



Accessibility Guide

SAN FRANCISCO MARITIME

NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK | CA

Accessibility Guide

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Meeting Everybody's Needs – An Overview

The National Park Service strives to be inclusive of everybody – all ages and all abilities – so please let us know how we can serve you best.

Vision: For self-guided tours the park offers a large print park brochure and map, and they are also available on the park website. Audio description is available for the feature film in the visitor center's "The Waterfront" exhibit. Arrangements can be made for a park staff or volunteer docent to provide audio description and reading services.

Hearing: Films are either captioned or scripts are available in large print. The park offers assisted listening devices on request. Sign language interpreter services need to be requested at least 5 days in advance. Contact Accessibility Coordinator/Chief of Interpretation for more information at 415-859-6797, safr_accessibility@nps.gov

Mobility: Some of the park's features and ships pose challenges to persons using wheelchairs or with other mobility issues. If physical access is not possible, alternative accommodation in the form of a digital virtual tour of the park vessels and museum is at the visitor center, and also available on the park's website. [Virtual Tour - http://www.nps.gov/safr/photosmultimedia/virtualtour.htm](http://www.nps.gov/safr/photosmultimedia/virtualtour.htm).

For special programs, like sailing on the *Alma*, the park will provide the necessary assistance for a person using a wheelchair or other mobility device to board the vessel and participate. Advance notice is requested. The park has a wheelchair to lend.

Developmental and Learning: The park staff, rangers and docents will do their best to adapt their programs to include multi-sensory experiences for persons with developmental and learning disabilities.

Service Animals: Service animals are allowed in National Parks. For a definition of a service animal, please go to: <http://www.nps.gov/goga/planyourvisit/service-animals.htm>

Rest Stops: Benches that allow for companion seating are situated throughout the landscape and inside buildings. Not all have backs or arm rests at this time.

Rest Rooms: Men’s and Women’s restrooms are accessible. However, at this time the park does not have a designated “family bathroom.” If you have a personal attendant of the opposite sex and require privacy, park staff can give you assistance to secure a restroom facility.

Planning Your Visit

Personal Assistance Requests: Please Call 5 Days in Advance

To request personal assistance (such as sign language interpreter, assistance with a wheelchair, audio description, special education classes, etc), please contact the park at least 5 days in advance. Contact Accessibility Coordinator/Chief of Interpretation for more information at 415-859-6797, safr_accessibility@nps.gov

Disabled Parking Placards – For Out-of-State Visitors

If you're visiting California and would like to use a Disabled Person Placard for parking, you must apply for a California “Temporary Parking Placard” for non-residents, good for up to 90 days. Out-of-state placards are not honored in California.

[California Temporary Disabled Parking Placard Application -](#)

https://www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/dmv/?idmy&urile=wcm:path:/dmv_content_en/dmv/fo rms/reg/reg195

Check for Updates Online

Check the park’s website for [updates on access alerts at:](#)

<http://www.nps.gov/safr/planyourvisit/accessibility.htm>

Arriving and Parking

Jefferson Street (at Hyde) has 2 universal disabled parking spaces near the entrance to

Hyde Street Pier and the visitor center. Beach Street has two universal disabled parking spaces near the entrance to the Maritime Museum. Along the Western edge of the park, Lower Van Ness (a gentle slope) has two disabled slots, and free 4-hour public parking. Street parking at meters is available at no cost to persons with the appropriate California disabled parking placard displayed. There are many public parking garages nearby.

Landscape and Main Pathways

Public areas of all buildings and all restrooms are accessible. A grassy-park landscape features paved paths (from flat to moderate slope) that include benches for frequent rest stops. The park's beach has a low wall with 1-4 steps down, and is not accessible to persons using wheelchairs. The Hyde Street Pier and Municipal Pier are paved. All sidewalks have curb ramps at intersections.

Park Website

The website provides the following accessibility features on park pages: adjustable text sizes, invisible links that allow persons using screen readers to jump to content of interest, alternate text for images, and alternate text for link titles. Text and descriptive photo captions are compatible with audio readers.

The website provides current park information and activities, history, culture, stories, photo and video galleries, as well as links to social media and other maritime venues.

[San Francisco Maritime Website: www.nps.gov/safr](http://www.nps.gov/safr)

For your convenience, this guide contains many links to the park's website regarding accessibility information and secondary accommodation for access to the park's attractions and features.

Park Guided Tours and Secondary Access

When direct access to the park's landscape or historic vessels is not possible the park has a variety of resources to choose from for secondary access that are described in this

guide.

Ranger-Led Tours and Personal Assistance

Rangers and docents will do their best to adapt their program to be inclusive. If accommodation is not possible, staff can recommend an alternate experience.

Online Self-Guided Tours

A digital “Virtual Tour” of the park includes interactive 360-degree panorama photographic tours of the decks and interiors of all the park’s historic vessels, and a “Communications at Sea” past exhibit from the Maritime Museum. The virtual tour is at the park’s visitor center, and online at

[Virtual Tour - http://www.nps.gov/safr/photosmultimedia/virtualtour.htm](http://www.nps.gov/safr/photosmultimedia/virtualtour.htm).

An exhibit, “Cargo Is King,” in *Balclutha*’s ‘tween deck is available online as pdf files at

[Cargo is King Exhibit Panels - http://www.nps.gov/safr/historyculture/cargoisking.htm](http://www.nps.gov/safr/historyculture/cargoisking.htm).

Interpretive panels for lumber schooner *C.A. Thayer* are available online as pdf files at

[C.A. Thayer Panels - http://www.nps.gov/safr/historyculture/thayerinterppanel.htm](http://www.nps.gov/safr/historyculture/thayerinterppanel.htm).

Printed Self-Guided Tours

The park brochure is available in English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Chinese and Japanese. All park brochures in English and foreign languages, the park map, including a self-guided walking tour of the waterfront are online and can be viewed in large print as pdf’s on the park website at:

[Park brochures and map - http://www.nps.gov/safr/planyourvisit/brochures.htm](http://www.nps.gov/safr/planyourvisit/brochures.htm).

Audio Tours

The park offers 28 cell phone audio tours along Hyde Street Pier that are accessible anywhere by your personal cell phone. [Cell Phone Tour -](http://www.nps.gov/safr/planyourvisit/cellphoneaudiotours.htm)

<http://www.nps.gov/safr/planyourvisit/cellphoneaudiotours.htm>

The park is also a terminus for the Barbary Coast Trail - a history trail that includes San

Francisco maritime history. Downloadable audio tours and print guides are available for a fee. Note: the Barbary Coast Trail organization is not affiliated with the park. [Barbary Coast Trail Tours - http://www.barbarycoasttrail.org](http://www.barbarycoasttrail.org)

The Park Visitor Center

Staff and volunteers at the information desk can assist you. All areas of the Visitor Center and restrooms are accessible to persons using wheelchairs. The orientation area has a tactile map and a “Voyages” exhibit that includes captioned video and multi-media. The feature exhibit, “The Waterfront, Sailors Called It Frisco” replicates six historic waterfront neighborhoods where all large artifacts, objects and exhibitry are touchable, and includes a mix of multi-sensory experiences throughout. The feature film is captioned on a 22-foot panoramic screen, and you can request headphones for audio description at the front desk. This exhibit offers authentic replicas with sound effects and hands-on experiences for persons unable to access the park’s beach or board the historic ships. The Visitor Center is located at 499 Jefferson Street (across the street from Hyde Street Pier).

Maritime Store

The Maritime Store is operated by the Western National Park Association. It is accessible and located at the entrance to Hyde Street Pier.

Hyde Street Pier and Historic Ships

Hyde Street Pier

Hyde Street Pier is level land paved, located at the junction of Hyde and Jefferson Streets. The pier offers interpretive panels and exhibits, historic sail and steam ships along with the park’s fleet of small craft, and an active boat shop and shipwright shop. Hands-on activities along the way include knot tying stations and a block and tackle demonstration. Amenities include public restrooms and benches. The pier also offers

unobstructed views of San Francisco Bay, Alcatraz and Angel Island, the Golden Gate Bridge, and the commercial fishing fleet.

Access to the Fleet of Historic Ships and Small Craft

Access varies to each ship because high and low tides cause the slope of each gangway to dramatically change. Please use caution when going aboard. Contact the Visitor Center at 415-447-5000, or the ticket booth at 415-561-7175, for accessibility updates based on the tide. All historic ships that are open for public self-guided tours offer hands-on tactile exploration, interpretive panels, and some have exhibits and captioned videos.

Virtual Tour: Online Access to Historic Ships and Small Craft

Where physical access to the historic vessels is not possible, the park offers a digital virtual tour. The virtual tour includes detailed interactive 360-degree panoramic photographic tours of the decks and interiors of all the park's historic vessels and a "Communications at Sea" exhibit once housed in the Maritime Museum. Explore all this on a screen at the park's visitor center, or online: [Virtual Tour - http://www.nps.gov/safr/photosmultimedia/virtualtour.htm](http://www.nps.gov/safr/photosmultimedia/virtualtour.htm)

Ferryboat *Eureka*

The gangway slope varies with the tide. During winter storms and extreme tides, the ferryboat might be closed to everyone. The car deck of the *Eureka* is filled with antique cars, trucks and carts behind ropes. A captioned video of her engine room is located on the car deck. The upper passenger deck is accessible by stairs.

Ship *Balclutha*

Please USE EXTREME CAUTION: the gangway access varies between a moderate to extreme slope. Once on board, the main deck has mixed accessibility. The raised decks and the 'tweendeck below are accessible by narrow stairs. The exhibit "Cargo Is King", in the 'tweeneck, is a 100% hands-on tactile experience with special environmental

audio effects, and all three films are captioned. Exhibit panels and photos are available online:

[Cargo is King Exhibit Panels - http://www.nps.gov/safr/historyculture/cargoisking.htm](http://www.nps.gov/safr/historyculture/cargoisking.htm).

You can also explore her decks and hold by taking the digital virtual tour.

Lumber Schooner *C.A. Thayer*

Stairs provide the only access to board *C.A. Thayer*. For alternate access, view

interpretive panels and photos online at [C.A. Thayer Panels](#) -

<http://www.nps.gov/safr/historyculture/thayerinterppanel.htm>, or explore her deck and hold by taking the digital virtual tour.

Steam Tug *Hercules*

Hercules is not accessible to persons using wheel chairs due to numerous obstructions and deck design. All parts of the ship offer “hands-on” exploration, and a captioned video presents a tour of the tugboat. There are times when the tug is closed to the public due to tides. Check at the fee booth, or call 415-561-7175 or 447-5000 for info. You can also explore *Hercules*' decks and cabins by taking the digital virtual tour online.

Scow Schooner *Alma*

Alma, a very stable sailing schooner, is open to the general public holding reservations for regularly scheduled sails. *Alma* offers a stable and smooth sail, and is an excellent opportunity for visitors to haul line and raise sail. [Buy tickets for Alma Sails online - http://www.recreation.gov](#). Persons using wheelchairs, or persons who require onboard seating with support, sign language, audio description, or any other accommodations, please notify the park at least 5 days prior to your sail date so the park staff can meet your needs. You can see a movie online of *Alma* sailing, [Out Sailing on Scow Schooner Alma - http://www.nps.gov/media/video/view.htm?id=A35C1330-F731-7585-63138A5858C16B84](#). *Alma* is not open to the public when moored to the dock. You can

explore her deck and cabin by taking the virtual tour online.

Paddlewheel Tug *Eppleton Hall*

The “Eppie” is not open to the public.

Historic Small Boats

The park’s collection of small boats is adjacent to Hyde Street Pier on floating docks.

The docks are open to the public only when staff are present. USE EXTREME CAUTION: gangway slope to the docks varies due to tides, and the floating docks move up and down.

The Ark Houseboat

Access to and from the houseboat is by stairs. All the historic furnishings are behind ropes. There is no video or audio support on board.

Aquatic Park and Maritime Museum

Aquatic Park and Cove

The park features paved paths (from flat to moderate slope) through a grassy park landscape, and benches offer frequent rest stops. The cement bleachers have the top-most rows designated for wheelchairs. The cove has a long sandy beach. Beach access requires descending 1-4 tall stone steps. The water is cold at 53° -60° F (12° -16° C) and strong tidal currents run through.

Maritime Museum, in the historic Bathhouse Building

The museum hosts changing exhibits and offers an information desk, elevator access to the third floor, and public restrooms. The Maritime Museum is at 900 Beach Street. The Aquatic Park Senior Center is also housed within the building.

Building E at Fort Mason Center

All public spaces within Building E, at Fort Mason Center are accessible, with elevators to all floors. Fort Mason Center is about a half mile to the west of Aquatic Park and Hyde Street Pier. The pathways between Aquatic Park Cove and Fort Mason Center are paved, with various routes to choose from (between ¼ and ½ miles). The “Bay Trail” route includes a steep hill on the east end with a choice of stairway or sloped path at the west end at Building E. Fort Mason Center’s main entrance for vehicles is at Marina Blvd. and Buchannan Streets. Paid parking is available at Fort Mason Center with universal disabled parking slots adjacent to Building E (parking fees apply). The outer lots are free.

Park Headquarters

The headquarters for San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park is on the second floor of Building E.

Maritime Research Center

The Maritime Research Center is on the 3rd floor of Building E, and open to the public by appointment only Monday-Friday, 1-4pm. Call 415-561-7030. Magnifying glasses and computer terminals with large print are available. A research librarian can assist visitors with books and also offer finding aides for what is behind closed doors in the photo, film and artifact collections.

San Francisco Maritime National Park Association

The Association’s offices are on the second floor of Building E. They are a non-profit, and operate the park’s education programs for school-age children, sponsor special events, and raise funds for the park. For accessibility information about education programs call 415-292-6664 educational programs, for events call 561-6662. General information is online.

A World War II submarine, the USS *Pampanito*, is operated by San Francisco Maritime National Park Association for public tours and education programs. The submarine is accessible by stairs. An audio tour, along with a free podcast tour, virtual 360-degree photographic tour and downloadable publications are on their website.

[Association Education Programs](#) and [Pampanito Tours - www.maritime.org](#).

Accessibility and Future Planning

Physical Barriers and Historic Ships

Many of the ship's structural elements do not lend themselves to meeting the ADA and ABAAS standards for persons with physical challenges or wheel chairs. Because all of the park's historic ships were built as working vessels where huge waves had to be kept off the decks, there are wall-like "bulwarks" around most decks, along with raised ledges, called "coamings," at the entrance to hatches to keep the water out. The vessels' decks are designed with curving slopes, called "sheer" and "crown," to shed water and have gangways that rise and fall with the tides. Please travel with caution!

Modifications that would allow persons using wheelchairs to board and explore the ships need to be made in a way so as not to destroy the historic nature of the ship. On some of the ships the park has not been able to find a way to accomplish this goal, and access varies. Steam Tug *Hercules* underwent extensive study by the National Park Service and the Access Board in Washington, and they have come to the conclusion that she could not be made wheelchair accessible without destroying her historic integrity.

FUTURE PROJECTS FOR HISTORIC SHIPS

Because the schooner C.A. Thayer was restored to sail her structure cannot be modified, and because her existing gangway requires steps, she will not be accessible to persons using a wheelchair until a new gangway is installed. The ship *Balclutha*'s gangway is in line for replacement. Upon replacement, the gangway will meet regulations for persons using wheelchairs (barring extreme tidal and weather conditions) and provide access to

her main deck. The park is developing a plan to fit a stairway with a lift to allow persons using wheelchairs to descend into Balclutha's 'tweendeck to tour the exhibit and films. A tactile map for Hyde Street Pier is part of the sign plan.

Future: Self Guided Tours: Descriptive Audio and App

The park is in the planning stages for descriptive audio for all video and media. Also, the National Park Service is currently developing an app that will enable parks to provide descriptive audio throughout the entire park landscape, exhibits and features.

Future: Accessibility Transition Planning

As of 2015, the park underwent a National Park Service accessibility evaluation and transition plan that is addressing accessibility compliance issues and solutions.

Your suggestions are welcome

If you have comments on accessibility, use the contact information below.

For Assistance and Information

If at any time you need assistance, please do not hesitate to ask a Ranger or other National Park Service Employee.

For general universal access information call:

Accessibility Coordinator/Chief of Interpretation at 415-859-6797

safr_accessibility@nps.gov

