



MYSTIC
AQUARIUM
INSTITUTE FOR
EXPLORATION

Thank you for inquiring about or reserving an overnight at Mystic Aquarium & Institute for Exploration. This letter contains information which I am asking you to please share with all the adults involved with the event. This will help to ensure that everyone understands our rules and knows what to expect for the evening. If you have information from our past overnight seasons, please discard it, as it is no longer valid.

This program is designed for both Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts and their chaperones. Overnights are held Friday or Saturday nights during October, November and January through May. We do **not** hold Girl Scout and Boy Scout events on the same nights. We have a minimum number requirement of 100 participants per overnight and a maximum number of 150 participants allowed. This number is regulated by the Fire Marshall and is not adjustable.

Participants are allowed into the aquarium at 7:00 PM on their assigned evening. The aquarium closes at 6:00 PM, giving the staff 1 hour to set up. Early entry is not permitted. Each participant will attend all 5 classes during the evening. The classes for 2010-2011 will include a special outdoor tour, a squid dissection, a touch and learn, Turtles! And a fish hunt.

We do assign sleeping areas on the main floor. The participants will be allowed to set up their areas **after** the final wrap up meeting as we use the floor space during the evening. Assignments are based on the size of the group and the ages involved. I do not accept special requests for certain areas. Space is limited so please be prepared to sleep next to another person.

Departure from the Aquarium is at 8:30am, unless we are able to allow you to stay later. This cannot be determined ahead of time. If a change occurs, the individual booking the event will be notified. The Aquarium reopens at 9:00am (10:00am during December-March).

This letter contains information on:

- The schedule for the evening
- Overnight expectations for chaperones and leaders
- How to find us
- Inclement weather information
- What to bring with you and what **not** to bring

If you have any further questions please contact Becky Hirsh at:

Mystic Aquarium, 55 Coogan Boulevard, Mystic, CT 06355
860-572-5955 ext 158
FAX 860-572-5969
bhirsh@mysticaquarium.org

2010 – 2011 OVERNIGHT SCHEDULE

Please be aware that this schedule will be modified as needed by the Mystic Aquarium staff at any time as needed.

EVENING

6:45 PM – Groups should arrive at the Aquarium.

7:00 PM – Groups are allowed to enter the Aquarium. Please take note of how many adults and children are in your group. Tell staff of any people not attending/ or substituting upon entry. Please have your entire pack/troop enter as one. **Snack is provided at this time. You may either eat snack now, or later, after the classes are completed.** Late arrivals will receive snack at the end of the evening.

7:30 PM – Opening meeting

7:45 PM – Activity sessions: Squid Dissection, Outdoor/BTS Tour, Touch and Learn, Turtles!, Fish Hunt

10:15 PM – Wrap – up meeting – find out where you will be sleeping.

10:30 PM – Get ready for bed

11:00 PM – Lights Out – Sleep

Morning

6:30 AM – Rise and Shine. Pack all of your belongings

7:00 AM – Move belongings to your car. You will then be escorted on a morning observation tour of the outdoor exhibits.

7:30 AM – Breakfast is served after your morning tour. This allows us to space out the people and reduce the wait time for breakfast.

8:30 AM – Gift shop opens – The gift shop is independent from the Aquarium. We do not have any control over their hours.

8:30 AM – All participants must exit the Aquarium. Participants' hands are stamped for same day re-entry, and scouts receive a patch.

2010 – 2011 Mystic Aquarium Overnight Expectations

We are so excited that your group has decided to join us for an overnight adventure in our fabulous underwater world. Mystic Aquarium & Institute for Exploration is a living museum, and your group will have the unique opportunity to sleep amongst our animals and their homes. We expect the utmost respect from our slumber-party guests towards our collection of animals. With this in mind, we look forward to sharing a great night with you and your group! There's no doubt that all will leave with lasting memories of this experience.

AS A CHAPERONE, we ask for your assistance in enforcing the following guidelines, during the overnight, with each participant. While our staff is responsible for providing an unforgettable overnight experience, **you** are responsible for insuring appropriate behavior and involvement from your participants. We appreciate your commitment to this educational event.

Overnight Guidelines – Please inform groups of these “rules” prior to their event.

- Follow staff instructions at all times
- Refrain from putting hands or objects in exhibits, or tapping on the glass
- Please use indoor voices, yelling and loud talking is not necessary
- Clean-up materials and personal belongings during your stay
- Understand that “lights out” means sleep
- Do not bring video games, walkmans, or any other distracting devices
- There is no smoking or chewing gum, and alcohol is prohibited while at the aquarium
- Please do not climb on rocks, walls, or benches
- Do not run, or skate while at the Aquarium
- We ask that no one bring their own food or beverages into the Aquarium. A light evening snack and continental breakfast will be provided. *Exception: Participants with specific food allergies or requirements please feel free to bring what you will need.*
- **Do not** leave the Aquarium main building or front gates without a staff member
- **Dinner will not be served. Please eat prior to arrival. Snack will be served between 7:00pm and 7:30pm.**
- **Chaperones must remain with their group during each activity, providing assistance when necessary.**

IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE YOUR VISIT:

1. Please be sure that your group eats dinner prior to their arrival. We will provide a light evening snack between 7:00pm – 7:30pm and a continental breakfast.
2. Groups must remove all belongings from the Aquarium by 8:30 am following the overnight, in order for the facility to open to the public at 9:00 am or 10:00am depending on the season (later opening is generally December-February). Times are subject to change.
3. Upon leaving at 8:30 am, group members will receive a hand stamp that entitles them to unlimited re-entry that day. This is only good for the individual who stayed the night. It is a courtesy on the part of the Aquarium and can not be applied to another day or person.
4. During your stay, groups will use the indoor public restrooms. Sorry – no showers in the morning.

5. Should an emergency occur, Mystic Aquarium Staff are well-practiced with the facility's medical and evacuation plan and procedures.
6. Additional Fee Activities: The Mystic Aquarium Gift Shop will be open at 8:30 am the following morning. Times are subject to change.

WHEN YOU ARRIVE AT THE AQUARIUM

1. Please park your vehicles in the main parking lot located on Coogan Boulevard.
2. **Doors will open at 7:00 pm.** Your entire group needs to arrive prior to this time in order to facilitate the check in process. Please have everyone enter together.
3. Aquarium doors are locked at night. Early-birds and late comers may find themselves out in the cold. If you arrive after check-in time, please call 860-572-5955 ext 425. We will come let you in as soon as someone is available.
4. Since your group will have pre-paid for the event, no exchange of money will take place at the door.

FEES – REFUNDS – CANCELLATIONS

- * Participants will be registering through either their council..
Minimum chaperone ratios are as follows (children ages 8 –12 require a 1:5 adult to child ratio, children ages 13-17 require a 1:8 adult to child ratio).
- * A minimum of 100 and a maximum of 150 participants can be accommodated, including chaperones. Smaller groups are booked into larger events.
- * A non-refundable deposit of \$500 and headcount is due to the Aquarium from the council or individual booking the event within 30 days of booking a date.
- * **One final group headcount and one full group payment is due to the Aquarium from the council no later than 30 days prior to the scheduled overnight.**
- * Inside 30 days of the overnight, no refunds will be given for group cancellation or for individual no-shows.
Outside of 30 days of the overnight there will be a 20% cancellation fee charged for any cancellations. The deposit will not be returned.
We encourage finding replacements for kids who may be sick or unable to attend.

HOW TO FIND US

**We are conveniently located off of Interstate 95 at Exit 90 (Mystic). Our address for GPS use is:
55 Coogan Boulevard, Mystic, CT 06355**

IN THE EVENT OF INCLEMENT WEATHER...2010-2011

If the weather on the day or evening of your overnight seems questionable, please call our Education Program Information Box at **(860) 572-5955 ext 218** for a recorded message regarding the status of your program. The message will include the time when it was left, and a brief explanation as to our decision regarding the program. We understand that the weather varies throughout the state, but we do make our ultimate decision based on the forecast for the surrounding Mystic area. In the event that we cancel your program, your program fee will be refunded in full. We apologize, but at this time we are unable to offer alternate dates for weather cancellations.

If you have any questions regarding this policy **prior to the day of the event**, please call Becky at (860) 572-5955 ext 158. Thank you.

IN THE EVENT OF A LATE ARRIVAL ...

If you find that you will be arriving at the Aquarium after 7:30pm on the night of your event, please do not worry. At 7:30pm we do shut and lock the doors to the facility. Once you arrive, please call **(860) 572-5955 ext 425** and a staff member will be out as soon as possible to let you in.

WHAT TO BRING ON YOUR 2010-2011 MYSTIC AQUARIUM LARGE GROUP OVERNIGHT

Please be sure to label all of your belongings. Items left behind will be kept for 5 days.

You may wish to have:

Sleeping Bag and Pillow

Sleeping Pad **Air Mattresses and cots are not allowed due to space limitations and for safety reasons.**

Contact Becky at 860-572-5955 ext 158 if needed for medical reason. Only those who contact Becky before the day of the overnight will be allowed to use an air mattress. We are limited as to how many we can allow each night. This will be enforced. We request your cooperation with this matter.

Flashlight

Toiletries

Face Towel/Wash cloth (large towels are not needed, as showers are not available)

Pajamas

Outer clothing for the **nighttime outdoor tour** (Depending on the time of year, this may mean hat, gloves, raincoat, or even boots. Please dress accordingly, you will be outside for part of the evening, rain or shine.)

Change of clothes

Camera

Money for extra items: Aquarium store (opens at 8:30 am),

Water bottle. - Must be able to be closed tightly. There are water fountains available.

Please eat dinner before arrival. Snack is from 7:00pm – 7:30pm. You may eat your snack when you come in or after the classes are completed.

Snack items may include: fruit snacks, Regular Goldfish, Cheezit crackers, Pretzels, granola bars, animal crackers, juice and water. Breakfast may include: bacon and eggs, toast, cereal, muffins, danish, milk and juice.

***** PLEASE DO NOT BRING *****

Please do not bring the following items into the Aquarium while visiting for the night: cigarettes

(this is a smoke free environment, please respect this for the safety of our animals), drugs, alcohol, gum, any electronics such as game players and IPODS, roller sneakers (these are a safety issue), and food or beverages (unless you have a food allergy).