



# THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

## **Pandemic Aware Procedures**



**Revised June 8, 2021**



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## Introduction

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Dear Guest,

As The Buffalo History Museum welcomes guests for on-site visits during the COVID-19 pandemic, we need to stay vigilant and flexible with regard to new procedures for ensuring safety. The procedures detailed here will be revisited as the pandemic evolves and reflect the most up-to-date approach to safe access and gathering as conditions change in our community.

Our plan complies with New York Forward Business Re-Opening Safety Plan, as well as all local, state, and federal health and governmental guidance. Staff has been trained to follow these procedures prior to opening our doors and updated as circumstances evolve.

The safety and well being of everyone at the Museum – guests, staff, volunteers – is our number one priority. Our Strategic Framework places the guest at the center, and as such, we focused on creating a safe, welcoming visitor experience while developing plans to reopen.

In light of new health and safety precautions, we intend to ensure our mission to *experience history with you* in a safe, welcoming atmosphere.

All my best,



Melissa N. Brown  
Executive Director

If you have questions about our Reopening Plan and Pandemic-Aware Procedures, please contact:

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# 1. Pandemic-Aware Guest Experience

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## Hours of Operation:

- Wednesday through Saturday 10 am to 5 pm
- Closed Sunday, Monday, Tuesday
- Resource Center is open on M & T Third Fridays from 10 am to 5 pm

## Guest Admissions:

### Occupancy Limits:

Admit a maximum of 240 guests and staff at any time, which allows for social distancing between guests.

Encourage guests to reserve free timed tickets in advance of their visit

- Timed reservations are available in advance of visits through our website. To ensure social distancing, we accept a maximum of 40 guests for 1-hour windows throughout the day (totaling 240 guests). Guests normally visit the museum for an average of one hour. Space is available for walk-ups if the day's pre-registration is not full.
- Registration for a visit to the Museum includes a timed start: if a ticket indicates 10 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., guests should arrive within that time to begin the visit. Guests may visit the Museum as long as they would like until 5 p.m. Guests who have not reserved a ticket may call in advance to see if spots are available for walk-ins during a given day.
- Our website, social media, and press outreach will encourage guests to reserve tickets in advance
- Advance registration will help us approximate daily visitation.
- At check-in, with advanced registration, guests will be asked their name to verify reservation and the proper number for the party. Guest contact information provided through the advanced registration will be kept for three months in case contact tracing is required.
- Advance timed reservations and affords guests a minimal contact, quick admittance experience.

## Admission is Pay What You Wish

### Promote contactless payments

- Guests are encouraged to "pay what you wish" for admissions. We are keeping the museum financially accessible for everyone.
- Guests may make their admission donation when registering online via credit card, or at the reception desk when they arrive by credit card or cash.
- Credit card usage readers are available on the upper counter of the reception desk for a self-service transaction. Readers are sanitized after every use. Receipts do not require signature, however, if a guest requests to sign, we will provide a disinfected pen for their use. After a guest uses a pen, it will be kept separate from other disinfected pens until it is disinfected.
- Reception desk surfaces, pens, credit card readers and other items handled during transaction will be wiped down after each transaction.
- Guest Services Associates can wear gloves (provided by TBHM) or sanitize between each cash transaction. Guest Services Associates request that cash payments be placed on the counter and not directly exchanging hands.

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- Donations can be made in a contactless manner at designated donation boxes or on our website.

Offer digital maps and information for guests

- Maps of the Museum are available on an adjacent reception table. Guests can also either take a photo to reference on their phone or follow QR code to a map PDF available on our website.
- Promote memberships offering the same alternatives available for way-finding. Visitors can either take a photo to reference later or follow a QR code to purchase on the website. Provided in a plexiglass stand, this information will be available after guests check in.
- Display free Wi-Fi access information prominently to facilitate use of the online tools and website links.

Shield for both guests and guest services associates with plexiglass protective panels at each reception desk and reference desk in Library.

Gather guest information for contact tracing

- Guests who pre-reserve tickets online will be requested to provide their names, email and phone number for contact tracing purposes. When the guests visit, their names will be checked off and these lists will be kept for up to 3 months in a confidential file for potential contact tracing.
- Walk-up guests are requested to provide same contact information: name and phone number and/or email address for contact tracing purposes. These lists will not be used for other purposes. Contact information will not be mandatory for walk-in guests but will be encouraged.
- Contact lists of guests who visited on a certain day will be compiled with daily staff questionnaires in a secure manner so that contact tracing can be easily completed based on daily attendance, if needed.

## Health Screenings:

Signage and pre-registration materials encourage healthy guests

- Website guidelines about the new guest experience, and post-reservation information encourage guests to conduct a self health screening. Before the visit and on signage at our entrance, we ask the following questions:
  - Have you experienced COVID-19 symptoms in past 14 days? (per latest CDC guidance: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>)
  - Have you have tested positive for COVID-19 in past 14 days?
  - Have you had close or proximate contact with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 case in past 14 days?
  - In the past two weeks, have you traveled to one of the restricted states that meet the criteria for required quarantine or “test out” in New York State? Link to NYS Travel Advisory: <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-travel-advisory>.
- If guests answer “Yes” to any one or more of these questions, we ask guests to reschedule their visit to the museum and seek medical guidance. We are not asking these questions directly or mandating answers as guests arrive.
- We are not performing temperature checks on guests.

## Social Distancing:

Encourage guests to maintain 6-foot standard of social distancing in all areas of the museum.

- Signage indicates where guests should wait at 6-foot increments to speak with guest services associates, use restrooms, and browse the Museum Shop.
- Signage throughout the museum reminds guests to maintain social distancing.

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## *Pandemic-Aware Procedures*

- Maintenance and all staff are monitoring guests on their regular rounds and encourage guests to maintain social distancing.

### Require face coverings inside the building

- Masks are required for all guests while inside the Museum and for the entire length of a visit, regardless of their vaccination status. Masks should cover one's nose, sit below the chin, fully cover one's mouth and nose, and rest securely on one's face. Face shields must be accompanied with a proper face covering that covers one's mouth and nose. Masks can be cloth, surgical, or n95.
- Guests are strongly encouraged to bring their own masks, but a number of disposable masks will be available. If a guest refuses to comply, they will be asked to leave the premises.
- Exceptions will be made to guests under the age of 2. Digital Museum experiences are available for individuals unable to wear coverings.
- For individuals who need a break from wearing their mask, outdoor space is available on the Museum's Portico, Japanese Gardens, and outside on our campus.
- Prepare guests for the public safety requirement using our website, social media, and press outreach in advance of their visit.
- Staff are required to wear masks in all public-facing spaces and when interfacing with the public, regardless of vaccine status.
- Staff and volunteers must wear masks while facilitating education programs for children whether inside or outside, regardless of vaccine status.
- Staff are not required to wear masks if they are vaccinated and in a private office or in a public outdoor space.

### Exhibit Experiences:

Offer interactive elements when enhanced cleaning can ensure a safe guest experience

- Removed interactive components that cannot be sanitized regularly (including cloth items).
- Interactive exhibit areas will have signage encouraging safe use and hand sanitizer or restrooms nearby for washing hands after use. The enhanced cleaning schedule provides for increased cleaning of interactive play areas.
- Interactive touch screens will be cleaned every 2 hours, or more often based on higher attendance.

### Hand washing:

Restrooms available on first and ground floors

- All restrooms are open to guests (including first floor restroom previously reserved for staff).
- 6-foot markers are provided outside all restrooms to show where guests can wait (if needed).
- At the Resource Center, social distancing will be encouraged, and each restroom treated as single party/family restroom.

Hand Sanitizers are available on all floors

- The second floor features two hand sanitizing stations; the ground floor has one near the exit/accessible entrance and one in the Erie County Room/Pioneer Gallery; and the first floor has one in the entry/gift shop area, along with dispensers on the reception desk.
- One stand is available in the Resource Center exhibit area and at the reception desk.
- Hand sanitizers and restrooms are available in staff areas along with signage to encourage regular hand washing.

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Signage accompanies all handwashing sinks and sanitizers following CDC recommendations.

#### Guest Amenities:

Elevator:

Signage encourages single party usage of the elevator and to wait at least 6 feet from the doors.

Ventilation:

Windows and doors will be open as much as possible to introduce outside air and with consideration of significant energy waste (mostly at the Pan-Am building where air conditioning is not widely available).

Doors will remain open to allow less contact with high-touch surfaces for both guests and team members.

Dispensing water:

Water bottles are available for sale at the guest services reception area.

#### Gatherings:

In-person programs and events have not resumed yet.

Any rental events will comply with all relevant NYS governmental safety regulations and can only be scheduled if we can offer a safe experience for all staff and guests.

At this time, catered events can be held with 75% capacity, which is 95 guests with the tables social distanced. The current indoor gathering limit for New York State is 250, if events remain below that number, they will not need guests to provide proof of vaccination or negative testing prior to the event. If an event is beyond the gathering limit (250), the event must be approved by the Erie County Department of Health, and all guests must be tested/vaccinated prior to attending. All NYS governmental regulations will be followed, including the latest guidance on masking and social distancing.

Staff team meetings will continue to be held virtually or in spaces where social distancing is feasible.

Suspend group visits and tours

The maximum group size that can pre-register for admission is 10 (and those individuals should be from the same family group).

If guests would like to attend the Museum with a group of more than 10 individuals, they must contact the Museum in advance to discuss alternative options to ensure the safety of guests and staff.

Indoor group tours are not allowed in New York State at this time.

#### Non-guest visitors and contact tracing:

Deliveries directed to Reinstein Building

- When staff order supplies to be delivered, they should direct to Reinstein administration building. All deliveries and mail will be sorted and kept in the closet by the door for staff to retrieve.
- If a delivery comes to the front entrance, it can be accepted if social distancing can be maintained, or guest services associates can direct the delivery personnel to the Reinstein Building.

Meetings with non-staff will be limited

- Prospective rental clients will be scheduled when the Museum is closed or not busy as much as possible. All meetings are scheduled in advance and coordinated through the Director of Operations and posted on the

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### *Pandemic-Aware Procedures*

Master Calendar with contact information for those attending. Oliver's Catering staff will supply participant's contact information for all participants prior to the visit.

- Vendors who require on site visitation (such as repair technicians), will schedule with appropriate staff and meetings will be put on the Master Calendar with contact information for the attendees provided. These meetings will be restricted to non-guest hours as much as possible.
- There may be exceptions for small meetings on days when the museum is not open to the public. These exceptions are approved by the Executive Director.

#### Maintain log of team members and guests in the building

- Guest services associates will keep track of how many guests are in the Museum.
- For advanced ticket reservations: name, phone number, and email address for reservation is recorded/kept in the case that contact tracing is needed.
- For walkup guests: name and phone number and/or email, number in their party and timing of visit will be recorded for contact tracing (if guests consent). It is not mandatory for guests to provide contact tracing information.
- Staff Member Health Screening questionnaires are completed daily, including questions on their health and circulation on site so there is a record of who was in each building and when.
- The staff member meeting with any outside personnel at the museum (maintenance repairmen or rental clients), is responsible for obtaining contact tracing information for all attendees and submitting it to Director of Operations via email or submitting through Master Calendar.
- All information provided for contact tracing will only be used for that purpose and not for any future marketing unless guest specifically requests it.
- Contact information will be kept confidentially by the Director of Operations for three months after the visit and then discarded.

#### High-volume procedures:

- Admission is restricted by ability to provide social distancing between guests. If we are nearing that limit, we will implement the following additional procedures to ensure safety:
  - If staff/volunteers are available, invite guests to enter through different entrances (doors on or under the Portico facing the Japanese Gardens). Staff or volunteers can welcome guests at these entrances, collect contact tracing information, and answer questions. Staff will be protected with a table and plexiglass similar to the main reception area.
  - Announce over loud speakers throughout the day reminders about social distancing and proper mask wearing during higher volume times.
  - As with all days, maintenance staff will do regular rounds to clean surfaces, and they will also keep an eye on social distancing and mask compliance and remind guests as needed.

#### Museum Shop:

Museum Shop offerings stream-lined to reduce crowding of items and thereby, guests.

- Removed many mobile racks/displays to allow more space for guests to browse.
- Signage indicates restroom waiting area.
- A table is available for guests to place products they have handled but decided not to buy. Those products are disinfected and restocked by guest services associates.
- Products not easily disinfected (stuffed animals, clothing) are removed from the display area or placed under glass/plexiglass.

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### *Pandemic-Aware Procedures*

- Guest services staff remains mostly at a distance when guests are shopping. If assistance is needed, guest services associates will enter the Museum Shop area and assist from a reasonable distance (while wearing face mask).
- The Museum Shop offers items for sale on the website for pickup at guest reception or curbside when we are open, allowing for quick, prepaid transactions.
- Museum Shop is included in high-touch cleaning on a two-hour rotation. Sanitize entire Museum Shop on a weekly basis.

### Research Library:

Full procedures will be available in a separate document and highlights will be included here.

- Guests will schedule advance appointments for the library, which will be open only during the Museum's public hours. In-person appointments will be scheduled on Wednesdays and Saturdays; Virtual Appointments will be scheduled on Thursdays and Fridays.
- Only two guests will be scheduled to use the Library at any time, and they will be required to wear face coverings and maintain social distancing during their entire visit, regardless of vaccination status.
- There is a 72-hour quarantine period for library collections handled by staff and guests.
- Guest work stations are wiped down with disinfectant after every use.
- Library guests are encouraged to bring all of their own supplies (ie: pencils, notepaper, laptops)

### Resource Center at 459 Forest Avenue:

- The Resource Center will follow the same safety and operational protocols in this plan. The Reception Desk will be staffed by one staff member and pre-registration will be highly encouraged. Museum admission allows for entry to both the Resource Center at 459 Forest Avenue and the Pan-Am Building at 1 Museum Court.
- When the Resource Center is open, maintenance staff will be making rounds every two hours to clean surfaces. The Resource Center will be thoroughly cleaned in public areas on Thursdays prior to opening to the public.

## 2. Team Member Procedures

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### Cleaning and Hygiene Protocols

- Staff provided with masks and training on how to properly use and clean them.
- Staff should wear masks whenever they are in public spaces and whenever they are within 6 feet of someone.
- Office doors should be closed when staff are inside and working without their masks on.
- Staff should follow all suggested traffic patterns to avoid interaction in small spaces.
- All staff are trained on disinfecting procedures and shown where to find cleaning supplies for cleaning at any time they feel comfortable. Staff will fill out weekly logs to confirm their office spaces were cleaned.
- Maintenance and guest services staff are provided with gloves for cleaning before and after guest interactions.
- Hand sanitizer available in all staff common areas, entrances, and in public exhibit areas.
- Full cleaning procedures are shared with staff, and staff can share feedback with Facilities Manager or Director of Operations at any time.
- Signage to remind staff about cleaning and hygiene available in all restrooms.

### Staff scheduling and contact tracing

- Staff are scheduled to work on site on rotations (where possible) to limit interaction and exposures to COVID-19.
- Staff are required to fill out a survey daily answering the following questions:
  - Have you experienced COVID-19 symptoms in past 14 days? (per latest CDC guidance: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>)
  - Have you have tested positive for COVID-19 in past 14 days?
  - Have you had close or proximate contact with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 case in past 14 days?
  - In the past two weeks, have you traveled to one of the restricted states that meet the criteria for required quarantine or “test out” in New York State? Link to NYS Travel Advisory: <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-travel-advisory>.
  - Staff will also be required to report where they will be working each day for contact tracing.
- All forms are submitted electronically to Director of Operations, who will review them daily and keep them in a secure place for potential contact tracing needs. These records will be kept alongside records of all guests who visited on a daily basis and all non-guest visitors (ie, vendors, repairmen) who were on site.
- Completing this form electronically will allow for all staff to fill out before coming onto the site and tracking the workplace of all staff.
- If anyone known to be in a Museum building becomes sick with COVID-19, all buildings affected will be closed immediately for a deep cleaning. Staff risk and quarantine needs will be assessed, and we will reopen when it is safe to do so.

### 3. Cleaning and Disinfecting Procedures

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#### High-Touch surfaces are disinfected frequently

- The following high-touch surfaces are disinfected on the following schedule on all days the Museum is open to the public:
  - Before opening at 10 am
  - 12 pm
  - 2 pm
  - 4 pm
- Staff will use disinfectant sprays approved by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as effective against COVID-19 and wipe down all surfaces with clean disposable wipes, or with pre-soaked disinfectant wipes.
- At our most highly used doors, we have also installed self-cleaning wraps on the handles.

#### General Cleaning Procedures:

- Prior to re-opening, the museum will undergo a deep clean to prepare for guests.
- Garbage can lids are removed to allow touchless throwing items away. All garbage cans are emptied daily.
- Doors are opened as much as possible to decrease touching of surfaces and increase fresh air circulation
- Cleaning logs will be kept in each restroom. Maintenance staff will fill them out when the restrooms are cleaned and the logs will be reviewed daily by Facilities Manager.
- Cleaning logs for the frequent disinfecting procedures are kept in the maintenance area and checked daily by Facilities Manager.
- If there is any known COVID-19 exposure in any of the buildings, all affected buildings will be shut down immediately and undergo a deep cleaning before reopening to any staff and/or guests.