit: AmbuTech. Used with permission.)

The blind character portrayed by Al Pacino in the film "Scent of a Woman" inspired the development of AmbuTech's solid black cane.

However, *only a white cane* identifies the user as a person who is blind or has low vision. This can be an important consideration when crossing streets and requesting information from store clerks, bus drivers, and the general public. It's likely that people will be more willing to help if they realize you're asking for information because you are blind or have low vision.

**About "White Cane Laws"**

Many people are under the impression that each state’s White Cane Law contains a provision that requires drivers to stop for, and/or yield to, pedestrians who are carrying white canes. **This is not correct. The laws in each state vary widely and drivers do not always reliably stop for pedestrians who carry white canes.**

When drivers see pedestrians who are carrying white canes:

1. Some states require that drivers yield.
2. Some states require drivers to come to a full stop.
3. Some states require only that drivers exercise caution when in the presence of pedestrians with white canes.
4. Some states provide no special rights and protections to pedestrians who are carrying white canes that are not provided to all pedestrians.

Check your state's White Cane Law to determine the language that describes driver and pedestrian rights and responsibilities.”

**Kustom Cane respects the thoughts and opinions of everyone. Some people insist on a white cane. Some prefer a predominantly white cane with little embellishment. To some, it is not an issue. However, as in all matters, it is wise to speak with a fully researched understanding rather than speaking out of ignorance or presumptuousness.**