

Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center

Guidelines for Group Visits

Thank you for choosing to visit the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center (TFFC). Please share this information with all leaders of your group. **A free smartphone/tablet app is available for download. Go to your device's app store, type in TFFC, and download to your device.**

When Making Your Reservation

- Call (903) 676-2277 for reservations by phone or complete the on-line School/Youth Group Reservation Form on the TFFC website. www.tpwd.state.tx.us/spdest/visitorcenters/tffc/education/group
- Organized School/Youth Groups of 10 or more students must make reservations at least 14 days in advance to be eligible for discounted group rates. The maximum size for daily group reservations is 300 students & chaperones; this limit is imposed in order for visitors to have a great experience at TFFC.
- We recommend that you contact us early for best selection of dates and times. Have an alternate date selected when making your reservation request. **Please be aware that TFFC experiences high visitation during the spring.**
- Reservation requests are pending until processed with confirmed dates.

Pre-Trip Planning

- Reservation confirmations and detailed schedules are sent via email.
- Teachers and group facilitators are encouraged to visit TFFC prior to their group visit. **Download TFFC app!**
- Discuss the chaperone duties with all chaperones and make sure they understand their responsibilities. Please be aware **in order to fish at TFFC, students 4th grade and younger are required to have a 1:3 chaperone to child ratio.** An alternate program is available for those not meeting the 1:3 ratio.
- We recommend that chaperones do not bring other children with them. This will make it easier for them to chaperone their assigned student group.
- Carefully review the "Guidelines for Student Behavior" with your students.
- Picnic areas are located on the TFFC grounds. Snacks are available for sale in the Gift Shop and from vending machines. No food or drinks are allowed in the Theater or on the tram.

Weekday groups: Schedules are provided for weekday groups with reservations made at least 14 days in advance. **Please expect an email from our Education staff two weeks prior to your field trip to finalize your schedule.** Questions can be directed to: **Craig Brooks at (903) 670-2222** email: craig.brooks@tpwd.texas.gov or **Zoe Ann Stinchcomb at (903) 670-2238** email: zoeann.stinchcomb@tpwd.texas.gov. Plan to split large groups into smaller groups according to Education staff instructions for the tram, fishing and dive show. Each group of students must be accompanied by a teacher/chaperone.

Weekend groups: Schedules are not provided for weekend groups; please plan your visit according to published TFFC activities. <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/spdest/visitorcenters/tffc/visit/information/>

Arrival

- Please be sure to arrive in plenty of time to unload students, arrange groups and go through admissions prior to your scheduled activities.
- **Chaperones must accompany students in the Gift Shop.** Please limit 15 students at a time in the Gift Shop.
- TFFC does not have storage space. Please leave coolers, lunches, and personal belongings on the bus.

Late Arrival and Cancellation Policy

TFFC staff would appreciate receiving at least a 48-hour notice of cancellations. Groups are responsible for their arrival time. **If you will be arriving late or need to cancel your reservation, please call 903-676-2277.**

IF YOUR GROUP IS RUNNING MORE THAN 15 MINUTES LATE WE CANNOT GUARANTEE THAT ALL ACTIVITIES WILL OCCUR AS SCHEDULED.

Field Trip Payment

School/Youth Group discounted admission rates are available for groups making reservations at least two weeks in advance. A minimum of 10 students is required to receive the discount on admission fees. Payment is due upon arrival, with the exception of groups that provide a purchase order (fax PO to 903-675-5818). Payment **MUST** be consolidated and made in the form of check, credit card, or cash. When you arrive at TFFC please have the exact count of students, teachers, and adult chaperones and be prepared to pay in one transaction. Adult chaperones not included in the group payment must advise admission staff that they are chaperones in order to receive the discounted group rate.

Wristbands will be issued to all paid adults in your group and serve as admission tickets. Wristbands are non-transferable, non-replaceable tickets for admission to TFFC; all adults in your group must wear a wristband.

Guidelines for Student Behavior

Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center (TFFC) staff and volunteers want everyone involved to have fun while learning about our natural resources. We consider your field trip to TFFC to be an extension of your classroom. As such, our expectations are that teachers, chaperones and students will conduct themselves in a manner that reflects acceptable behaviors in your classroom. Please make sure all teachers, chaperones and/or group facilitators have copies of this information.

- Teachers/chaperones are responsible for keeping their group together and for monitoring student conduct.
- Follow school rules. Be courteous and respectful of other visitors. Help students to use their quiet voices and walk through the exhibits. Do not allow students to climb on exhibits or railings.
- Students must stay with their teacher or chaperone at all times.
- No running is allowed in the exhibit areas.
- Help protect our living resources (animals and plants). Do not allow students to disturb animals by tapping on windows/aquariums. Please prevent students from chasing any animals at TFFC. Do not allow students to drop or throw anything into an exhibit.
- TFFC exhibit animals are fed scientifically prepared diets. Please help keep all the animals healthy by not feeding them “people food”. Duck and fish food dispensers (25¢) are available.
- Leave no trace! Please make sure to keep TFFC looking the way you found it when you arrived – dispose of trash appropriately, and please remind students and chaperones not to pick any of the foliage (leaves, flowers, etc.) around the grounds. This year’s wildflowers and seed pods provide the seeds for next year’s wildflowers and foliage.
- Keep talking and noise to a minimum during presentations, such as the dive show, tram tour and fishing orientation. Please be respectful of the presenters. Students, **teachers and chaperones** are asked to not use cell phones during presentations, such as the dive show, tram or fishing orientation. The exception to this is to take photographs.
- Students please check with your teacher to determine when your group may visit the Gift Shop. Only 15 students are allowed at the Gift Shop at one time and must be accompanied by chaperone(s).
- Students who are disrespectful or disruptive will be asked to leave the group so that others have the opportunity to participate in the program.