



PO Box 530, Sandstone, MN 55072
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Website: www.audubon-center.org

GROUP USE POLICIES & INFORMATION

Please read thoroughly

All members of your party should be made aware of our policies; violation of policies may result in extra charges or visitors being asked to leave the Center property.

Environmental Respect

The Audubon Center is an environmental education center dedicated to sustaining and improving the environment, and teaching others how to do the same. We practice natural resource conservation and ask all visitors and participants to limit or eliminate disposables, recycle proper materials, shut off lights and faucets when not in immediate use, keep windows and doors closed during heating and cooling seasons, and reduce food waste at meals.

Group Management

Often there are other groups booked at the Center during your stay. We ask that you respect anyone who is simultaneously using our facility. There are often families or children touring our grounds, so please be aware of your language, as voices can carry far. If issues arise between groups staying at the center, you are asked to inform a staff member or your liaison immediately. Please treat all Center staff, equipment, facilities, and grounds with courtesy and respect. Do not remove any items from walls or any rooms without prior approval. Groups will be charged for any broken, damaged, or vandalized items.

Arrival and Departure Times

Our normal check-in time is 3:00 p.m. and check-out time is 10:30 a.m. Occasionally, you may be allowed to arrive earlier or later, depending on other groups' arrival/departure times. We cannot guarantee early arrival or late departure until one week prior to your event. Usually arrangements can be made to utilize other space at the Center until your accommodations are ready for you.

Your Liaison

A staff member or intern liaison will be assigned to your group to serve as your main contact during your stay. During normal business hours, your liaison will be available via radio or in person to answer questions and deal with any problems that may arise; during nighttime hours, radio use is strictly to be used for emergencies only.

Medical & Release Forms

All youth participants staying overnight **MUST** complete an Audubon Center Medical Form. All individuals who will be participating in any of our challenge or adventure programs while at the Audubon Center must complete an Audubon Center Liability Release Form. Anyone without a form will not be allowed to participate in the above listed activities. There may be other instances when a Liability Release form will be required. **NO EXCEPTIONS** will be made. ALL Medical and Liability Release Forms must be turned in to your Audubon Center staff liaison upon arrival at the Audubon Center of the North Woods. Please contact our Reservations Coordinator with any questions.

Fire Code Policy

Burning of any materials, including candles and smudging with sage, is **STRICTLY PROHIBITED** in any of our buildings without prior approval. Such requests must be pre-approved by our Business Manager.

Drug, Alcohol, Tobacco & Gun Policy

No recreational or illegal drugs are allowed on the Center's grounds or in the Center's vehicles at any time. Smoking is restricted to designated outdoor areas on the Center's grounds, and is not permitted in any of the Center's vehicles or buildings. When school groups are present, smoking is restricted to out of sight areas behind buildings. Cigarette butts should be disposed of properly. Chewing tobacco is to be done outdoors only.

Alcohol may not be consumed in the Center's vehicles, nor is it permitted during programming hours when children are on the premises. You may serve beer, wine or malt beverages (no hard liquor) with prior approval, but you cannot charge for it. Depending on the nature of your event, you may be required to hire a security guard or peace officer to be present if alcohol is served. NO food or beverages are allowed in the Audubon Center lodging rooms.

Absolutely no firearms are allowed on the Center's premises. Visitors violating these policies will be asked to leave Center property immediately.

Dining Hall / Office Hours:

Our office is staffed between 8 AM and 4 PM, Monday-Friday and most Saturdays. The dining hall will be open and staffed by your assigned liaison during the times arranged for your group in advance.

Meals & Food

All meals are prepared by our kitchen and served cafeteria style. No potlucks, caterers, or crockpots are permitted in our dining hall or Crosby Lodge; meals are not allowed to be brought into those two buildings.

Meal times are prearranged and are scheduled to coordinate with other groups, if present; requests for meal times outside our normal range will be considered but often cannot be accommodated. We ask you to arrive for meals at the prearranged time – the food line is only open during those set times. Food needs to stay in our dining hall area or in the lounges only; we do not allow any food in the dorm rooms.

If you have special dietary needs and have made special arrangements to bring in food, access to the kitchen will only be during the hours our dining hall is open. Please let us know well in advance (at least 2 weeks) of dietary allergies or restrictions in your group, so that our kitchen staff may plan menus accordingly – late notice of dietary restrictions cannot usually be accommodated.

If you have arranged for a custom menu, any menu changes must be made at least one week in advance – after that time, food has been ordered, prep has begun and staff has been scheduled, so no further menu adjustments are allowed.

Pet Policy

Although we do allow daytime visitors/hikers to have leashed dogs on our trails, unfortunately we do not allow pets in any of our buildings. There are boarding kennels available in nearby Hinckley and Moose Lake.

Per federal ADA laws, service and assistance animals are allowed in our buildings – however, animals whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as service or assistance animals. If you use a qualified service or assistance animal, we ask that you let us know prior to your visit – please call 320-245-2648.

Quiet Hours

The Audubon Center's quiet hours for participants and visitors are from 10 PM-7AM. This policy includes both indoor and outdoor activities. If your group wishes to participate in an activity outside of these hours, please notify us in advance so special arrangements can be made if necessary.

Departure Policies

Residential groups are required to tidy their rooms prior to departure and to vacate rooms at the prearranged time. Late departures may result in additional charges. All personal items should be removed, windows and doors should be closed, lights and faucets turned off. If using our linens, please take off the bottom sheet and leave bed linens piled on bed; leave used towels on the floor (do not place damp towels with bed linens). If your facility has a kitchen, thoroughly **WASH AND PUT AWAY any dishes and cookware you have used**. Rooms are checked for cleanliness and damages before your group's arrival and again prior to departure. Your group will be charged for any missing, broken, damaged or vandalized items and/or if extensive cleaning is necessary.

Group Adventure Courses and Naturalist Programs

The Audubon Center maintains a low ropes, high ropes, initiatives, archery and climbing wall adventure courses. These courses may be used only when authorized and trained Center staff members are present and the activity has been scheduled in advance. A signed liability waiver is required prior to participation in any of these activities – NO EXCEPTIONS. Any of our programs, including adventure/challenge, team-building and naturalist programs, may be booked by groups, depending on staff availability. If interested in programming, AT LEAST TWO WEEKS advanced notice is required – however, please book programs as early as possible.

Beach / Swimming Area

The Center's canoe launch and swimming area below the Staff House is not open to the general public and is limited to supervised Audubon Center activities or by permission to a group staying at the Center. The Audubon Center does not provide a lifeguard; the beach area drops off quickly and can be dangerous. No children are allowed at the swimming area without an adult present.

Equipment Use/Rental

With advanced notice (please arrange at least one week prior to your visit), we have cross-country skis and snowshoes available for use by our overnight guests, as well as canoes and a projector available for rent.

Medical Services

Audubon Center staff are trained and certified in basic First Aid and CPR. First aid kits are located in each building. For critical medical emergencies you can call 911 from any phone (dial 9 first to get outside), then inform your liaison or an Audubon Center staff member immediately. Emergency medical care and ambulance service is available 8 miles away at the North Pine Medical Center in Sandstone. Guests should bring an extra vehicle for transportation for medical situations not requiring an ambulance. The Audubon Center does not provide this type of transportation. It is the full responsibility of each group to plan for the medical needs of their participants.

Telephone/Cell Phone/Mail/Internet Access

INCOMING CALLS: Our telephone is answered by office staff Monday-Friday between 8AM and 4 PM and most Saturdays until 2 PM. Any messages will be relayed to appropriate person(s) during this time. After hour phone calls are answered by our voice mail system. Messages can be left for any person(s) staying at the center on the voice mail system. If you leave a message after outside of normal business hours, it will be retrieved and given to the appropriate person the following day. Our telephone number is: 320.245.2648 or 888.404.7743.

AFTER HOUR EMERGENCIES: If there is an after-hours **emergency** and someone needs to contact a guest staying at the Center due to an **emergency only**, the staff house emergency number is 320-245-3142. This is to be used for true emergencies only – otherwise, please leave a message on the Center's phone at 320-245-2648. An alternate number for a true emergency is the Pine County Sheriff's Office at 800-450-3930.

OUTGOING CALLS: There is a phone available for outgoing calls in every lodging building on the Center grounds as well as in Blandin Dining Hall. You must use a credit card or calling card for any long distance calls. A "9" must be dialed first to gain access to an outside phone line. Most of these phones will not accept incoming calls.

CELL PHONES: Please be aware that cell phone coverage is spotty due to our remote location. Do not rely on making or receiving calls via your cell phone.

MAIL: Mail is picked up in town once daily. We have a limited supply of postage for sale; for your own convenience you may want to bring your own stamps. Anyone wishing to write to a participant staying at the Center, should use the following format:

Participant Name
Audubon Center of the North Woods
PO Box 530 (for packages, use: 54165 Audubon Dr.)
Sandstone, MN 55072

INTERNET ACCESS: We have free wireless internet access in all of our lodging and dining facilities. Occasionally there are brief interruptions in service, but if you experience continued connectivity problems, please let our office or your liaison know.

Laundry

Crosby Dorm contains a coin-operated (quarters only) washer and dryer for use by overnight groups.

Fire Alarm

In the event of a fire alarm, one person will need to call the night time liaison IMMEDIATELY from the radio or phone. Everyone else should evacuate their rooms and gather in the parking lot. The liaison will come to the dorm, turn off the alarm, check to see if there is an emergency and notify alarm company or fire department.

Shuttle/Taxi Information

For public transportation from the Twin Cities or Duluth, Skyline Shuttle is available (www.skylineshuttle.com), with a drop-off location at the Victory gas station in Sandstone (you must call them to request a Sandstone drop-off - 888-354-2677). If feasible, we can make arrangements to pick you up in Sandstone with advanced notice; otherwise, Sandstone does have taxi service – Attaboy's, (320) 245-5355 – to bring you to the Center (about a 5 mile trip).

Wheelchair Accessibility

All of our lodging buildings are wheelchair accessible. Two of the dorm rooms at the Crosby dorm are specifically designed for wheelchair use. Trails around the buildings and to nearby classroom areas (Wildlife, Adventure, Maple Syrup, Bird banding) are wheelchair accessible. Trails to the other study areas are mowed grass, and travel could be difficult, depending on the abilities of the individuals. Please inform our staff of any physical challenges your group's members may have that require special planning or scheduling.

What to Bring

For your convenience, we provide a "what to bring" list. Bedding and towels can be provided by the Center for a small fee (must be arranged for in advance). Please be aware that self-tanning products can permanently stain bed linens and towels, which may result in an extra charge, so if you or anyone in your group uses those types of products, we request they be washed off prior to bedtime.

Water, Wood, Ice

The Center has rural plumbing which consists of a septic system and well water. Please be sure your group is mindful of the septic system. Our water conserving toilets can handle only small amounts of toilet paper with each flush. Do not put anything other than toilet paper in toilets.

Our water comes from a well and has a lot of iron and minerals in it. Although the water in the dorms may smell and taste different from the water you are used to, it is not harmful to use or consume. We have two drinking fountains in the dining hall that are double filtered to take out much of the natural metallic taste of the water. We ask that you fill water bottles from these fountains any time the dining hall is open. Bottled water dispensers are also available in each building.

We supply visiting groups with a reasonable amount of firewood for small campfires or fireplace use. If additional firewood is needed, there will be a small fee for the additional wood – please make these arrangements well in advance. We can supply campfire making supplies (kindling/paper and matches) and buckets of water (for dousing when done), but cannot start campfires for groups. Also, any campfires must be attended to at all times and thoroughly extinguished with water when leaving the campfire area.

We do not have an ice machine on the premises, so please do not ask us for ice. If you require ice, please bring your own or purchase in Sandstone (about 5 miles away).

Feedback

We are consistently looking for ways to improve our visitors' experience, so your feedback is very precious for us. There are guest feedback forms available in our lodging buildings as well as by the front door of the dining

hall. We encourage all members of your group to take a minute or two to complete this brief evaluation form – you can simply leave it in your room or drop it off at the front desk.