

BAMFIELD MARINE SCIENCES CENTRE PUBLIC EDUCATION PROGRAM BOOKING POLICY

Please familiarize yourself with the following information. Following these procedures will make your booking and field trip smoother and more enjoyable for all. Thank you! We look forward to seeing you in Bamfield soon!

Please note, we do not automatically schedule any bookings, even if you come every year!

BOOKING PROCEDURE (click on the topic below to jump to it)

1. Familiarize yourself with program availability
2. Application deadlines
3. Making a booking request
4. Confirmation
5. Paying your deposit
6. Details to cover before departure
7. Returning your information sheet
8. Itinerary

Step One: Familiarize yourself with program availability.

1.1 **When is the program available?** Field trips visit BMSC from early September until late June each year. During this time, the programs run all day, every day excepting Christmas Break. Our program calendar is divided into two terms; Fall and Spring. The Fall term runs from September to mid-December. The Spring term runs from January to June.

1.2 **To whom is the program available?** The Public Education Program is available to groups of all types and interests. While our most common field trip groups are university and high school groups we also host elementary school groups, French Immersion, seniors, naturalist groups, clubs, girl guides, and even large family groups.

1.3 **What size of groups can come to BMSC?** We can handle groups size as small as 20 and as large as 48; the ideal size is 24. Boat capacity is 12 so groups of 12, or multiples there of, work well. We prefer groups slightly under or equal, rather than slightly over, multiples of twelve. Under special circumstances with special permission there is sometimes opportunity for other group sizes or even individuals to participate in programs at Bamfield Marine Sciences Centre.

(See below).

If all this sounds good, go to Step 2, otherwise explore the following for troubleshooting tips.

1.4 **What if my group is too big?** Due to limited resources at this popular shared-use facility, the maximum group size that the Centre can normally accommodate is 48 people. It is our experience that groups larger than 48 do not allow for an optimum learning experience. However, requests can be made for larger groups. We can accommodate them, if resources allow. When this occurs, chaperone to student ratios become particularly crucial.

1.5 **What if my group is too small?** If your group is smaller than 20 but greater than 10, and you have flexibility around booking dates, we recommend that you submit a booking request. We do our best to schedule your group with another small group with similar learning objectives. If we are not able to book you with another small group, you will be charged for 20 participants.

1.6 **What if I am not part of a group?** Individual adults: We do not run a program for individual adults. However the opportunity does exist to volunteer as a youth forum chaperone (see below for information on forums). As a chaperone, you will have the opportunity to experience field trips, labs, and all that our program has to offer, with the added enjoyment of being in a leadership role with keen, extraordinary youth from around BC. A criminal records check may be required if you are not a registered teacher. Previous volunteers have thoroughly enjoyed the experience. If you are interested in applying for this position contact the Public Education Program Co-ordinator, Anne Stewart, at astewart@bms.bc.ca.

High school students:

- Youth Forum: Each year the Public Education Program hosts a few Youth Forums on biodiversity. These forums are opportunities for grade 11 and 12 youth from around BC to do work experience at BMSC. For more information on when the next forum is email Anne Stewart at: astewart@bms.bc.ca. If you are interested in applying to participate in a youth forum, send the Public Education Program a resume and letter of introduction; include who you are, what you've done, and why you would like to participate in a forum at the Centre.
- Independent work experience: Each year the Public Education department accepts a few grade 12 students to participate in independent work experience. The first step in this application process is to have your school's work experience co-ordinator contact the Public Education Program Co-ordinator, Anne Stewart.

1.7 **What if program dates do not work for me?** Although our full program can

only run September to April (see 1.1), special arrangements can be made to have an off-site program outside these dates. In these circumstances, off site accommodation may be necessary. If you are interested in exploring this option for your group make inquiries following the procedures in step three indicating your preference for an off-site program.

Step Two: Familiarize yourself with application deadlines

2.1 **Application Deadlines:** Fall Term (September - December): April 30 Spring Term (January -April): July 31

If this all sounds good, go to Step 3, otherwise explore the following for troubleshooting tips.

2.2 **What do I do if I miss the deadline?** If the deadline has past, this means that the calendar for the term has already been created. It is still worth submitting a booking request as there may still be space available. If space is not available, do not fear, we maintain an active waiting list for each term.

2.3 **What do I do if I'm not sure I can commit?** A deposit is required to secure your spot. If you are not sure that you can commit but wish to secure a spot, you risk losing your deposit. If you are not sure that you can commit and do not wish to risk a deposit, we cannot hold a position for you. Deposits can also be forwarded under some circumstances. (see 5.4 regarding cancellations)

Step Three: Submit a formal booking request

3.1 **What is a formal booking request?** We do not have a booking request form. Instead a formal application means that you send (fax/email/or post) us written information (see 3.2). It can be a note faxed, a request emailed, a napkin sent by post (see 3.3). Just WRITE IT DOWN. We have too many scattered staff to have it any other way. Even if you have a wonderful phone conversation with a staff member, we still need a formal (i.e. written) request.

3.2 **What to include in a formal booking request.** A formal booking request must include the following information:

- Your name and the name of the school or organization you are bringing
- At least two of the following: address, phone number, fax number, or email
- The estimated group size you will be bringing; this number includes all persons, including chaperones, coming on the field trip. It is important to consider this number carefully, as we may not be able to increase it by much.
- The length of your desired stay

- 3 date options, in order of preference
- The age, grade and/or knowledge level of the group
- Any information you can give us about learning objectives for your field trip

3.3 Where do I Apply?

Contact Anne Stewart:

By email: astewart@bms.bc.ca

By fax: 250-728-3452

By Post: Public Education Program

Bamfield Marine Science Centre

Bamfield BC, V0R 1B0

3.4 What are the booking priorities?

1. University courses are given first priority in choosing dates for field trips, if they let us know 6 months prior to the time of the field trip. If professors are unsure about whether they will have a field trip, we suggest they make a tentative booking.
2. Adult groups will be given priority for weekend dates.
3. Alberta and interior B.C. groups will also be given some priority for dates including a Saturday night so that they may qualify for cheaper airfares.
4. Schools that are actually running a marine science course or unit and groups that are a collection of interested students from more than one school will be given special consideration.
5. We will only be able to ensure space for a school group every second year. Due to the large number of groups interested in a booking and the limited capacity of the marine station, it may not be possible to provide bookings more often than alternate years. If space permits, or the group is able to come during the slower periods of the year (late November to late January) we may be able to accommodate some groups every year.
6. **Groups whose lack of participation, unfit behaviour or lack of supervision limit the usefulness of a BMSC field trip will be assigned a low priority.**

Step Four: Receive confirmation of booking reservation.

4.1 **When should I expect confirmation of my booking request?** Spring booking letters go out in early September. Fall booking letters go out in early May. Ad hoc booking letters go out as soon as possible.

4.2 **What will I receive in my confirmation package?** Dates, costs, deposit requirement and due date, and the field trip information sheet that needs to be filled out and returned as soon as possible.

Step Five: Confirm Booking Reservation by paying deposit.

- 5.1 **How much is the deposit?** For groups under 35, we require a deposit of \$100/day. For groups of 35 and over we require a deposit of \$200/day.
- 5.2 **When is it due?** Immediately upon being offered booking dates. Your spot is not guaranteed until the deposit is paid. Do not send this fee until we have notified you of your booking dates.
- 5.3 **How do I pay the deposit?** By cheque or money order sent in the mail (see 3.3 for address) or by VISA over the phone. To pay by credit card, call our main office between 8:30 and 4:30 Monday to Friday at 250-728-3301 local 221 or 211.
- 5.4 **Under what circumstances can I have my deposit refunded?** This deposit is refundable **only** if cancellation occurs 60 days prior to your trip

Step Six: Arrange Details on your end:

6.1 What details am I responsible for?

Transportation: You are responsible for planning and financing your group's transportation to and from the Centre. Because we know the area so well, we may be able to provide advice. Access to Bamfield is available by road or water. Both boats and buses can be chartered.

Chaperones: For youth groups we require a 10:1 student to teacher ratio. For mixed sex youth groups we require both a female and male chaperone. The program works best when the chaperones are regular teachers of the students they are accompanying. We understand this is not always possible, on occasion other staff or parent volunteers may accompany the group in the role of a chaperone. The chaperones are required to participate in all activities. As well, they are required to sleep in the dormitories with the students and are responsible for all discipline.

Establishing Objectives for your Field Trip: Communicate clearly to your group members, your students and us, why it is that you are coming to Bamfield and what it is that you hope to get out of it. We pride ourselves on the flexibility of the program. We want to build your itinerary around what most excites you and your group.

Prepare the Participants: Groups who are prepared and aware of the expectations placed on them as well as the opportunities presented will get the most out of their experiences. We recommend some sort of screening process. Many schools also have the students sign a code of conduct as well as having the usual parental consent (we are not responsible for waivers).

Step Seven: Submit Your Completed Field Trip information sheet:

7.1 What do I do if my group numbers are different from the booking request numbers?

A small number adjustment is allowed. Plus or minus 2 people is fine, just let us know well in advance. If the adjustment is more than that, you need to seek special permission from our office. Our accommodation is limited, so large adjustments cannot always be granted. If the group size drops closer than 15 days prior to trip, you will be charged for the original number. If the group size increases there will be an additional charge of \$20.00 for every extra person.

7.2 What do I do if I do not know all of the information requested? Send us what you can. Where you do not have the required information, make a note of when we can expect to receive this information from you. It is important that we receive all of this information **at least three weeks** in advance of your trip. Please take the initiative to communicate your information with us, we would much rather spend our resources planning fantastic activities for your arrival rather than on requesting information.

7.3 Why is the information requested so important? Our Centre is highly utilized. We have limited beds and are often completely full. This is why your group numbers and gender break down are so important to us. We want to ensure that everybody has an appropriate and comfortable place to sleep. Our centre is also very isolated. We receive supplies only once a week and must place our order a week prior to that. We are able to meet the needs of almost any special diet, but we do need advanced notice in order to plan. Our isolation also means that medical resources are limited. We must be informed of any allergies in order to assess that this is an appropriate travel destination for the participant. Anybody who may require hospitalization is advised by the Red Cross to stay at home. We also need this information in order to plan your itinerary!

Step Eight: Itinerary Building

8.1 How do I get my itinerary? Before your scheduled arrival, our Program Coordinator will send you a detailed itinerary. This itinerary is constructed based on the information you sent us in your booking request and information sheets. We cannot plan your itinerary until you get this information to us! It is also based around tides and access to boats and labs.

8.2 What if I want to make changes to my itinerary? Our itineraries are always flexible. They have to be, as our weather often decides changes for us. If there is anything you would like to see changed on the itinerary contact the Public Education Coordinator, Anne Stewart, by email astewart@bms.bc.ca or phone 250-728-3301 ext. 226 to discuss these changes. Perhaps you want to work your students more or less, or be outside more or wish to create a different emphasis for the trip. We are interested in

building the best itinerary for your needs and welcome your participation in this process.
Could I have an example of an itinerary? Sure! There are pdf versions on the website.
www.bms.bc.ca

Step Nine: Arrive at Bamfield and have a wonderful field trip!!!