



Docenting at Port Townsend Marine Science Center The Basics

- Create a welcoming and safe space
 - Treat everyone with respect
 - Be attentive and available to visitors
 - Keep visitors and animals safe
 - Inform the exhibit lead of issues with people, facilities, or the exhibits
 -
- Engage visitors
 - Share things you find interesting, amazing, or inspiring
 - Personalize the experience for them
 - Mention ecology, habitat or interactions whenever possible
 - Encourage visitors to observe, think, and link.
 -
- Respond to visitor questions
 - Compliment the question
 - When responding, add a prompt for further thought. “Did you notice....” “What do you think...?” “Look at how...”
 - When you don’t know the answer,
 - Be enthusiastic about learning and exploring
 - Focus on themes, steer away from trivia
 - Use resources provided by PTMSC or ask another docent or staff
 -
- Inspire conservation
 - Be inclusive. A global solution needs people of all ideologies to participate
 - Focus on solutions
 - Meet people where they are

Don’t Forget!

- Represent the PTMSC to visitors and the general public
- Wear your name badge, dress neatly and include the PTMSC logowear
- Log your hours

When it’s busy

- Let the exhibit lead know so they can assist visitors too
- Shorten waits at the admission desk by welcoming visitors (see welcoming information for each exhibit).

When it's slow

- Expand your skills: revisit exhibits at a deeper level, look at a guide book, imagine being a visitor, focus on an exhibit or topic you find challenging
- Browse the resources on the tablets
- Light cleaning of surfaces and floors. (specific methods and products are used in cleaning the tanks, signs, and animal contact surfaces, check with exhibit lead if you aren’t familiar)
- Restock and fold brochures and maps

Who You Work With

Volunteers: Each shift in each building has, minimally, a volunteer docent and a volunteer at the admissions desk.

Exhibit Lead: Each day, each building has an exhibit lead who is typically an AmeriCorps Member or an Intern. The exhibit lead will meet you at the beginning of your shift, provide support throughout the day in the exhibit, provide breaks and fill empty shifts as needed.

Staff Lead: Each day, one of the permanent staff members acts as an onsite supervisor for everyone. They may fill an open shift in either building if needed and provide breaks for volunteers and other staff or AmeriCorps members.

The opening shift

- Arrive at 11:45 am
- Assist in readying the exhibit for visitors
- Open at 12:00 pm

The closing shift

- On arrival: check in with the exhibit lead for updates
- 2:30 begin docenting
- At 4:30: let visitors know that the other exhibit is open for 30 minutes more if they haven't visited it yet
- After 5 pm: Bring in and flip signs.
- Assist with other closing tasks