



## **Exploratorium Rentals Department COVID-19 Policies and Updates**

Last Updated October 8

### **Introduction**

When the Exploratorium was founded 50 years ago, it opened its doors with the mission to spread scientific discovery, knowledge, and exploration to anyone who crossed the threshold of the Palace of Fine Arts. We brought those values with us when we moved from the Palace to our current home at Piers 15 and 17, and since opening have expanded our scope to become leaders in science education, through Global Collaboration projects, our Teachers Institute, and by hosting thousands of guests from around the world for private Event Rentals.

Though the COVID-19 pandemic has physically divided us, the Exploratorium remains committed to challenging our guests' understanding and perception of the world around them, doing so in a safe and effective manner. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the landscape of event production, and while we strive to create unique and memorable experiences, this cannot come without partnership between the Exploratorium, our vendors, and our clients, all working together toward the common goal of safe event production. Outlined within are measures that the Exploratorium Rentals Department have undertaken, in collaboration with the Exploratorium Health and Safety Committee, in order to safely and responsibly host world class events.

### **At A Glance**

- **Everyone is required to wear face coverings while on the Exploratorium campus.**
- **Hygiene stations have been installed throughout the museum.**
- **Custodial cleaning and disinfecting activity has been increased throughout the Museum.**
- **Floor plans, exhibits, and capacities have been modified to allow for social distancing.**
- **Vendor Policies pertaining to food and beverage service and layout have been updated to decrease risk of contagion spread.**
- **All Museum Rentals Staff undergo mandatory COVID-19 specific training before returning to work.**
- **Rentals Clients will receive an Info Pack with in-depth information on specific safety considerations pertaining to their rental.**
- **Virtual Tours have been developed for clients and guests to see the facilities in lieu of an on-site visit.**

## **Exploratorium Infrastructure Plans**

From the beginning of the pandemic, the Exploratorium has been monitoring the COVID-19 situation, and modifying the guest experience to reduce the risks of exposure for staff and visitors as much as possible. Before the shelter in place order was first put into effect by Governor Newsom, the Exploratorium Campus Facilities and Floor Departments took action to remove exhibits deemed to have a high risk factor for transmission, including the closure of the Tactile Dome. Sanitizing and washing stations were placed on the floor, with clear signage throughout the museum directing guests toward these services.

As new local, national, and global guidelines are implemented, the Exploratorium remains committed to updating our policies and practices in order to mitigate the risk of exposure to our guests and workers to the best of our abilities. Any and all policies are designed to be supplementary to, rather than a replacement for, any and all state and local health orders and directives, as well as the museum's official COVID-19 Health & Safety Plan..

### **Cleaning and Disinfecting Processes**

Our custodial team has resumed the enhanced cleaning practices that were put into place prior to San Francisco's Shelter In Place order, using cleaning and disinfecting products deemed effective against COVID-19 by the EPA. These practices include cleaning and disinfecting exhibits; monitoring, cleaning and disinfecting restrooms and high-touch surfaces on a scheduled, high frequency basis; and providing hand sanitizing stations throughout the campus, both Pier 15 and Pier 17.

### **HVAC Systems**

The Exploratorium's HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning) system uses MERV 14 filtration, meeting the levels recommended by ASHRAE for filtering airborne particles in the COVID-19 size-range. It circulates 100% air from outside the museum, with no recirculation. Fresh air is being pumped into the museum continuously, through filtration that prevents external particles from entering, and constantly diluting the particles inside the museum, lessening the risk of stagnant airborne particulates.

### **Physical Distancing**

To allow for a minimum of six feet of distance between guests, the Exploratorium Floor Department has relocated exhibits to accommodate a wider clearance throughout our galleries. A greater emphasis has been placed on exhibits that showcase perception through observation and listening, rather than touch or easily transmissible substances such as liquids.

### **Health and Safety Monitoring**

While the privacy of our staff and visitors is a priority for us as an institution, the challenging landscape that the COVID-19 pandemic has created has led the Exploratorium to explore various health monitoring protocols to ensure the safety and health of all visitors and staff in the

museum. Per local ordinance, all staff and visitors will be required to wear face masks while on the premises to reduce airborne spread of particulates.

Staff must check in before full admittance into the museum, and those who are exhibiting any symptoms related to COVID-19 may not enter the Exploratorium. Should any staff be diagnosed with COVID-19, they must report their diagnosis to HR and must self-isolate until at least 3 days after symptoms of the disease have resolved and at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared. Should a member of Rentals Staff show symptoms of the disease at any point during their shift, they will be asked to leave the rental space, and will not return to work pending diagnosis and the corresponding appropriate self-isolation period.

While there are conflicting results of the effectiveness of temperature checking equipment with regards to COVID-19 detection, upon consulting with our senior in-house scientists, these techniques have been deemed too unreliable to be an adequate form of prevention. We do ask that all staff and visitors uphold their end of the social contract that has resulted from this pandemic, and take care to not come into the museum if they are not feeling well.

## **Rental-Specific Plans**

The Exploratorium Rentals Department has been monitoring correspondence and mandates related to the COVID-19 pandemic and has devised a list of operating procedures and regulations in an effort to create an environment that reduces risks of exposure as much as possible for Rentals guests. We are continuously evaluating new best practices for safe gathering and rental event production, and will continue to update our new policies and procedures as new information emerges.

## **Accessing & Touring the Venue**

In order to conduct venue tours with as little risk of exposure as possible, the Exploratorium now offers virtual tours of the premises. These tours can be guided by a member of the Exploratorium Rentals Department, or explored at your own pace independently.

Clients who wish to visit the Exploratorium on site should check-in with their Rentals sales representative. On site visits are subject to accordance with the San Francisco reopening plan. Venue tours may have a maximum group capacity of 10 guests or the maximum group size as defined by local ordinance, whichever is lower, including your Rentals representative. All guests must wear face masks at all times while on the Exploratorium campus.

## **Employee, Vendor & Guest Health**

The safety of our staff, vendors, and guests is our top priority. In light of this we have developed strategies to minimize the likelihood of transmission of the Coronavirus. However these measures will only be effective through a unified effort by all parties involved. We ask that in addition to formal agreements, Vendors, Clients, and their Guests enter into a Social Contract with us, informing us of any at risk behavior or individuals. We ask that clients take measures

within their own companies, on an individual and institutional basis to maintain transparency and uphold the safety of all present.

### **Employee Training**

All Exploratorium Rentals Staff have undergone mandatory training which will cover topics ranging but not limited to, hygiene and proper use of safety equipment, new social distancing standards, safety and disinfecting protocols, availability of testing, and appropriate guest management.

Logistics Supervisors have undergone COVID-19 Compliance Officer training, administered by Health Education Services. In addition, members of Exploratorium Facilities Management staff have also undergone this training.

Rentals Staff meetings will be held in small groups allowing for proper social distancing, and prior to every rental, Exploratorium staff will be reminded of hygiene practices and topics covered in their aforementioned training.

Rentals Staff assigned to the specific spaces during a rental will be stationed in solitary positions, to allow for greater social distancing amongst staff, as well as guests. Where interaction is unavoidable, for example in moving exhibits, staff will be pre-assigned partners and these partners will be assigned specific tasks, to minimize physical interactions amongst staff and better assist in contact tracing efforts. Extra care will be taken to maximize efficiency and minimize the time that partners need to work in close proximity.

Employees will only be permitted to use restrooms and break areas in back of house sections of the museum, removed from the rental space, to minimize exposure to guests. Rentals staff will be required to wash their hands every hour.

### **Vendor Management**

All vendors providing onsite services are required to submit their staff guidelines for safe services prior to arriving on site on the day of their rental. Preferred Vendors must sign an addendum to the Exploratorium Vendor Policies before resuming work at the venue, confirming that their staff will all adhere to hygienic codes of conduct while on our premises. Vendors will be required to wear masks at all times while operating before, during and after rentals. Food stations will be designed to adhere to prevailing ordinance for safe food distribution.

### **Capacity Decrease**

Our gallery capacities have been decreased in accordance with local mandates on safe gathering sizes. Capacities have been reviewed by Rentals Department management as well as Exploratorium Building Facilities management to allow for greater social distancing amongst guests while also accounting for exhibits in the spaces and maintaining the identity of the Exploratorium as a venue.

## **Screening Requirements**

All Rentals are required to have a guest screening process in place, agreed upon by the Exploratorium and the client. We can recommend companies that offer screening services, or we can discuss other plans with you.

Vendors will be responsible for screening their own staff, in accordance with best practices outlined by the CDC, as well as adhering to the Vendor Policies addendum which all vendors must acknowledge and sign prior to operating at the Exploratorium.

## **Isolation Areas**

Each rental will have a designated isolation area, which may be activated as part of the client's screening process, where Persons Under Investigation may be taken and diagnosed by a trained medical professional. This space will be kept separate and discrete from the rented space, and will be separate from our general First Aid room, which will be reserved for guests with other medical emergencies.

## **Custodial & Security Presence**

Exploratorium Rentals will see an increased custodial staff presence. Custodial staff are trained in how to use cleaning and disinfecting solutions that have been deemed by the EPA to be effective in destroying the Coronavirus on surfaces. Galleries activated for rentals, and any other museum space where guests or vendors may be present will undergo thorough cleaning and disinfecting between when the museum closes and when vendors are allowed on site.

Restrooms activated for the rental will be cleaned every hour, or more frequently based on the size and attendance of the contract. Restroom access will be monitored by Explo staff and access may be minimized to prevent the spread of pathogens. Throughout the rental, activated spaces will be monitored by custodial crews for any spills, similar to their pre-COVID duties, and will frequently clean and disinfect high touch areas such as banisters, doors, and elevator buttons.

Depending on the layout of the rental, additional security guards may be hired to help maintain a secure perimeter for the venue. These guards are not intended to interact with guests, and operate strictly under an observe and report protocol, however they will be trained and familiarized with hand sanitizer distribution points throughout the building.

## **Guests' Journey Through Rental**

### **Pre-Production:**

### **Info-Pack**

Prior to every rental, an Event Logistics Supervisor will provide documents which clients are encouraged to share with their guests. This will include information such as a map of the venue with the activated space's main point of entry, restrooms, and sanitizing stations clearly labeled, and a sample of our Guest Liability Waiver for review prior to arrival on site, which all guests will be asked to sign before entering the space.

### **Staff Monitoring**

In accordance with Exploratorium reopening policy, all Exploratorium rentals staff will be screened upon arrival before starting their shift, to see if they exhibit any symptoms of COVID-19. Staff will need to answer questions as directed by the [City and County of San Francisco Health Order Directive](#). If at any point during the screening it becomes clear that the staff member has, or is at risk of having, COVID-19 or related symptoms, they will be asked to leave and offered sick pay for their shift as applicable. Vendors will also be required to enact similar measures with their on site staff prior to the start of their shift.

### **Registration**

In order to reduce the likelihood of long registration lines, we urge clients to implement pre-registration systems, whereby their guests can receive a registration pack and waiver prior to accessing the venue. We encourage other methods such as touchless RFID wristbands, or touchless key card entry stations. Guests who arrive without pre-registering must wait with separation of 6' or more between themselves, or the group that they have come with, and the next guests or groups.

### **Cleaning**

Prior to the start of every rental which begins following general visitor hours, activated spaces will undergo thorough cleaning and disinfecting. Morning rentals will have undergone thorough cleaning and disinfecting the previous evening as part of the Exploratorium cleaning procedures. Custodial staff will perform routine cleaning and disinfecting of high-touch surfaces throughout the space. Depending on the size and scope of the rental, Exploratorium staff may monitor and regulate restroom admittance.

### **Guest Arrival**

Rental guests will enter the museum through the aforementioned, clearly defined entry point. This entrance will be separate and dedicated for rental guests' use and Exploratorium staff working in the building during the time of the booking will be informed of its location, so that the potential for crossover or exposure is minimized. Doors will be sanitized and propped open for guests prior to arrival to minimize the need to touch shared surfaces. There will be disinfectant stations nearby, signage will be posted near the entrance with information on required face masks and hygiene services available. Exploratorium staff wearing face masks will be present to answer any questions guests may have.

### **Throughout The Event**

Exploratorium staff and vendors will work together to create and maintain an environment adherent to best safe practices as outlined by the CDC and local guidelines.

### **F&B Stations**

F&B plans and set ups will be discussed between vendors and your Logistics Supervisor as part of pre-production, and a plan of service must be agreed upon as part of the planning process. Any food station must be staffed, and single use containers such as bottles and cans will replace communal fountains and pitchers. We encourage the use of single-use, environmentally-friendly compostable flatware where appropriate, and a greater emphasis on bussing will be placed on vendor waitstaff.

### **Social Distancing**

A greater emphasis on physical distancing will see gallery layout changes implemented. We will strive to provide the most complete Exploratorium experience as possible, however some exhibits may be removed from the floor prior to the start of your contract to allow for greater egress and social distancing at a minimum of 6 feet. If there are any particular exhibits that clients wish would stay on the floor they can consult their Logistics Supervisor prior to the rental.

During pre-production additional care will be taken in assessing floorplans, which includes collaboration between Museum Rentals, Facility Operations, and the SF Fire Marshal's office to ensure that all seating and tabling is laid out in a manner adherent to local mandates. Throughout the booking, Exploratorium Rentals staff will monitor the activated galleries for high traffic, or congregation points and have been trained in how to best approach and disperse situations in an engaging, safe, and customer service focused manner.

### **Post-Production**

Following the end of the contract time, once all guests have safely exited the premises, all surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected. Vendors remain responsible for removing all waste and product that they had brought onto the piers, including liquids and ice, and are responsible for cleaning and disinfecting their activation locations, using products outlined by the CDC.

Once the venue is clear of vendors, Exploratorium staff will restore exhibits, and custodial crews will perform a thorough cleaning and disinfecting of all activated spaces, surfaces, exhibits and anything else that had been used throughout the booking, in order to provide a safe venue for the following day's visitors.

### **What Can You Do?**

It is only by working together that we can overcome the COVID-19 pandemic. While we have outlined, and continue to update, policies and regulations which we feel will lessen the transmission of COVID-19, and will help keep your guests safe, there are important steps that you as our client can take to ensure a safe and successful rental as well.

### **Communicate**

Communicate with your guests about the importance of safe hygiene practices. The [CDC](#) and [WHO](#) have excellent resources on best hygiene and etiquette practices. On the same note, urge your guests to stay home if they are not feeling well. No event is worth the possible transmission of COVID-19 or any other communicable disease.

Communicate with your guests the steps that the Exploratorium is taking to keep them as safe as possible. Distribute the information that your Logistics Supervisor has provided, and inform guests of safe methods of transportation to and from the venue, as well as the safe designated entry point.

### **Inform Yourself**

Arm yourself and your guests with knowledge. The Exploratorium has compiled, and continues to update, an online [Toolbox](#), composed of informative videos and at home activities which will help you and your guests better understand the Coronavirus and how to safely prevent its transmission.