

MUSEUM RENTALS - EVENT POLICIES

The Exploratorium Event Policies include detailed information and requirements for having events here.

Availability/Timelines

The Exploratorium is available for rental events when the museum is closed. This currently includes Friday through Wednesday evenings plus some open hours availability.

The standard evening rental contract is 5:30 PM to 12:30 AM, which includes the setup, event, and strike. The standard daytime open hours contract is a 5 hours half-day between 8:00 AM and 4:00 PM or a full day contract of 8 hours from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Additional load in hours are available for daytime events for an additional cost and pending approval.

Types of Events

The Exploratorium's mission is to create a culture of learning through innovative environments, programs, and tools that help people nurture their curiosity about the world around them.

Because the Exploratorium is a not-for-profit, private institution, and its mission extends to its public policies, the following types of events are **not allowed**:

1. Events advertised to the general public
2. Events where entrance requires advance or on-site ticket purchase
3. Political events or celebrations, including rallies
4. Any fundraising events that do not follow the below guidelines

Fundraising Policy

Fundraisers are events where guests contribute monies on an optional basis or are solicited after the event. Please note our fundraiser policies:

1. No political fundraising is permitted.
2. No on-site ticket sales are allowed. All funds must be secured by the organization in advance or after the event.
3. Marketing for the event must be through the organization's communication channels and cannot include advertising to the general public.
4. Collateral, including electronic and paper invitations, flyers, newsletters, etc., must be approved by the Exploratorium. This statement must be included: "The Exploratorium is not a sponsor or beneficiary of this event."
5. When seeking in-kind donations, organization must disclose to the donor that the Exploratorium is not a beneficiary of their donation.
6. Calendar restrictions apply.
7. It is important to the Exploratorium that all visitors, including attendees of a non-profit rental, have an understanding of the Exploratorium's mission. Consequently, the Exploratorium will work with any non-profit rental to provide attendees with a membership brochure. This can take the form of placing brochures within event gift bags, at table settings or other distribution methods that are approved by the Exploratorium.



Concurrent Events

For any events that are not full-facility rentals, the Exploratorium reserves the right to book concurrent events in any galleries not included in your rental contract. The Exploratorium will work to avoid conflicts when there is more than one event scheduled in the museum.

Event Staff

We provide an Event Coordinator, Operations Technician, and *Explainers* for all gallery rental events. Our docents, called Explainers, facilitate guest interactions with exhibits. The Event Coordinator will assist you with logistics during load-in/out and will approve the satisfactory cleanup of food and beverage stations and décor following your event. The Operations Technician will be on hand to help with power and other facility-related needs.

Security

Greeters will be provided at event entrance(s) and exit(s) in correlation with the galleries rented. The Exploratorium provides outdoor perimeter campus security only. Our security staff is strictly “observe and report.” You may bring in additional security for your guests, please inform the Museum Rentals Department if you choose to do so.

Caterers

The Exploratorium requires the use of Approved Caterers for all events. No outside caterers may be used. Each caterer on our list is familiar with the Exploratorium’s facility, procedures, rules and regulations, and carries our required insurance, health permits, and liquor liability insurance.

Open Hours Caterers

If your event is during museum open hours (daytime or Thursday evening for example) and you require alcoholic beverage, renter must work with Curiosity Catering, the Exploratorium’s in-house beverage catering company. Renter is able to use any caterer off our Approved Caterer List for food service.

Alcohol Policy

The Exploratorium’s list of approved caterers includes those offering beverage service options. Any alcohol must be poured by a licensed, insured bartender. Although a bartending service will manage the distribution of alcohol, the event sponsor is ultimately responsible for the safety of all its invitees, guests, agents, or subcontractors, including for the distribution of alcohol. Absolutely no alcohol may be served to minors. The Exploratorium reserves the right to confiscate alcohol and any illicit substances from underage attendees, and contact the appropriate authorities if deemed necessary.

Curiosity Catering owns the liquor license for the Pier 15 venue. If you wish to use other caterers or bar caterers from our Approved Catering List to serve liquor, they will need to do a one-night buy out of the liquor license for a \$1,000 fee at least 3 weeks in advance of your event. This increases to \$1,500 if within the 3 week timeframe. Please refer to the [Add-On Sheet](#).

Please note for events during museum open hours, renter is required to use Curiosity Catering for beverage service and all alcohol must remain within rented space(s).

Outside Vendors

Before each event, all vendors are required to schedule a walkthrough with a member of the Museum Rentals team to make arrangements regarding deliveries, power needs, floor plans, loading areas, and pickup times. Outside vendors are also required to provide a certificate of insurance with an Additional Insured Endorsement meeting the Exploratorium's insurance requirements. (See the Insurance Requirements section below for details.)

Floor Plans/Event Timelines

The Exploratorium must approve specific plans involving event timelines, caterers, musicians, florists, and all décor, including sound, plants, and lighting schemes. Approval must also be given for positioning of tables, bars, musicians, etc., and any special needs that the renter may have. All requests for planning must be received by the Exploratorium by no later than three weeks prior to the event. Please note that plans requiring permits from the Port of San Francisco may require a longer lead time.

Exhibit Moves

We feel that the value of an event experience at the Exploratorium lies in the integrity of our exhibits. Many of our exhibits are delicately balanced, difficult to move, or permanently placed. For these reasons, we are hesitant to move our exhibits and are only able to relocate select exhibits to accommodate event layouts. Your Museum Rentals contact will be happy to identify which exhibits in your gallery are considered moveable. Nothing should be taped, tied, nailed or otherwise attached to or in front of the exhibits, graphics, walls, floor, or furniture.

Load Out

Renter will incur additional load-out fees for any guests or vendors who are not finished loading out of Pier 15 and Pier 17 by the contract end time. We generally suggest 1.5 - 3.5 hours of load out time past guest departure. All decorations, promotional materials, supplies, decor, etc., must be removed immediately following the event. The museum does not have available storage areas, so rental deliveries and pickup must be made the same day as the event unless previously arranged with the Museum Rentals Department. There will be a charge for equipment that is not removed from the museum post-event. The Exploratorium is not responsible for any materials left behind.

Cleanup

The event rental area and event prep areas should be bussed for stray plates, glasses, etc. All debris and garbage should be bagged and removed from the premises. Caterers are to cleaning materials and must supply extra trash and recycling containers. Any food or liquids on the floor must be swept or mopped up. All trash, recycling, compost (including flowers, decor, etc.) must be removed from the premises on the night of the event.

Cleanup is subject to the approval of the Event Coordinator. After an event, we ask that the catering wrap-up crew be out promptly so we can secure the building. If catering teams go past the contracted load out time, client will be charged additional hours, please refer to the [Add-On Sheet](#).



Audio Visual

The Exploratorium offers select Audio Visual packages. Magnetic Image Video (www.mivideo.com) is our exclusive AV provider for use of Exploratorium AV equipment. They can be reached at (415) 456-7900 for a quote. You are also able to bring in an AV vendor for your event.

Power

Galleries (Central, East, and Observatory) contain company switches, which are available for additional event power. Company switches require special tie-in cables and may only be used by approved lighting or AV vendors. Tie in cables are available for an additional fee, please refer to the Add-On Sheet.

All vendors must notify the Museum Rentals team of their power needs prior to the event. While we can accommodate most requests, we may ask that you provide a generator. The museum does not provide extension cords or other equipment, and we require that any cables on the floor be safely covered and taped using gaffers tape.

Lighting

The Exploratorium has LED Lighting Packages available in the Ticketing, Crossroads, West, Central and East Galleries. Please refer to the Add-On Sheet for pricing and secure through the Museum Rentals Department. We often will still suggest a lighting vendor be brought in for specific food and beverage lighting, pin spots, pattern washes, etc.

Music/Sound

All entertainment, stage, and speaker placement must be approved by the Museum Rentals Department at least three weeks prior to the event. Any amplified music is subject to volume control at the discretion of the Event Coordinator. Please refer to your event contract for music licensing information. Sound systems are available in select galleries. Please refer to the Add-On Sheet.

Décor Restrictions

Items **not** permitted:

- Helium Balloons
- Flower petals
- Fog or Haze Machines
- Glitter
- Confetti
- Feather Boas
- Rice (throwing)
- Stickers

Tactile Dome

The Tactile Dome can be reserved for evening events that include the West Gallery. Please inquire with the Museum Rentals Department for availability and refer to the [Add-On Sheet](#). If booking your event within three months, the Tactile Dome could already be in use for other guests.

Museum Stores

The Exploratorium has two museum stores that will be closed during your event, unless contracted to be open. The large store is along the Embarcadero and the small store is in the Crossroads (part of the Central Gallery rental). Please refer to the [Add-On Sheet](#) for pricing.

Café Area

SeaGlass Restaurant and Seismic Joint Cafe are private concessions owned and operated by Curiosity Catering. Either of these spaces could be concurrently rented during your event. Use of these areas as part of your event must be arranged directly through the Museum Rentals Department. Please be advised that use of the sink, counters, and kitchen area by other caterers is not permitted.

Ship Berthing on East End of Pier

The Exploratorium at Pier 15 is located on Port of San Francisco property in the midst of the maritime operations of the city. As such, the Port of San Francisco reserves the right to berth vessels on the east apron of the piers. In the event that the Port of San Francisco assigns a Navy vessel to berth on the east end of the pier, the Port of San Francisco reserves the right to close all access to the East Apron and limited portions of the Pier 15 South Apron. While such berthing's are a relatively rare occurrence, please note that events will proceed as scheduled with normal cancellation penalties in place. Options to buy out the ship berthing are available with approval. Please reach out to the Museum Rentals Department and reference the [Add-On Sheet](#).

Port Permits

Certain installations, décor, and amplified sound affecting the exterior of Pier 15 will require a permit from the Port of San Francisco. Please discuss any exterior event plans with the Museum Rentals Department to determine whether or not a Special Event permit will be required.

Fire Permits

Use of any open flame or liquid nitrogen during an event will require you to obtain a Fire Permit. Use of candles, sterno, and open-flame decorative lighting on dining tables, buffet tables and stands within assembly occupancy must be approved by the Port of San Francisco and SFFD. Please consult the Port's permit website for additional information - <https://sfport.com/permit-services-faqs>.

Insurance

The Exploratorium requires certificates of insurance from Renter, caterers, and all vendors that show the following:

- \$1,000,000 General Liability
- \$1,000,000 Automobile Liability
- \$5,000,000 Umbrella Liability (Renter and Caterer Only)
- \$1,000,000 Workers Compensation

For **Social Events**, Renter only needs to provide the below, while all other vendors still need to provide the above.

- \$1,000,000 General Liability

The Description of Operations should list:

- The Exploratorium, The City and County of San Francisco, The San Francisco Port Commission and Their Officers, Agents, Employees and Representatives are listed as additional insured with (the Renter or vendor's insurance) to be:
 - **primary and non-contributory**
 - **include the additional insured endorsement**
 - **include the waiver of subrogation**

The Certificate Holder should list: "Exploratorium, Pier 15/Pier 17, San Francisco CA 94111"

In the event that the Renter, its caterer, or any other vendor uses a beverage service, the beverage service must carry comprehensive general liability insurance, including liquor liability with a limit of liability not less than \$1,000,000, and the Renter or caterer must carry host liquor liability coverage as a part of its general liability insurance.

Certificates of insurance should either refer to the specific event date or include the following description: "This additional insured coverage applies to any and all events held at the Exploratorium."

Please ensure you also provide the **Endorsement Page** with all certificates.

Certificates of insurance can be sent to Amy Adkins, Director of Museum Rentals, via regular mail to: The Exploratorium, Piers 15/17, San Francisco, CA 94111, by email to events@exploratorium.edu

All insurance certificates must be received at least 3 weeks in advance of the event.