
The Crane – National Maritime Museum in Gdansk

Szeroka 67/68 St., 80-835 Gdansk



If you are visually impaired, you should be aware that the Crane is largely inaccessible. This is clearly stated on the museum's website. Not only is the access route to the Crane difficult, but also the entrance location. There is no Braille information, no guides, no contrasting stair edges, and no clearly defined path. The stairs are steep, narrow, and poorly secured, making it very risky to navigate without assistance. Most of the exhibits are in display cases; individual objects (coins, a barrel, the wheels and ropes of the mechanism, and decorative elements) can be touched – usually thanks to the kindness of the staff, not to formal rules. Descriptions are printed in small, low-contrast font, making reading difficult even for visually impaired people. The restrooms on level -1 are opened by a code entered on a touchscreen panel without raised markings, making it virtually impossible to use them independently. Access with a guide/assistance dog is easy. The Crane can offer interesting, "blind" experiences (space, sound, the smell of wood, the sound of the mechanism), but it's definitely better to visit it in the company of sighted people. The involvement of the facility's staff is very helpful.



If you are hearing impaired, it's relatively easy to find basic information about the facility online, but it's difficult to find information about the Crane's accessibility. Access to the facility is easy, with cloakrooms and lockers located directly next to the ticket office. The ticket office and security staff are friendly and very empathetic. Navigating the Crane is intuitive (except for the terrace entrance). The exhibits are at the heart of the facility, which is a wonderful experience. Most of the museum's content is conveyed through written descriptions on boards (Polish and English) and multimedia with audio. Some films have subtitles only in English, others lack full Polish subtitles, and there's no translation into Polish Sign Language (PJM). There are also no induction loops or visual alarm systems. The advantage of the exhibition is that it is highly visual and interactive – you can simply "see" much, not just "hear." This greatly benefits the Crane.



If you have a mobility impairment, you should be aware that the Crane is a historic building with very limited accessibility, and for wheelchair users, no accessibility at all, as indicated on the site's website (which is quite difficult to navigate). Access for wheelchair users is limited to the main entrance (flat, though paved and difficult to identify) and the ground floor with the ticket office. The staff clearly states that the entire tour route involves numerous, steep, and narrow stairs with no elevator; the handrails are sometimes broken, and the steps lack contrasting markings. The exhibition halls are relatively spacious, and most exhibits are at the appropriate height (taking into account the position of a wheelchair user), although some display cases are too high, and the text is too small. The restrooms on level -1 and the ticket code system are difficult or even impossible to use, especially for people with hand disabilities. There's a lack of a quiet, clearly marked place to rest or unwind. The Crane can be an interesting adventure for those who can walk despite mobility impairments, but it's not accessible to wheelchair users.



If you have an intellectual disability, the Crane can be an interesting, yet sometimes intense, place. The museum displays provide short, clear descriptions in Polish. Many exhibits are well-presented, and simple "touch/don't touch" pictures help you understand the rules—a major advantage. The rooms are small, so you'll find it easier to concentrate. The dim lighting may be comfortable for some people on the autism spectrum. Many items are touchable (e.g., coins, scales, furniture, dishes, food in the inn, and some chests). However, there are a lot of steep stairs, no quiet room, and a code is required to enter the restroom. If you choose a quiet time to visit (off-season, preferably in the morning) and have the support of a caregiver, Crane can be a good experience.