Welcome to the Columbia River Maritime Museum! At CRMM, you will get a chance to explore the Pacific Northwest’s history.
You will see the lightship Columbia sitting in the water outside the museum building.
When you first walk into the Columbia River Maritime Museum, you will see our Visitor Services staff standing behind the front desk.
At the front desk, you can purchase tickets to the museum and to see a movie in our 3D theater. You can also get a map of our exhibits to plan out what you will see.
You may have to wait in line if the museum is busy. The busiest times of day are in the late morning/early afternoon, and when it is raining. The museum’s only restrooms are to the left of the front desk.
The Columbia Theater shows 3D movies every half hour for $5 per person. There is one movie that plays on the hour (e.g., 3:00) and another on the half hour (e.g., 3:30). Please do not enter the theater before getting your 3D glasses from a staff member! Note that the theater can be very dark and loud.
The museum store is also at the front of the building across from the front desk. You can check it out at any point during your visit! Once you have your ticket, you can leave and re-enter the museum all day, from 9:30am-5pm.
Some exhibits in the museum are louder than others. The loudest exhibit at CRMM is about the U.S. Coast Guard in the Brix Maritime Hall. You may need to use a pair of headphones to muffle the noise. These are available at the front desk.
The Brix Maritime Hall has lots of natural light and a very high ceiling. You can keep moving to the exhibits at the back of the museum if the large space feels overwhelming. The rest of the galleries are smaller, darker, and quieter.
In the galleries there may be some things within reach. Those are okay to touch! Don’t lean over any glass, railing, or wall between you and an artifact.
The lightship Columbia outside the main building is also part of the museum! When you’re ready to see it, you can go out the doors located near the front desk entrance and turn right along the pier. Sometimes the lightship is closed at high tide for our visitors’ safety. You can ask the front desk whether the lightship is open or not.
There is a set of stairs and gangway on the 17th Street Pier to get onto Lightship Columbia. The angle of the gangway changes and can be very steep depending on the tide. Even though you can see down to the water, you can safely get across to the ship. There are railings to help and watch your step!
The Lightship Columbia functioned as a floating lighthouse to mark the mouth of the Columbia River from 1951-1979. Since the lightship was essentially a small town anchored 5 miles out to sea, all of the supplies for the crew had to be on board. The lightship had a crew of 17 men who worked 2-4 week rotations, with 10 men on duty at a time. Life on board consisted of long periods of monotony punctuated by fierce storms, particularly in the winter.

The lightship Columbia is not physically accessible. You can check out a digital tour of the ship on our website at crmm.org under the "Exhibits" tab.
Below deck, you may find yourself in small spaces with low lighting. The lightship may have a strong smell, especially in the summertime.
Inside you can see the galley (kitchen), dining area, and bunkbeds where sailors slept!
You may notice the large brown posts attached to the lightship. This is how it stays in place, but you may still feel the waves move the ship. This is a normal part of being on a ship, but if you are feeling queasy you can go to the top deck for some fresh air!
The Barbey Maritime Center and Warnock Commons and Model Boat Pond are also part of the Columbia River Maritime Museum.
You can come by the Boat Pond anytime with a boat of your own! The museum also offers rentals during the spring and summer with a suggested donation of $5.
Thank you for visiting the Columbia River Maritime Museum! We hope to see you again soon.