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Maritime Aquarium Opens More as COVID-19 Eases, But With Tighter Safety Regs Than State Allows

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As state-mandated capacity restrictions are lifted on Friday, March 19, the Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk is ready with special COVID-19 protocols to welcome in additional guests.

— *an announcement from the [Maritime Aquarium](#)*

President and CEO Jason Patlis said special measures have been added and refined since the Aquarium's reopening in June under Gov. Ned Lamont's reduced-capacity rules.

Although the South Norwalk family attraction is allowed to have full capacity as of Friday, it will loosen — but not eliminate — its own limits on how many guests can enter each hour, he said.

“We continue to strongly encourage guests — even Aquarium members — to reserve their tickets in advance online so that the actual admission process can be quick and contactless, and to guarantee their entry when they arrive,” Patlis said.

Upon entering the Aquarium, guests will find a number of protocols in place.

“Everyone age 2 and older is still required to wear masks,” Patlis said. “We have enhanced cleanings of common areas. And we have implemented methods that promote social distancing throughout the galleries.”

Other protocols and measures, he said, include:

—**added plexiglass partitions at popular exhibits** – such as the jellyfish, intertidal-zone, and shark & ray touch tanks – that establish separation.

—**continued temporary closure of “touch” exhibits**, like the “Sketch & Release” digital activity on the Aquarium’s 32-foot video wall.

—**adding staff on the weekends to see that best practices are followed** and — while guests are expected to participate in creating a safe experience — to give a friendly reminder if needed.

—**and holding capacity in the new 169-seat 4D movie theater at 30 percent**, which is below the governor's order of 50 percent for movie theaters but which enables the Aquarium to maintain distancing while guests are seated during the 10-minute experiences.

Patlis thanked Gov. Lamont for steering Connecticut through the pandemic to this week’s milestone of lifting capacity restrictions, and also thanked everyone who has visited the Maritime Aquarium and respected its guest protocols over the last year.

On March 13, 2020, the Maritime Aquarium became one of the first aquariums in the country to close because of the pandemic. The Aquarium quickly pivoted to offer live, virtual educational programs, which have continued — and expanded — since its reopening June 20.

In addition, during the closure and since, work continued on simultaneous construction projects to build the new 4D theater, which opened in January, and a new 150,000-gallon seal exhibit, which is expected to open in May.

A new special exhibit, “A Slug’s Life: Facing the Climate Endgame,” debuted in January.

“If you haven’t seen the Maritime Aquarium in a while, it’s definitely time for a visit,” Patlis said. “After a very long year, people are ready to get out of the house, and we are excited to welcome them.”

Learn more about the COVID-19 measures that the Aquarium has put in place — and is asking guests to follow — and reserve advance tickets online at MaritimeAquarium.Org.