

Maritime Aquarium To Reopen Saturday (Members With Reservations Get In Thursday, Friday)

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After a three-month closure, The Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk will reopen to the public on Sat., June 20 with online ticketing for timed entry and other special guidelines for guest and staff well-being.

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

In aligning with the state’s phased approach and federal and state public-health directives, The Maritime Aquarium will limit guest capacity, require masks to be worn at all times, sell tickets only online with timed entries, provide one-way flow through the Aquarium, and stress physical distancing.

“We were among the first aquariums in the country to close on March 12, and we are so excited to welcome back our members, volunteers and guests,” said President and CEO Jason Patlis.

“The new measures we’ve implemented prioritize the health and safety of our guests, volunteers and staff first and foremost, with comprehensive and detailed changes to the guest experience that meet or exceed the requirements for re-opening.”

Maritime Aquarium members and special invited guests can return first, on Thurs., June 18 and Fri., June 19 with advance reservations.

Along with attendance limits that reduce capacity and support physical distancing, the Aquarium is changing its admission policy to advance, online-only ticketing with timed entry.

Even Aquarium members must reserve a time online. Anyone arriving at the Aquarium without an online

reservation will not be admitted. The Aquarium began taking online reservations for the reopening today (June 15) on its website: www.maritimeaquarium.org.

Other initiatives include touchless transactions and a requirement that all guests over the age of 2 who can tolerate a mask will be required to wear a mask or cloth face covering during the entirety of their visit. Staff and volunteers are required to wear masks in public places.

Several interactive experiences, such as digital touch screens and the indoor play area, will remain temporarily closed. The IMAX Theater will not open. And the cafe will remain closed during the initial phase of reopening but is expected to open on or around July 1.

The Aquarium gift shop expects to open and operate on the same hours as the Aquarium, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily, beginning June 18.

- In an effort to help guests easily remember the new processes for public safety, the Aquarium has created a well-suited summarizing acronym called **WAVES**:
- —**Wear a mask**
- —**Advanced reservations only**
- —**Visit only when healthy**
- —**Exercise social distancing**
- —**See website before you arrive**

Although The Maritime Aquarium proactively closed March 12, the animal-husbandry staff has continued to provide the highest-quality daily care for more than 6,000 animals, from 180-pound harbor seals and 9-foot sharks to tiny anemones and coral polyps.

The Aquarium's education department has provided more than 200 distance-learning programs to school groups in 11 states, reaching more than 6,700 students, while virtual programs for families served more than 5,000 participants of all ages in 39 states, Puerto Rico and four foreign countries.

Dave Truedson, the Aquarium's chief operating officer, said staff has been preparing to reopen the building to guests for several weeks.

"In addition to the new measures for guest visits, we have expanded the efforts of cleaning staff throughout the day in disinfecting hard surfaces – in addition to their thorough work at night – and have added additional hand sanitizers throughout the facility," Truedson said.

"All of the new protocol has been implemented based on guidelines of government agencies and public health officials, whose recommendations we will continue to follow."

Patlis added that, although the coronavirus measures are new, The Maritime Aquarium is as wonderful an experience as it always has been.

“The animals have missed the crowds, as have we – and we can’t wait to welcome everyone back!” he said.

To order online tickets, see the full list of safety measures, and learn more about the Aquarium’s animals and exhibits, go to www.maritimeaquarium.org.