

Statue of Liberty Visitor Use and Protection Plan  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

March 30, 2004



# Summary

- Immediately following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, Liberty Island and the Statue of Liberty were closed to visitors. Liberty Island was reopened to visitors in December 2001, but the Statue itself has remained closed since that time. After the September 2001 closure, the National Park Service and the Department of the Interior began a comprehensive series of safety and security assessments at the Statue.
- The assessments showed that there were a number of steps that needed to be taken before the National Park Service could responsibly welcome visitors back into the Statue. The National Park Service moved forward with improvements, and many of them have been completed.
- Although some improvements are still underway, the Department has concluded that all planned safety and security measures will be completed by the summer of 2004. On March 30, 2004, the Secretary will announce the plan to provide visitor access to the Statue's observation deck level.

# Safety Improvements Since 9/11

- Removed all combustibles from the monument.
- Overhauled fire detection and alarm systems.
- Compartmentalized spaces in lower levels of the monument.
- Constructed interior fire-rated stairways and corridors.
- Installed emergency lighting and upgraded lighting throughout the structure.
- Installed smoke dampers in heating and cooling system.
- Installed exit signs and emergency push bars.
- Replaced elevator fuel with less combustible soy-based fuel.

# Safety Improvements To Be Completed

- Internal: Sprinklers, smoke detection, alarms, lighting, exit doors.
- External: Temporary stairway from top of Ft. Wood to the ground.

# Security Improvements Since 9/11

- Enhanced security screening for all visitors at Battery Park and Liberty State Park prior to boarding ferries.
- Developed security screening and 100% ID checks for all staff, concessionaires, and contractors.
- Increased explosive detection K-9 capability. U.S. Park Police sweeps all visitor ferries and delivery trucks.
- Initiated 24-hour marine law enforcement patrol for Liberty and Ellis Islands with thermal imaging and night vision capability. Obtained more effective boats and installed barge dock.
- Created restricted water zone around Liberty and Ellis Islands.
- Increased nighttime law enforcement with land-based thermal imaging capability.
- Installed new barriers at the Ellis Island service bridge.
- Assigned U.S. Park Police detectives permanently to FBI Joint Terrorism Task Forces in New York and New Jersey to enhance information on potential threats.
- Increased U.S. Park Police and National Park Service staffing to implement security plan.
- Improved communications and radio equipment.

# Visitor Use and Protection Plan

- Visitor access to observation deck (“6P” level), with newly constructed polycarbonate see-through ceiling. Benefits of plan are visitor access to:
  - Statue of Liberty Museum.
  - Top of Ft. Wood, with 360 degree outside view.
  - Outside observation deck at top of pedestal, with 360 degree panoramic view.
  - Inside view of Statue itself from top of pedestal.
- Why not higher? Health and safety concerns:
  - Safety standards of the International Building Code and the Building Code of the City of New York cannot be met inside the Statue itself. (National Park Service policy is to comply with safety and fire codes whenever possible.)
  - No code-compliant exits from the Statue.
  - No ability to provide adequate fire suppression or space compartmentalization.
  - Time required for visitors to reach exit far exceeds code standards.
  - Inadequate fire suppression.
  - Stairs to crown are unenclosed, too narrow, and too steep. (Riser height exceeds maximum allowable under Codes; tread depth and stair width exceed minimum allowable.)
  - Heat can be oppressive in summer months (up to 20 degrees higher than outside temperature).

# Long-Term Safety and Security Improvements

- Construct permanent internal Ft. Wood staircase for visitors exiting the Statue.
- Permanent Screening Facilities:
  - Battery Park.
  - Liberty State Park.
  - Secondary screening facility on Liberty Island.

# Statue of Liberty Timeline

- 1811 – Star-shaped Fort Wood built on Bedloe’s (now Liberty) Island.
- 1874 – Fundraising for Statue begins in France.
- 1877 – Congress authorizes site for Statue but appropriates no money. Private fundraising begins for pedestal construction.
- 1881 – Statue assembly begins in Paris. Completed in 1884.
- 1885 – Statue dismantled and shipped to New York. Joseph Pulitzer begins nationwide fundraising for pedestal.
- 1886 – Statue reassembled and dedicated.
- 1916 – Black Tom explosion on New Jersey waterfront damages Statue and Ellis Island Great Hall. Visitor access to torch ends.
- 1924 – Statue of Liberty declared a national monument.
- 1933 – National Park Service takes over administration of Statue from War Department.
- 1937 – Statue closed for two-year restoration.
- 1941 – Army MPs stationed on Liberty Island to guard Statue throughout WWII.
- 1982 – Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation established to raise money for restoration.
- 1984 – Statue closed for two-year restoration.
- 2001 – Statue and Liberty Island closed following 9/11 terrorist attack. Liberty Island reopened in Dec. 2001 for visitors. Statue itself remains closed for implementation of safety and security improvements.
- 2004 – Improvements sufficient to provide full visitor access to observation deck level.