

Navigating the Museum of Science

GENERAL INFORMATION

Many exhibit components have “audio labels” to provide access to visitors who cannot read text labels. These audio labels are generally located on the front left corner of each component. The audio is received by a handset, similar to a phone handset. The audio labels are always activated by a 1-inch square button.

Many of the exhibit components are meant to be touched and manipulated, so feel free to touch anything that isn’t behind a barrier.

Exhibits and exhibit components change and move on a regular basis, so you may wish to consider sighted assistance for navigation purposes. If you are interested in a sighted guide, please contact our accessibility coordinator at accessibility@mos.org or 617-589-3102. We appreciate two weeks’ notice.

You may also want to contact the accessibility coordinator to get the most current information on exhibit components and their locations. We can also direct you to exhibits that are especially tactile, auditory, or olfactory.

BUILDING OVERVIEW

Looking from above, the Museum of Science is a long, rectangular structure. The building is approximately one million square feet, 1000 feet from end to end, and has a northwest to southeast orientation. The building was originally built in the 1950s and has been added to many times. It consists of several sections connected end to end over time to form a linear structure. It is located on the Charles River Dam, which spans the Charles River and connects Boston and Cambridge. Part of the building is in Cambridge, and part of the building is in Boston.

The MBTA’s Green Line Science Park station is approximately 200 yards from the Museum. The rear of the building (south) faces the Charles River, and the front of the building (north) faces McGrath Highway. At the southeastern end of the Museum are the domes of the Mugar Omni Theater and the Charles Hayden Planetarium and at the northwestern end there is a five-story parking garage. The Museum of Science exhibition area is divided into three wings: the Red Wing, the Green Wing, and the Blue Wing. In order from the southeast to the northwest, the Museum is laid out in a generally linear fashion as follows: Omni Theater and Planetarium, Red Wing, Green Wing, lobby, Blue Wing, parking garage. Each wing has three levels: Lower Level (LL), and Levels 1 and 2. There is a level 3 exhibition space in the Green Wing only, accessible only via the Green Wing elevator and stairway.

ARRIVING AT THE MAIN ENTRANCE

The main entrance is located in the approximate middle of the frontage of the building. There are both revolving and traditional doors. The traditional doors have a power assist feature. They can be opened by pressing a large button on a square post located in front of the doors.

When entering through these doors, you will be in the main lobby. The lobby is a rectangular area with high ceilings. Many of the walls are glass, including a floor to ceiling wall of windows on the back wall facing the Charles River. Upon entering, you step into a carpeted area around the entrance and when you reach the terrazzo floors you are at the lobby's central area. The Information Desk is on the left immediately after entering the front doors. Staff and volunteers can provide directions and information, as well as strollers, wheelchairs, electric scooters, Assistive Listening Devices, maps, first aid, and lost and found.

Gates to enter and exit the Green and the Blue Wings are directly across from and parallel to the main doors. Entry gates are in the middle, and exits are on either side. Standing in the center of the lobby, facing the gates and with your back to the main doors, the Red Wing corridor is on your left and the concourse is on your right. The Red Wing corridor leads to the store, the cafeteria, the Atrium, the Planetarium, and the Omni Theater. The concourse leads to the garage and has public restrooms.

You can purchase tickets at the box office, which is located on the concourse. The concourse is carpeted. Once you pass the transition to the carpeted concourse, the box office is located on your left. There are ticket windows which can be approached by paths outlined by cane-detectable ribboned stanchions. There are three separate lines, each with its own entrance. The first, closest to the lobby, is to pick up previously purchased tickets. The second is the members-only line. The third and final line is for general ticket sales.

ARRIVING FROM THE GARAGE

Each level of the garage can be accessed by stairs or by elevator. **[As of this update in May 2023, the garage elevator is out of service. We apologize for the disruption. For assistance, please call 617-723-2500 and someone will direct you.]** Taking the elevator, choose level 1. The elevator opens its back door on level 1. Follow a long narrow carpeted corridor, called the concourse, to the Museum's main lobby. There are restrooms on the right side of the concourse. You will know that you have reached the main lobby when the floor surface becomes terrazzo. Before arriving at the lobby, you will pass the box office on your right. There are ticket windows which can be approached by paths outlined by cane-detectable ribboned stanchions. There are three separate lines, each with its own entrance. The first, closest to the garage, is for general ticket sales. The second is the members-only line. The third and final line is to pick up previously purchased tickets.

Standing at the transition between the concourse and the lobby, facing the lobby, the Information Desk is located at 10 o'clock. The Information Desk is a low counter where you can find strollers, wheelchairs, and electric scooters to borrow. Information, Assistive Listening Devices, first aid, and lost and found are also located at the Information Desk. Standing on the transition between the concourse and the lobby, with your back to the concourse, the gates to the Green and Blue Wings are located on your right.

ARRIVING VIA PUBLIC TRANSIT

Science Park is the closest MBTA station. It is on the Green Line and is approximately 0.2 miles from the museum. Science Park station is wheelchair accessible and has elevator access to the train platforms.

For more information about public transportation in Greater Boston, visit www.mbta.com

Science Park station is surrounded by high volume roads. This intersection involves cars entering and exiting Storrow Drive and the Msgr. O'Brien Highway. It is also located near on- and off- ramps for Interstate 93. This is a complex and very busy intersection. There are no audible signals and cars frequently run lights. The traffic signals and walk signs are on a programmed cycle but this can be interrupted by pushing the "walk" buttons.

Cross Nashua Street heading north. You will cross two lanes of one-way traffic and the cars will be traveling right to left as you face the street crossing. The intersection will be to your left. When you have crossed, you will find yourself on a triangular traffic island. Turn 90° to your left.

When it is safe, cross Msgr. O'Brien Highway/Route 28/Charles River Dam Road. It is safest to cross with the parallel traffic on your left. You will cross approximately 5 lanes. The intersection will again be on your left.

When you reach the other side of the intersection, turn right. Continue on the sidewalk for approximately 500 feet. You will cross the Craigie drawbridge. This is an active drawbridge. When it is open, bars lower across the sidewalks and there are audible alarms. After crossing the bridge, you will reach a tactile transition strip. This strip is at the outlet of the museum's circular driveway. Turn 90° to your left and you will cross a seldom used section of the driveway. When you reach the other side, turn right and follow the sidewalk. The museum will be on your left, and the driveway will be on your right.

The main entrance is approximately 500 feet down on the left.

RED WING

LEVEL 1: MUSEUM STORE, RIVERVIEW CAFÉ, ATRIUM, MUGAR OMNI THEATER, and CHARLES HAYDEN PLANETARIUM

From the center of the main lobby, facing the entrance gates, with the main doors at your back, the Red Wing is to your left, at nine o'clock. It is a long corridor that ends at a high ceilinged, open area called The Atrium. As you walk down the Red Wing hallway from the lobby to the Atrium, you will pass by several amenities. There are benches on either side of the hallway at intervals. Storage lockers are on the right. The Riverview Café is also on the right side of the corridor. It offers a variety of food from quick lunches, such as sandwiches and pizza, to full meals. There is also a Starbucks full-service café. The Museum Store is located on the left-hand side of the hallway, directly across from the Riverview Café.

Going further along the Red Wing, the corridor will widen into a high-ceilinged open area called the Atrium. There are metal café chairs and tables in the Atrium. On the right side is the staircase down to the Lower Level. The elevator to Red Wing Level 2, the Mezzanine Level and the Lower Level is to the right of

that staircase. On the left wall you can find an audiokinetic sculpture and the *Soundstair* to Nichols Gallery, the special exhibit hall.

Beyond the Atrium are the Charles Hayden Planetarium on the right and the Mugar Omni Theater on the left. This area is entered by climbing three carpeted stairs, or by a wheelchair ramp immediately to the right of the stairs. Both the Planetarium and the Omni Theater require a separate ticket.

LEVEL 2: NICHOLS GALLERY (Special Exhibit Hall)

You can reach the Red Wing, Level 2 by taking either stairs or an elevator. Entering this gallery differs depending on the exhibit. If the exhibit requires a separate, timed ticket, Nichols Gallery is entered from the Atrium. Standing with one's back to the Red Wing corridor, the stairs are located on your left. The elevator is on the right side of the Atrium. It is to the right of the stairs heading down to the Lower Level. If the exhibit in Nichols Gallery is included in Exhibit Hall admission, Nichols Gallery is entered from the second level of the Green Wing, inside the Exhibit Halls.

LOWER LEVEL: LIVE ANIMAL CARE CENTER, RESTROOMS

Taking the elevator from the Atrium to the Lower Level: Step out of the elevator and walk straight and a doorway will be at 1 o'clock. After exiting the doorway, turn left and the *Live Animal Care Center* observation windows will be in front of you. The live animals are behind the windows. For restrooms, turn 180° around and walk past the doorway. Restrooms will be on your left. With Braille signage on the doors. A water fountain/bottle filler is between the restrooms.

Taking the stairs to the Lower Level: The staircase has a landing halfway down. The staircase then takes a 90-degree left turn. The area at the bottom of the stairs is carpeted. Turn to your left at the bottom of the stairs. Continue until you reach a terrazzo floor, turn left again and walk up a ramp. At the end will be the *Live Animal Care Center*. The live animals are behind the windows.

GREEN WING

LEVEL 1: GLOBE, NEW ENGLAND HABITATS

From the main lobby, enter through the gates in the center of the lobby where a Museum staff person will check your ticket. Turn to your left and you will be in the Green Wing. Once in the Green Wing, straight ahead is a very large model of the Earth, surrounded by a circular low barrier. With the globe in front of you and the lobby behind you, the *New England Habitats* exhibit is on your right. Beyond the globe at 11 o'clock, you will find a wide staircase heading both down to the Lower Level and up to Levels 2 and 3. If you prefer the elevator, take a left at the stairs. The passenger elevator is straight ahead. The freight elevator is on the right side of the hallway.

LEVEL 2: HALL OF HUMAN LIFE, NICHOLS GALLERY, ACCESSIBLE AND FAMILY RESTROOMS

Taking the elevator to Level 2: Exiting the elevator, the *Hall of Human Life* entrance is straight ahead.

Taking the stairs to Level 2: The stairs have two flights that switch back. At the top of the stairs turning right you will find an elevator thirty feet from the stairs. If turning left, twenty feet ahead is the entrance to the *Hall of Human Life*.

From the top of the stairs if walking straight, be aware of two large circular columns on your way, one on the right and then one on the left. Forty feet ahead turn right and, immediately after, turn right again to find a family restroom and accessible multi-user male and female restrooms, all with Braille signage on the door.

Past these restrooms, also on the right, is the entrance to Nichols Gallery. Across from Nichols Gallery is a balcony overlooking the main lobby. Activity in the lobby can be heard clearly at the entrance to Nichols Gallery.

From the top of the stairs, if you continue straight on, you will enter a carpeted area. This is an open bridge connecting Level 2 of the Green Wing to Level 2 of the Blue Wing. The bridge spans the lobby, and the noises and activity of the lobby can be clearly heard while crossing the bridge.

LEVEL 3: BRAD WASHBURN EXHIBIT, WEEMS SCULPTURES

Taking the elevator to Level 3: Out the elevator, cross a doorway and the *Brad Washburn* exhibition is displayed around the level 3 hallway in front of you. Ahead you can find the Katharine Lanes Weems animal sculptures inside display cases along a corridor. The entire floor is carpeted.

Taking the stairs to level 3: At the top of the stairs, the *Brad Washburn* exhibition will be straight ahead of you surrounding the hallway. Turn left and you can find the Katharine Lanes Weems animal sculptures inside display cases along a corridor. The entire floor is carpeted.

LOWER LEVEL: SHAPIRO FAMILY SCIENCE LIVE! STAGE, A BIRD'S WORLD, COLBY ROOM

Taking the elevator to the Lower Level: Out of the elevator, thirty feet ahead on the right side there are two sets of three-step stairs, separated by a landing that takes you to the exhibition *A Bird's World* in a carpeted area. If continuing straight ahead, past the stairs is the Shapiro Family Science Live! Stage area. The stage is set up as a small amphitheater, in a carpeted area. There are five rows of wooden, backless benches. The first row has wheelchair accommodation space. To access the exhibition *A Bird's World* without using stairs, there is a ramp on the right side of the stage seating area. The exhibition area of *A Bird's world* is carpeted.

Taking the stairs to the Lower Level: You will arrive in front of two sets of three-step stairs, separated by a landing, that take you to the *A Bird's World* exhibit, which is in a carpeted area. If you turn right as you reach the Lower Level, the Green Wing elevator is to the right, approximately thirty feet away. If you turn left at the bottom of the stairs, you will be at the seating area for the Shapiro Family Science Live! Stage.

BLUE WING

The Blue Wing is comprised of three levels. It is generally square and organized around a central open core. There are paths of travel on all four sides of this large, open central area. Exhibits are on the outside of the square, while the inside houses escalators, the central, open area, and the Current Science and Technology Center Stage on Level 1. The open area on Level 2 takes up all of the rectangular central space. On Level 1, the open, central space only takes up half of the rectangular area when compared to Level 2. The exhibits surround the open area on both levels. On the Lower Level, exhibits are also located in the

central area. The elevator and restrooms are located on all three levels along the southern wall, which is closest to the lobby.

LEVEL 1: Level 1 houses the *Current Science and Technology Center Stage*, located near the escalators to and from the Lower Level. The *Engineering Design Workshop* and *Artic Adventure*, as well as other permanent and rotating exhibits, are located on this level.

From the main lobby, enter the Exhibit Halls through the gates in the middle of the lobby, where a Museum staff person will scan your ticket. After passing through the gate, turn right and continue until you reach carpet. The carpet indicates the entrance to the Blue Wing.

You will enter by passing through a narrow corridor. If you take an immediate left after exiting the corridor, you will find both restrooms and an elevator along the left wall. They are labelled with Braille signage.

If you continue straight ahead after exiting the corridor, there will be exhibits on your right. The central open core will be on your left. On the left, past the open area, is the Gordon Current Science and Technology Stage area. Live talks may be given in this space throughout the day. There is bench seating. This area also houses escalators to and from the Lower Level and Level 2.

Continuing straight ahead, with exhibits on your right and open core and escalators on your left, you will reach doors after approximately 250 feet. This is the entrance to the Theater of Electricity. The Theater of Electricity is open on all three levels of the Blue Wing. It houses a 30-foot-tall Van de Graaff generator at its center. The actual theater stage is located on the Lower Level of theater, down a set of stairs. There is bench seating along a railing on the first and second levels.

If you turn left after entering the Blue Wing, Level 1, you will pass restrooms and the elevator on your left, and the open core on your right. The restrooms and the elevator have Braille signage. If you take a right, keeping the open core on your right, you will find exhibits on your left. The open core and the Current Science and Technology Stage area will be on your right.

LEVEL 2: EXHIBITS, 4D-THEATER, CAHNER'S THEATER, GARDEN WALK AND INSECT ZOO (The 4-D Theater requires a separate ticket.)

Taking the elevator to Level 2: Arriving on Level 2, on either side of the elevator are male and female bathrooms and two display cases. Turning right and then turning right again, you will be leaving the Blue Wing and heading toward the Green Wing, where the *Hall of Human Life* is located. You will cross an open bridge that connects the second floor of the Green and Blue Wings by crossing above the lobby.

Turning right and then left instead, you will continue into the BLUE WING and the 4-D Theater will be on your right, followed by a variety of exhibits, all on the right. The second-floor entrance to the Theater of Electricity is straight ahead.

Continuing around the square by taking a left turn before entering the Theater of Electricity, you will find the *Garden Walk and Insect Zoo* entrance on your right. Turning right again you will be on the fourth side of the square. Temporary exhibit space and Cahner's Theater will be on your right, the central core will be on your left.

LOWER LEVEL:

Taking the elevator to the Lower Level: Like all levels of the Blue Wing, there are exhibits lining the outside of the square. There are also exhibits in the center of this level.

If you take a right out of the elevator and right again, you will enter a narrow corridor, similar to the one on Level 1. This corridor connects the Blue Wing to the lower lobby, which houses the *Yawkey Gallery on the Charles River*. You can continue through that exhibit, and you will enter the Lower Level of the Green Wing, where the *A Bird's World* exhibit is located.

LOWER LOBBY

The lower lobby is directly below the rear main lobby. It houses the *Yawkey Gallery on the Charles River*. It can be reached by a long, spiral staircase. After entering the gates, the staircase is located at approximately 11 o'clock. This area can also be reached from the Lower Levels of the Blue Wing and the Green Wing.