

Hazard Information Sheet Portsmouth Historic Dockyard

Guidelines for visiting teachers and group leaders (January 2025)

To ensure all visitors to Portsmouth Historic Dockyard have a safe and rewarding experience we have compiled these brief safety notes. These notes are primarily aimed at school and youth groups visiting on organised trips. It is the responsibility of teachers and group leaders to complete a full risk assessment prior to visiting (a requirement of most local education authorities) and this document does not replace your own assessment being undertaken.

All buildings and exhibits are assessed on a regular basis and maintained to a high standard, as are equipment and procedures (e.g. fire evacuation). Due to the nature of our attractions some hazards cannot be avoided but they can be mitigated for. They all may have raised artefacts, sharp edges, electrical hazards, fire hazards, trip/fall/slip hazards and rusty/dusty artefacts. First aid trained staff are available at all sites. Please approach the nearest members of staff if any assistance is required or an emergency occurs. All Front of house staff are trained in evacuation procedures; in the event of an alarm, please follow the instructions given by the staff and volunteers. Do not stop to collect your belongings. The muster point for each attraction is listed in the corresponding sections below.

All staff are DBS checked.

We have qualified First Aid staff available at all our sites. Please contact a member of staff if you need assistance.

Groups of more than 30 in size may have to split down into smaller groups whose entrance will be staggered to avoid overcrowding and allowing a better experience for you and others.

General site information:

Preliminary Visits

- Portsmouth Historic Dockyard offers free preliminary visits for all group leaders and we strongly recommend that a preliminary visit is carried out prior to each time you bring a group. This will enable you to become familiar with the site (and see what changes may have occurred since your last visit), assess any potential risks your group may encounter and consider the logistics of your visit (see how long it will take you to move between learning venues, where you will have lunch, where your drop-off/collection point will be etc).

On Arrival

- Our coach drop off points and parking for minibuses in Portsmouth are close to a busy road and bus station. Children will require close supervision.

- There is a car park at the Royal Navy Submarine Museum. Please note that other visitors are likely to be using it at the same time

Supervision

- Every effort has been made to make Portsmouth Historic Dockyard a safe environment for visitors but we request that groups are adequately supervised and that pupils move about the site in a safe and orderly manner. We recommend that pupils are accompanied in the following ratios but a minimum ratio of 1:12 is required: Key Stage 1: 1 free adult for every complete group of 5 children Key Stage 2-5: 1 free adult for every complete group of 8 children.
- Please see the COVID 19 guidelines below for specific information on current arrangements for groups including revised ratios

The General Environment

- Portsmouth Historic Dockyard is located within a controlled working environment and although the hazards are slight there are several of them – you will note uneven steps, low lighting levels and the proximity of water. At times there will also be movement of vehicles within the Historic Dockyard although this is kept to a minimum.
 - **Water** There are three areas in the Historic Dockyard where pupils will be near to the water:
 1. In front of Action Stations
 2. Behind HMS Victory and
 3. Alongside HMS Warrior.

There are handrails of a suitable height and strength at all these areas. There are also throw lines and life buoys available at points around the water area. Access to the Action Stations building can be gained via a variety of routes, but the preferred route is across one of the two Mast Pond crossings that lay alongside a pair of historic timber boathouses. These crossings are constructed from timber and can be slippery when wet. The water areas close to the building are fenced off with chain and post barriers.

Surfaces

A variety of surfaces - cobbles, concrete, ramps and stone steps make the ground uneven, particularly at the far end of the Historic Dockyard. If the group is made aware of these, the level or risk is slight and the likelihood of an accident occurring is minimal. Wheelchair users and those who find walking difficult should be warned of the difficulty and allowed extra time for moving from place to place.

Both outside and inside our ships and galleries you may find objects, features or uneven surfaces that can cause trips and slips. Please ensure that children walk not run during your visit.

Security

The National Museum of the Royal Navy is protected by 24 hour CCTV and security. All visitors entering the dockyard will be required to go through a bag check at the entrance. You are responsible for the conduct and health and safety of your group at all times. Although our staff are trained to take the highest care of the health and safety of your group, they are not legally responsible for them.

In the event of an emergency evacuation please follow the instructions of NMRN staff who are trained to ensure people get off the ships or out of the museum safely and quickly.

Conservation and Maintenance Work

There is always work happening across all our sites to keep our historic vessels and building safe and well maintained. You may come across areas barriered off during your visit. Please ensure that members of your group do not enter any of these areas.

Hazard Information -HMS Victory

- Historic ship
- Access via shallow steps or a metal ramp (to access the Lower Gun Deck for wheelchair users or those with limited mobility)
- Very cold temperatures during winter months
- Low light levels on lower decks
- Uneven flooring and very low ceilings and doorways-mind your head!
- Trip hazards on the decks eg ring bolts
- Steep ladders/stairs on board and in the Dry Dock
- Top decks and dock bottom exposed to the elements – slippery when wet
- Proximity to water (walkway behind the ship)

Muster point: Port Arena and next to entrance of HMS M.33 in Starboard Arena

Hazard Information -HMS Warrior

- Historic ship
- Access via a gang way which moves with the tides-it can be very steep at certain times of the day
- Uneven flooring and low ceilings
- Trip hazards eg ring bolts
- Steep ladders/stairs
- There are openings in the sides of the upper deck which are covered with netting only
- Top deck exposed to the elements – slippery when wet

- Moored alongside a purpose built jetty, proximity to water

Muster point: Turning circle on the jetty and outside Visitor Centre/Porters Lodge

Hazard Information -HMS M.33

- Historic Ship
- Lift from the dockyard down to the dry dock where she is located (currently out of order)
- Staircases/ladders down to the dry dock and between the three decks of the ship
- Uneven flooring
- Low lighting levels and narrow passage ways
- 9-minute audio-visual display – loud noises and flashing lights
- Trip hazards throughout
- Stairs, ladders, walkways and two decks exposed to the elements – slippery when wet
- Extreme temperatures dependent on the season

Muster point: Next to entrance of HMS M.33 in Starboard Arena

Discover More Backpacks-The backpacks used on board HMS Victory, HMS Warrior and HMS M33 are checked after each use and have their own risk assessments

Hazard Information -NMRNP

- Museum (Victory Gallery, Nelson Gallery, Sailing Navy Gallery, HMS Gallery, Temporary Exhibition Space)
- Level access to all galleries
- Uneven flooring through some galleries
- There is a lift between the first and second floors in Victory Gallery
- Immersive Film in the Victory Gallery is an Audio-visual experience with loud noises and moving images. It is a one-way route (you can exit through the end door into the Trafalgar Panorama room)

Discover More Chests in the Victory Gallery, Nelson Gallery and HMS Gallery are checked after each use and have their own risk assessments

Muster point: Next to entrance of HMS M.33 in Starboard Arena

Hazard Information-Mary Rose Museum

- Museum
- Rotating doors at the entrance
- Immersive sinking experience, may be distressing (option to miss out this element)
- Low light levels throughout

- Lifts between floors
- Proximity to water
- Trip hazards

Muster point: by the fence in the arena

Muster point: Outside Visitor Centre/Porters Lodge

Hazard Information- Royal Navy Submarine Museum

- Museum and historic submarines
- Located on a jetty, proximity to water
- Car park on site
- Vehicles eg deliveries on site
- Lifts and stairs lead to HMS Alliance and the first floor of the museum
- Interactive exhibits
- HMS Alliance
 - Second World War era submarine
 - Uneven flooring, low ceilings, confined space
 - Trip hazards eg steps through to compartments
 - Low light levels in places
 - Extreme temperatures dependent on the season
 - Original submarine with instruments and equipment still in place
- Holland 1
 - First World War era submarine
 - Confined space
 - Trip Hazards
 - Low light levels
- Busy Boats Bay
 - Equipment including soft play, play structures, water play etc
- Muster point: End of the Jetty and Holland 1 car park

Hazard Information- Explosion: Museum of Naval Firepower

- Museum
- Located on a jetty, proximity to water
- Car park on site
- Exhibits with moving parts and confined spaces
- Low light levels in the Grand Magazine
- Coastal Forces exhibition (opens Autumn 2021 date TBC)
 - Viewing platform with railings
 - Lift to access the viewing platform

- AV film with loud noises (gunfire etc) flashing lights and moving images
- Low light levels in places
- Handling box checked and monitored by staff

Muster point: Car park

Hazard Information- Harbour Tour, Boathouse 4, BH7 lunch room and Dockyard Apprentice

Harbour Tours are operated by Solent & Wightline Cruises; please contact them for risk assessment guidelines – solentcruises@clara.co.uk

Boathouse 4 and Dockyard Apprentice exhibitions are operated by Portsmouth Naval Base Property Trust; please contact them for risk assessment guidelines – info@pnbt.com

BH7 lunch room is operated by BaxterStorey; please contact them for risk assessment guidelines – boathouse7@baxterstorey.com

COVID 19 Guidelines

- The museum adheres to the government's guidelines which may be in place on any given visit date.
- Our staff are regularly sanitising our galleries and we have multiple hand sanitiser points throughout our sites
- Please do not visit if anyone in your group has symptoms of COVID 19 or has tested positive. If you should need to cancel a visit owing to COVID-19, you can rearrange for another date. The same applies if NMRN had to cancel or the site was closed due to COVID-19.

Review

This information is reviewed every 6 months and amended as required. Please ensure you are using the most up to date information to plan your trip.

Date of next review: December 2025

COVID guidelines are likely to change more frequently and will be updated as required but please do refer to our website for the most up to date information.

Please do get in touch by emailing phd.learning@nmrn.org.uk if you have any specific concerns and we will be very happy to help!