

RENTAL OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

National Museum of Natural History Policy

1. PURPOSE

This document establishes rental and federal use policies applicable to the use of the National Museum of Natural History. This policy supplements SD 401.

2. TYPES OF RENTAL EVENTS

The following types of rental events are authorized at the National Museum of Natural History:

- Private corporate receptions and dinners.
- Fundraising galas for organizations with 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status (including religious organizations).
- Personal social events for adults such as wedding receptions & ceremonies*, memorials, anniversary celebrations, and birthday parties.
 - *Weddings are limited to four per calendar year, not more than one per month and not permitted during times of highest visitation. A professional wedding planner is required.
- Personal youth events* such as bar/bat mitzvahs, debuts, cotillions, quinceañeras, or birthday parties.
 - *Personal youth events are limited to four per calendar year, not more than one per month and not permitted during times of highest visitation. A professional event planner is required.
- Business gatherings in non-public spaces such as conference rooms.

3. RULES

The following policies have been instituted to preserve and protect the spaces and collections. The Smithsonian special events coordinator assigned to an event is responsible for ensuring these rules are followed.

Prohibited Activities

The following activities are prohibited at all rentals at the Smithsonian:

- a. Political activities, including solicitations for candidates; campaign kickoffs, or other activities directed toward the success or failure of a partisan candidate, political party, or partisan political group;
- b. Violations of any federal or local law regarding the sale of alcoholic beverages or other restricted substances;
- c. Sales of non-Smithsonian products or services;
- d. Gambling;
- e. Religious or civil ceremonies (other than those incidental to a wedding Rental); and
- f. Solicitations by for-profit entities (for example, ticketed events advertised to the general public).

Use of the Smithsonian Name

The use of the Smithsonian name and the National Museum of Natural History name is prohibited, except to indicate the address of the rental event. Licensees are prohibited from using the Smithsonian or National Museum of Natural History logo.

Reservations and Payments

A prospective Licensee may place a maximum of 2 dates on hold on the calendar. A completed application must be submitted and approved before the dates can be held. In the event we receive another inquiry for the same date(s), the applicant will be given first right of refusal and be given 48 hours to return a signed contract. After 48 hours, the hold will be released. In all other cases, once an applicant receives a contract, the signed contract is due back to the Office of Special Events within 5 business days along with a non-refundable \$5,000 deposit. The non-refundable balance of the fee must be received in full at least six weeks prior to the event date requested. If a confirmed event date must be changed, the Museum will endeavor to reschedule for a mutually convenient date if space is available. If the event is canceled by Licensee, unless rescheduled, any and all deposits and payments are non-refundable once received by the Smithsonian.

3. RULES (continued)

Hours of Events

The National Museum of Natural History is open to the public from 10:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Corporate/non-profit: Evening events may begin at 6:30 p.m. for events of fewer than 300 guests with minimal set-up. For events with extensive set-up and/or larger than 300 guests, evening events may begin no earlier than 7:00 p.m. Additional charges apply for events ending after 10:30 p.m. Events must end by 11:30 p.m.

Weddings/personal: Events may begin no earlier than 7:00 p.m. Additional charges apply for events ending after 11:00 p.m. Events must end by midnight.

Set-Up

Set-up in the Rotunda may begin at 3:00 p.m. for evening events; set-up in exhibit spaces may begin at 5:30 p.m. All pricing includes the set-up time and a maximum of 2 hours for breakdown time. Any breakdown which requires additional time will be billed at a rate of \$1,500/hour.

Site Visits and Walk-Throughs

Please call the Office of Special Events at 202-633-1650 to schedule an appointment with one of our special events coordinators. Site visit appointments can be scheduled and accommodated Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Once an event is confirmed, a walk-through with the Smithsonian special events coordinator, all vendors, event planners, and the client must be scheduled at least 2 weeks prior to the event. Clients must submit a list of vendors and a floor plan for approval prior to the final walk-through.

Insurance

Licensee and each of its vendors and other service providers/suppliers shall obtain and carry liability insurance as follows:

- Licensee must have general liability insurance pertaining to the event in the minimum amount of two million (\$2,000,000) dollars per occurrence, with the Smithsonian Institution and the United States Government named as additionally insured. For events with an expected attendance over 2,000 people, the limit of liability shall be \$5,000,000 dollars per occurrence.

3. RULES (continued)

- All vendors and other service providers/suppliers (excluding florists, musicians, and photographers using hand-held cameras) must have general liability insurance providing coverage of not less than \$2,000,000 per occurrence for injury and general liability, with the Smithsonian Institution and the United States named as additional insured.
- Vendors providing or serving alcohol (e.g., caterers) must have not less than an additional \$2,000,000 in specific general liability insurance pertaining to their service of alcohol, with the Smithsonian Institution and the United States Government named as additional insured.
- Auto Liability Coverage. If Vendor uses auto(s) on Smithsonian premises, Auto Liability in the minimum amount of \$1,000,000 dollars per occurrence, combined single limit.
- All vendors must carry workers compensation coverage as required by the jurisdiction where the work will be performed.
- Licensee and its vendors may meet the insurance requirements through separate, combination, or package policies if they meet the required limits and scope of coverage. Umbrella and/or excess policy limits may be accepted to meet the required limits and scope of insurance.
- Certificates of Insurance should be sent via fax or e-mail to the Museum Representative designated. **Do not mail copies of certificates of insurance.**
- In no case will the facilities be available without the above stated coverage. **Licensee shall provide insurance certificates at least 30 days prior to the event date.** The Smithsonian will cancel the proposed event if insurance certification is not received by this date.

Vendors

The National Museum of Natural History maintains a list of approved vendors who have successfully operated in our spaces and are knowledgeable about our requirements. A copy of the approved vendors is attached. If any of your proposed vendors are not on the list, they must be approved by the National Museum of Natural History first. All proposed vendors must meet the building requirements and demonstrate substantial experience working in historic buildings, museums, or similar locations in the past year in order to provide services at events in the National Museum of Natural History. Food providers who are not on the approved vendor list must partner with a licensed caterer from the list.

Operational Rules for Entire Facility

Licensee must comply with the attached **NMNH Guidelines for Special Events.**

3. RULES (continued)

Press and Public Relations

- Licensee must notify the Special Events Coordinator in advance of all invited press and media including affiliation and intended publication outlet one business day prior to the event.
- Media interviews and red carpets or other media events may take place only in spaces identified in advance by the museum. No news media photography or videography is permitted in the other galleries including the Rotunda.
- Photographers and camera crews are permitted two hand-held cameras and one weighted, stationary tripod. The tripod must be located away from emergency exits and not within a walkway. All cameras and lighting must be battery operated. All lighting setups must be approved in advance by the Special Events Coordinator.
- The museum may be listed on printed material as the site or venue for the event only. The names of the Smithsonian and the museum may not otherwise be used in any advertising, promotions, or publications.
- Copies of all printed and electronic material containing this reference (i.e., advertising, promotional, tickets, websites, emails, invitations, and menu cards) shall be submitted to the Special Events Coordinator for approval before distribution.
- Announcements and invitations may not be issued until the Agreement has been signed and the deposit received.

Photography and Videography

- The use of selfie sticks is not permitted.
- The Licensee must notify the Smithsonian Special Events Coordinator in writing at least 2 weeks in advance of any plans to use professional photographers or videographers at the event. During the event, Licensee may photograph and record within the interior of the museum at locations specified by the museum, so long as (1) the images and recordings will be used only for personal, non-commercial, or internal corporate use, and (2) any appearance of Smithsonian names, logos, staff, collections, iconic Smithsonian locations, or other identifiable Smithsonian content (including but not limited to the Rotunda, the Right Whale in the “Sant Ocean Hall,” the Hope Diamond in the “Harry Winston Gallery,” the *T.rex* in the “David H. Koch Hall of Fossils—Deep Time” and the *C. megalodon* shark in the Ocean Terrace Café) in the images or recordings are background and incidental. The museum reserves the right to review footage to make a determination as to whether portrayal of its content is background and incidental. In no case shall the images or recordings be used in a way that it suggests that the Smithsonian endorses Licensee or its activity.
- Videographers must submit an equipment list to the Special Events Coordinator two weeks prior to the event. Videographers are allowed two handheld cameras and one weighted, stationary tripod. The tripod must be located away from emergency exits and not within a walkway. All cameras and lighting must be battery operated. All lighting setups must be approved in advance by the Special Events Coordinator.
- No more than four videographers will be permitted to work an event.

Filming for Commercial Purposes

- Filming for commercial purposes—including, but not limited to, television shows, documentary films, theatrical releases, web shows, etc.—at the National Museum of Natural History is subject to the procedures and criteria established by the Smithsonian Filming Committee (<https://newsdesk.si.edu/filming-requests>).
- Any requests for commercial filming at the museum must be made through the above website or the museum’s Office of Communications and Public Affairs (NMNH-Comms@si.edu or 202.633.2950).

Contracting

This attachment and the NMNH Guidelines may be provided at the time of inquiry to inform prospective licensees of the museum’s rules and requirements. This attachment will be incorporated into an Event Agreement that includes additional legal requirements. The event is not guaranteed until all parties sign an event contract and payment has been received.
