

POLICIES AND PRACTICES: VISITOR SERVICES/ADMISSIONS

The quality of the visitor's experience is the first priority of the Visitor Services/Admissions Department and one of the very highest priorities of the Morse Museum in general. Every detail of our visitors' physical, psychological, social, and intellectual experience—from their entry from the street to their departure from the building—is of the greatest concern to all Museum staff members but especially to the Visitor Services/Admissions staff. Every policy, practice, and rule must be designed and implemented with this principle in mind.

Policies and practices concerning Visitor Services are gathered into four groups and set out below:

I. Hours, Holidays, and Entrance Fees

II. Basic Rules and Regulations for Visitors to the Galleries: This section helps us govern behavior in the Museum, including the management of packages, strollers, cameras and photography; phones, phone calls and texting; food and beverage; pets and service animals, and the like.

III. Tours: This section deals with tour reservations, docent-led group and individual tours, non-docent led group tours, bus parking, and management and related issues.

IV. Staff and Contract Personnel: Given the extreme importance of the visitor's entry experience, this section of policies and practices is applicable to Visitor Services staff, other staff and contract personnel involved in the direct daily management and control of the Morse visitor experience in general and of gallery maintenance and visitor engagement specifically.

I. Hours, Holidays, and Entrance Fees

Museum Public Hours

Sunday
Monday

1:00 p.m.– 4:00 p.m.
Closed

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|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| Tuesday– Saturday | |
| November–April | |
| Tuesday– Thursday, Saturday | 9:30 a.m.– 4:00 p.m. |
| Friday | 9:30 a.m.– 8:00 p.m. |
| May–October | |
| Tuesday– Saturday | 9:30 a.m.– 4:00 p.m. |

It is essential to note that long-standing tradition at the Morse provides for the public to enjoy the Museum until 5:00 p.m. on days when 4:00 p.m. is the published closing hour. Thus while the published hours remain at 4:00 p.m., the doors are not locked to the public until 4:15 p.m. on those days, and no visitor is asked to leave nor given any indication whatsoever of imminent gallery closing until 4:55 p.m. On these days, the Shop may close to the public no earlier than 4:25 p.m.

Holiday Closings

The Museum and Administrative Offices are closed to the public January 1, Thanksgiving Day, December 25, Memorial Day, and Labor Day. The Museum is open on July Fourth and Easter Sunday.

Admission/Entrance Fees

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|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Adults | \$5.00 |
| Seniors (60 and over) | \$4.00 |
| Children under 12 | Free |
| Students | \$1.00 |
| Members | Free |
| Prearranged Tour Group | \$4.00 per person |
| Prearranged School Groups | \$1.00 per person |

Fee Waivers

Prospective visitors who say they are unable to pay the fee or appear to be unable to pay the fee or who decide or appear to decide to leave because of the fee will be admitted free. Museum professionals will be given courtesy admission with identification. Other individual or group fee waivers must have the approval of the Assistant Public Affairs Manager, Public Affairs Director, Building Manager, Maintenance and Security Assistant, Executive Assistant, a curator, or the Director.

II. Basic Rules and Regulations for Visitors to the Galleries

Animals: No animals with the exception of bona fide service dogs are permitted in the galleries.

Backpacks, large parcels: No backpacks (packs extending five inches or more carried on backs) or large parcels are permitted in the galleries. They may be tagged with contact information and placed in the cabinet in the rear entrance vestibule with a signed waiver of Museum liability— but only if there is space. Visitors leaving items must retrieve them no later than 4:30 p.m. Items with a value of more than \$50.00 should not be held.

Cell phones: Cell phones should be silenced or turned off. Any visitor, however, who is texting or sending e-mail messages will not be corrected unless they are distracted and presenting a danger to objects and visitors in the galleries. Anyone who takes a phone call in the galleries need only be asked to step outside if they begin a long conversation and disrupt the experience of other visitors to the galleries.

Food/drinks: No food or drinks are permitted in the lobby, the video room, or in any gallery at any time other than during Museum receptions. A Museum Shop bag will be issued to visitors for water bottles only; otherwise drinks and food should be discarded. This rule applies to staff as well as visitors, volunteers, vendors, tradesmen, and all others.

Photography: Our signage indicates that photography is forbidden, and taking pictures in the galleries is, in fact, highly discouraged. This rule will apply without exception to flash photography. Visitors who begin taking photographs in the first galleries of the Museum should be advised that photography is not permitted. Visitors who “sneak” a few pictures without the use of any flash, lights, tripod, or any equipment beyond a camera or camera-phone will not be corrected unless their picture taking disturbs or distracts other visitors.

Umbrellas: Visitors may carry collapsible umbrellas in the Museum. Large umbrellas are not permitted in the Museum and should be placed in the umbrella stand in the lobby. If it is raining, plastic umbrella bags are issued at the desk for all visitors with wet umbrellas, whether or not they wish to carry the small ones into the galleries or place them in the umbrella stand in the lobby.

Segways, bicycles, large strollers: None of these personal moving devices are allowed in the galleries because they present a hazard to other visitors and objects. They may be left outside the building in the rear exterior service corridor out of the way of other visitors. Only compact umbrella strollers are permitted, and on exceptionally busy days, no strollers will be allowed at all.

III. Tours

Tours are comprised of five types:

1. Docent-led “Museum Highlights” group tours.
2. Curator tours of selected installations and exhibitions.
3. Docent or staff gallery talks.
4. Informal tours led by a docent or staff member.
5. Group tours led by individuals not associated with the Museum such as educators or tour company personnel.

Although a docent may on occasion be available to answer visitor questions or to show individual visitors or a very small group of visitors around the galleries, it is not the Museum’s policy to offer tours to most visitors. A schedule of the available dates for docent tours is kept by Visitor Services.

The Museum offers docent-led Museum Highlights Tours to any group of 10 or more that makes a reservation for a visit and tour at least two weeks in advance. Only prebooked groups reserving two weeks in advance of their visit may be guaranteed a docent-led tour.

Normally, no tour group may exceed 25 people, and no more than two groups may tour at the same time. A bus tour sponsored by one organization with up to 50 participants will count as two groups because it requires two docents.

Tours for different organizations should be booked at least a half hour apart. Normally, no more than two docent-led tours of 25 people should be booked within the same 90-minute period and no more than 50 people, if part of a tour sponsored by the same organization, should be granted access at the same time. No more than four tours should be booked in a day.

Tours should last no longer than 45 minutes.

All Museum Highlights Tours should include Gallery III, the American Art Pottery installation, and the Tiffany Chapel along with other galleries, and all docent and privately led tours should omit the Laurelton Hall galleries. If a docent or privately led tour goes into the Laurelton Hall galleries, the Curator of Education or Director of Public Affairs should be alerted.

Curator Tours, offered at specific times and on specific days according to a consistent schedule, are offered to any interested visitor. A schedule of available dates and times for Curator Tours is kept by Visitor Services. Space is limited for these tours and available on a first-come first-served basis. No advance reservations will be taken.

Docent and staff gallery talks, offered at specific times and on specific days according to a consistent schedule, are offered to any interested visitor. A schedule of available dates and times for these talks is kept by Visitor Services. Space is limited for these talks and available on a first-come first-served basis. No advance reservations will be taken.

Visitors often inquire at the Visitor Services Desk if a tour is available, and if a docent is on duty and not booked for another tour, those visitors, however small the group, may receive a tour. The Education Department provides the Visitor Services staff with a monthly calendar of docents scheduled for gallery duty.

Privately led tours are discouraged and permitted only when prearranged with Visitor Services and approved by the Public Affairs Director or Curator of Education. Every effort will be made to schedule such tours when the galleries are free of other tours or heavy visitor traffic.

IV. Staff and Contract Personnel

It is the responsibility of the Visitor Services staff:

- To greet all visitors and visiting groups and to familiarize all groups with the relevant gallery rules as instructed by the Assistant Public Affairs Manager and the Director of Public Affairs in consultation with the Curator of Education.
- To maintain lobby and gallery object guides and brochures, including efficient inventory control, distribution, and collection for recycling.
- To maintain the proper placement of all furniture and ropes and stanchions in the galleries. All staff and contract personnel, however, must be attentive to stanchion placement and to either correct improperly placed stanchions or report them to Visitor Services/Admissions personnel.
- To see that Admissions Desk chairs remain behind the desk at all times.

It is the responsibility of all Visitor Services staff and contract Security personnel:

- To wear official Museum designed and provided, or approved name tags while on duty in the Museum.
- To dress in a professional manner suitable for greeting the public, which precludes such casual choices as jeans or shorts.

- To immediately report any lighting or equipment malfunction as well as any damage to furnishings, walls, ceilings, etc. to the Building Department as well as to the staff member's immediate supervisor. Any movement or damage to a work of art or exhibition furniture should be immediately reported to the Registrar, Curator/Collections Manager, and the staff member's immediate supervisor.

Personal belongings of staff, contract personnel and volunteers should not be in view of the visiting public. Lockers are available to women, staff and volunteers in the ladies' room.

Plants and/or cut flowers are permitted in the lobby, video room, or galleries only with direct approval from the Director.

Approved by the Board of Trustees

1 April, 1996

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