

# Preparing for Your Group Visit to the Exploratorium



Thank you for making a reservation to visit the Exploratorium. In order to get the most from your visit, please read the following information well in advance.

## TOPICS COVERED

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| 1. Pre-visit planning                     | 7. Checking in upon arrival              |
| 2. Chaperones REQUIRED (for youth groups) | 8. Set meeting times and places          |
| 3. Nametags REQUIRED                      | 9. Special needs                         |
| 4. Arranging payment                      | 10. Visitor amenities and accommodations |
| 5. Arranging for lunch                    | 11. Visiting the Exploratorium Store     |
| 6. Arranging transportation and parking   | 12. Contact information                  |

### 1. PRE-VISIT PLANNING

Plan your trip with a free pre-visit. Please bring a copy of your confirmation letter, valid for one one-time complimentary admission for the group leader. Additional guests will be charged full admission.

### 2. CHAPERONES REQUIRED (for youth groups)

One adult chaperone is required for every 10 youth. Groups without the required number of chaperones may not be admitted to the museum.

The Exploratorium defines a chaperone as a group leader who is at least 20 years old. Supervisors under 20 years old will be counted as youth and do not count toward the required ratio of 1 adult chaperone for every 10 youth.

The Exploratorium encourages active chaperoning. Chaperones are responsible for the behavior of the students they are accompanying and must stay with their group to ensure their students are sharing exhibits with other museum visitors.

**Important:** The supervision of youth is the responsibility of the group's chaperones. The Exploratorium reserves the right to remove any group whose behavior is disruptive to others. Groups removed from the museum may not be allowed to return for up to one year.

### 3. NAMETAGS REQUIRED

Please provide visible labels with the name of your group (NO individual names) for everyone in your party, including all adults. These labels are required for entry. If your group does not bring nametags, you may be asked to pay for labels upon arrival. Nametags for all youth and chaperones **MUST** be visible and worn by your entire group **BEFORE** you enter. Guests without nametags may not be admitted to the museum.

### 4. ARRANGING PAYMENT

Payment for your group, whether made in advance or upon arrival, must be made in one lump sum. Note that, once payment is made, the tender cannot be changed (for instance, we cannot hold a reservation with a credit card while waiting for a check to be approved). Please review these required procedures:

**For Groups WITHOUT Tactile Dome Reservations:** Payment must be made in one lump sum, either in advance or upon arrival. Any additional members of your group entering and paying individually will be charged at the General Admission rate. Purchase Orders will be accepted providing they are received at least 7 days prior to your visit and include our reservation number along with an approved PO number. Requisition numbers and Electronic Funds Transfers (EFTs) are not accepted.

**For Groups WITH Tactile Dome Reservations:** Payment in full is required in advance. IF PAYMENT IN FULL IS NOT RECEIVED AT LEAST ONE MONTH IN ADVANCE, YOUR RESERVATION WILL BE CANCELLED WITHOUT NOTICE. Purchase Orders are not accepted for the Tactile Dome. Tactile Dome tickets are neither refundable nor transferable to another person, group, date, or time slot.

**For Lunch Boxes and Lunch Vouchers:** Lunch options require advance notice and payment at least 10 business days prior to your group's scheduled arrival. Please call 415-561-0308 for more information.

## 5. ARRANGING FOR LUNCH

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The Exploratorium is located in the historic Palace of Fine Arts. We encourage you to take advantage of our scenic location by eating lunch outside on the park grounds. The grassy area by the Palace lagoon is a great place to picnic and is easily accessible from the main entrance of the Exploratorium.

Our Café is available for visitors purchasing their lunch. However, seating in the Café is limited and reserved for paying customers only. If part of your group is purchasing lunch in the Café, ask the cashier for a lunch bag so they can join the rest of the group outside.

Prepaid lunch vouchers and lunch boxes are available, provided your order is placed and paid at least ten business days prior to your arrival. Please see the section on Arranging Payment (#4, above), for instructions on placing your order.

## 6. ARRANGING TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING

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***Important: Please note that all arrival, departure, and parking processes are subject to change in response to detours mandated by the nearby Doyle Drive/Presidio Parkway construction project. Please visit our website for updates and information.***

[www.exploratorium.edu/visit/location\\_directions](http://www.exploratorium.edu/visit/location_directions)

### **General information**

- Exploratorium Directions and Public Transportation Hotline: 415-561-0399
- Exploratorium Location, Directions, and Parking website: Includes parking information for private cars and mandatory bus instructions for groups, as well as information on travel by bike and public transportation:

[www.exploratorium.edu/visit/location\\_directions](http://www.exploratorium.edu/visit/location_directions)

### **Parking Information for Cars**

Free parking (private cars only) is now available in the lot next to the St. Francis Yacht Club, across the street from our main entrance. New route and parking maps and instructions are now available on our website.

[www.exploratorium.edu/visit/location\\_directions](http://www.exploratorium.edu/visit/location_directions)

### **Special Instructions for Buses**

If you are traveling by bus, our Reservations Office will work with you to schedule arrival and departure times. Please see our website for updates on procedures, routes, and parking information. Note that instructions differ for yellow school buses and tour buses: Please be sure to follow the correct set of instructions.

All buses MUST use approved routes to and from the Exploratorium as detailed on the Exploratorium website. The area surrounding the Exploratorium has many streets with weight and bus restrictions. Please follow the detailed directions to avoid unnecessary delays.

As always, unloading in the lot directly in front of the museum is not allowed except for groups of seniors or persons with disabilities.

[www.exploratorium.edu/visit/location\\_directions](http://www.exploratorium.edu/visit/location_directions)

## 7. CHECKING IN UPON ARRIVAL

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***The check-in instructions for groups arriving by yellow and charter bus differ, and are subject to periodic change in response to detours mandated by the nearby Doyle Drive/Presidio Parkway construction project. Route and parking arrangements are also subject to change. See #6 above for transportation information.***

Once you've arrived, bring your group to the front of the Exploratorium.

Then:

- Assemble your group outside the Main Entrance and send the group leader into the museum to register and confirm payment at the Admissions Desk. Please have your total head count ready.
- At the Admissions Desk, you will receive special labels for your group's adult chaperones. Please be sure adult participants put on their stickers before entering.
- Please notify the Admissions cashier if you do not have labels for the youth visitors (19 years and under) in your party. An additional fee may be assessed if we must provide your group with stickers for the youth in your party.
- After check-in, you may break into chaperone-led groups (as appropriate) and come in to the museum. Be sure everyone in your group is wearing an identification sticker in a visible location before entering.

**For Group Visits on Free Day:** The first Wednesday of every month is Free Day. Please check in with Admissions prior to entering the museum. Reservations are required for groups of 10 or more.

## 8. SET MEETING TIMES AND PLACES

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Make sure your entire group knows when and where you are meeting for lunch and/or departure. The lobby is not a good meeting place, as it's our only entrance and exit. We suggest using landmarks within the museum as meeting places. Easily identifiable locations within the building are the Shadow Box, Listening Vessels, Big Chair, Webcast Studio, or the 30-foot-tall concrete angel sculptures in the Skylight Area.

## 9. SPECIAL NEEDS

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Please let us know if your group has special needs or requires information in a language other than English. Tell the cashier when you check in and we will do our best to accommodate you.

## 10. VISITOR AMENITIES AND ACCOMMODATIONS

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**Restrooms:** Restrooms are located both in the front lobby and at the halfway point in the museum, on the right-hand side.

**Lockers:** Coin-operated lockers are located just beyond Admissions on the left-hand side of the museum, next to the McBean Theater. Use of a medium-sized locker is 75 cents; large lockers are \$1.25 each. We're sorry, but we have neither the staffing nor the facilities to store lunches for you.

**Backpack Storage:** Youth are encouraged to store backpacks in lockers, or leave them at home or in cars or buses. However, please keep in mind that your group will not have access to buses during your visit. Backpacks may not be taken into the Store.

**ATM Machine:** For your convenience, an ATM machine is located near the lockers, just beyond the Admissions desk on the left side of the museum. If you need to use the ATM machine before paying for your group visit, please inform the Admissions staff and they will point you in the right direction.

**Café:** You'll find our Café just beyond the Webcast studio on the right-hand side of the museum. Note that the Café has limited seating and is reserved for visitors who are purchasing their lunch. A coffee cart is located in the main lobby and is typically open every day until the mid-afternoon.

**First Aid:** If you need first aid or emergency assistance, go to the Main Office, or find an Explainer to help you. Explainers are the museum's primary floor staff. You can identify them by their bright orange-and-black vests.

**Lost and Found:** If you are missing an item, try checking at the Main Office, where lost and found items are handled.

**Lost Group Members:** The Exploratorium does not have a public address system, but our Explainer staff is trained to help. If one of your group strays, contact an Explainer or head to the Main Office to report the missing person. Explainers are the museum's primary floor staff. You can identify them by their bright orange-and-black vests.

## 11. VISITING THE EXPLORATORIUM STORE

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To help us ensure that everyone enjoys a pleasant shopping experience, please note these simple rules:

- Chaperones must accompany children into the Store: There must be 1 chaperone for every 5 children entering.
- Chaperones are responsible for the behavior of the children they are accompanying. Please stay with children while they are in the Store. Rowdy guests will be asked to leave.
- On busy days, we sometimes require groups (but not other visitors) to wait in line until other groups have finished shopping. This is for the comfort of all of our visitors, as the Store can become very crowded.
- Please allow at least half an hour for the Store. Lines may be avoided by shopping before noon.
- Please have a chaperone assist children at the registers. Also, please remind younger children about sales tax. This will speed the process and ensure that everyone is helped quickly.
- Please regroup and get organized away from the Store's doorway. We must remain compliant with fire codes and ensure that other visitors can freely enter and exit.
- Note that no food or beverages are allowed in the Store.

## 12. CONTACT INFORMATION

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The Reservations Office is open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and is closed on Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and most Monday holidays. Please call 415-561-0308 for reservation assistance.

**Tactile Dome Reservations** 415-561-0362  
**Field Trip Reservations** 415-561-0317  
**Group Reservations** 415-561-0308  
**Reservations Fax** 415-674-2828

*Mailing Address for payments and purchase orders:*  
**Exploratorium Reservations Office**  
**3601 Lyon Street**  
**San Francisco, CA 94123**

***THANK YOU! We hope you have an exciting and fulfilling experience at the Exploratorium.***