

Peak Periods – Crowd Management

1. Definition of Crowd Safety Goals and Overcrowding

Crowding occurs as a result of an excessively large number of people gathering in one area. Large crowds are a normal part of the operation of the Natural History Museum. From a commercial point of view large numbers may be desirable, but excessive crowding and poor crowd management can lead at worst to crushing, injury and even death and at the very least to such anxiety and stress that visitors decide not to come again or recommend a visit to others.

Crowd safety is primarily a management responsibility, which currently falls to the Visitor Services section of the Public Engagement Group, and requires the application of the best practices of health and safety management.

These guidelines help to ensure that adequate and effective controls are present in order that:

- the quality of the customer experience was not reduced by high volumes of visitors;
- health and safety requirements and standards are maintained; and
- the security of visitors, staff and Museum property is not compromised.

2. Identification of Points of Crowding or Potential Crowding

The following have been identified as critical areas in terms of over crowding issues:

- 2.1. Front entrance at Cromwell Road
- 2.2. Central Hall
- 2.3. Dinosaur Way
- 2.4. Jerwood Gallery
- 2.5. Fossil Way – Fossil Marine Reptiles
- 2.6. Bird Gallery
- 2.7. Lasting Impressions
- 2.8. Café
- 2.9. Restaurant
- 2.10. Sandwich Bar

This list may change depending upon the introduction of new special exhibitions and should be reviewed periodically.

3. Systems to Control Crowds and Minimise Congestion

Before each main holiday period, a checklist should be completed to ensure that all areas have considered the planning stage for managing the build up of crowds. An example of a checklist can be found below.

The following provisions have been introduced to assist with crowd management and have been noted against the areas of crowding or potential crowding as identified in 2. Above.

Front Entrance at Cromwell Road

One of the problems with this area is identifying the entry and exit door. During peak periods, a staff member will be positioned on the steps outside the entrance. They will direct visitors to the appropriate door. While queues are still present, this will be the left hand door into the Museum. Barriers will be in place to also help direct visitors to this door, and any queue will be formed in the front Courtyard area and then up the West ramp.

Towards the end of the day, when the number of visitors exiting the Museum is greater than those entering, the barriers on the front steps will be arranged to facilitate an easy exit, in that they will be moved to direct visitors down the East ramp. When the queue has dissipated, visitors will be able to enter via the East ramp, although the staff member at the entrance will need to ensure that they still enter via the left hand door.

A staff member will also be in position to direct visitors to the exit door.

Central Hall

The crowds in the Main Hall can be made more manageable by slowing down the entry of visitors. Using a staff member at the entrance easily does this. There may also be times when bag searching needs to be introduced at

the entrances as a security precaution. When busy, this creates a constantly moving queue line outside the Museum and prevents large numbers entering at once, swamping the Main Hall.

Tables and barriers will be used at the entrance door, angled in such a way as that all visitors are directed to the left of the pillars at the entrance, towards the information desk. This highlights the position of the desk so that visitors with queries can head straight there.

The Dinosaur Gallery queue can take up around half of the hall. A team of staff will be assigned to the Dinosaur Gallery and will work to keep the queue moving. Barriers will be placed in the hall to maximise the available space, and signs erected warning visitors of the length of the queue. A staff member will also be located at the front of the Museum advising visitors about the queue and directing visitors to other parts of the Museum.

Another measure to reduce the crowds in the Central Hall, and the Blue and Green Zones in general, is to have a staff member positioned at the corner of Exhibition Road and Cromwell Road with a handheld PA system asking visitors to enter via the Exhibition Road entrance. This will delay the build up of crowds in the Central Hall and increase the crowds in the usually under populated Red Zone.

Dinosaur Gallery

As mentioned above, a team of five staff will work solely in the Dinosaur Gallery. They will work on the queue line in the Central Hall, at the area before the steps up to the bridge area and at the tannoy system at the pit area. They will communicate to each other using the radio system to ensure that the queue remains moving.

They are also responsible for ensuring that a 'pulse' system is in place that allows a restricted number of visitors on to the walkway. This is restricted to 240 at any one time.

Special Exhibitions – Jerwood and Waterhouse Gallery

These Galleries can become busy when a popular exhibition is resident there. A timed ticket system is in place for paid entry exhibitions to restrict the number of visitors entering the Gallery. Sales can also be suspended from the till point at the Gallery to prevent a queue forming for ticket sales. All ticket sales would then be dealt with at the tills at the entrance to the Museum.

Fossil Way – Fossil Marine Retiles

This Gallery can be congested if the queue for the Restaurant moves into this space. The contract caterers will be responsible for effectively managing the queue in this area. Visitor Services will provide ropes and posts and advice on the best methods of doing this. There is an added complication in that the entrance to the Restaurant is also a route to the staff canteen and to a lift and stairs that will take Visitors to the Picnic Area. When a queue line is in place, defined by ropes and posts, the entrance to this area is dramatically reduced. Visitors should then be advised to take the alternative stairs and lift to the Picnic Area near the Museum Shop.

Bird Gallery

This is again a relatively narrow Gallery and is a main thoroughfare from the Red Zone to the Green Zone and vice versa. Staff presence in this area will help keep the flow moving, and any Learning activities should not be based in this area. Visitors will also be dissuaded from sitting on the floor in this gallery to either eat packed lunches or to draw specimens.

Lasting Impressions

The entry to Lasting Impressions from the red Zone is only wide enough for two people to pass at any one time, or one pushchair/wheelchair. This actually can help slow down the number of visitors entering the Green Zone but could cause a potential issue with congestion in the immediate area. A staff member will monitor the area to keep the flow going, and advise the Visitor Services Team Managers if the area is becoming too congested.

If this area becomes too congested, the Duty Manager may consider suspending entry to the Green Zone from the Red Zone and the Cromwell Road entrance.

Café

It is the responsibility of the contract caterers to ensure that this area does not become too congested and that the queue to the area is effectively managed. The Café Manager will ensure that only visitors purchasing items at the café use the tables, that Visitors are asked politely to vacate the area when they are finished and that tables are quickly cleared and made available for other visitors. They will also ensure that the 'footprint' of the tables does not exceed the border outlined in the mosaic floor to ensure a safe and adequate passageway to the other

galleries through the North Hall. The caterers can communicate using their own radio system, so they may decide to advise visitors to make their way to an alternative outlet if it is less busy.

The caterers will also advise the visitors waiting in the queue on the length of the queue and expected waiting time.

Restaurant

It is the responsibility of the contract caterers to ensure that this area does not become too congested and that the queue to the area is effectively managed. The Restaurant Manager will ensure that the head of the queue is managed and that Visitors are only allowed entry when a table is free. They will also ensure a suitable exit is provided for Visitors leaving the Restaurant, and this is facilitated with ropes and posts. The caterers can communicate using their own radio system, so they may decide to advise visitors to make their way to an alternative outlet if it is less busy.

The caterers will also advise the visitors waiting in the queue on the length of the queue and expected waiting time.

The Mary Anning Room is now used as an overspill eating area during the school holidays.

Sandwich Bar

It is the responsibility of the contract caterers to ensure that this area does not become too congested and that the queue to the area is effectively managed. The Café Manager will ensure that only visitors purchasing items at the café use the tables, that Visitors are asked politely to vacate the area when they are finished and that tables are quickly cleared and made available for other visitors. They will also ensure that the ropes and posts used for the queue line does not impede access to the fire exit or to the passenger lift. The caterers can communicate using their own radio system, so they may decide to advise visitors to make their way to an alternative outlet if it is less busy.

The caterers will also advise the visitors waiting in the queue on the length of the queue and expected waiting time.

Peak Period Checklist

Security Operations Manager		
Task	Date for Completion	Completed Yes/No
Liaise with Underground		
Subway open/closed		
Liaise with Science Museum regarding queues		
Staff to be briefed to ensure no visitors eat in galleries and are asked to move to picnic area/s		
Ensure that adequate staff have been organised for bag searches		

Visitor Services Team Manager		
Task	Date for Completion	Completed Yes/No
Ensure staff allocated to check queues and monitor external steps		
Ensure sufficient numbers of external coats		
Staff to be briefed to keep internal & external steps clear		
Staff to be briefed to ensure no visitors eat in galleries and are asked to move to picnic area/s		
List of first aider's to be given to the FOH Manager for the following days daily sheet produced by Security Control		
Adequate barriers to be available for internal and external queuing		
Signage to be produced/reviewed for one way systems		
Ensure batteries for portable PA systems are charged		

Commercial Operations Manager		
Task	Date for Completion	Completed Yes/No
Staff to be briefed to ensure no visitors eat in galleries and are asked to move to picnic area/s		

Housekeeping Operations Manager		
Task	Date for Completion	Completed Yes/No
Staff to be briefed to encourage visitors to use toilets in whale hall to assist with queues in north hall		
Staff to be briefed to ensure no visitors eat in galleries and are asked to move to picnic area/s		
Staff to be briefed to check external steps and report any issues to gardeners		
Staff to be briefed to focus on clearing eating areas		

Customer Services Manager		
Task	Date for Completion	Completed Yes/No
Obtain list and times of Gallery Characters		
Advise on any additional messages regarding crowd issues are added to the Internet		
Review one-way system signage and arrange replacements if necessary		

Benugo Manager		
Task	Date for Completion	Completed Yes/No
Staff to be briefed to focus on clearing eating areas		
Adequate barriers to be available for queues to all outlets		

Duty Manager		
Task	Date for Completion	Completed Yes/No
Up to date list of first aiders obtained from Health and Safety Section		
List of first aiders added to daily sheet produced by Security Control (Information passed to Security Operations Manager)		

Training, Retraining and Briefing Requirements	
Related Procedures/ Impacts on other areas	
Documentation/Recording Required?	

3/12/08