

Museum Guide Must-Dos

Remember- your tours should be safe, engaging, and informative!

1. **Explain the basics.** Each visitor will have a different level of knowledge about trolley history, American history, and local geography. Explain all acronyms and take time to ensure that your ideas are clearly communicated. For example, if you choose to discuss Shaker Heights 94 as an example of a PCC car, you should define PCC as “Presidents’ Conference Committee,” give a brief history of the committee, and mention that Shaker Heights is a city near Cleveland, OH.
2. **Share how trolleys work.** Your tour should not focus too much on technical aspects (too many numbers, dates, and stats can be boring for non-railfans), but guests will want to know the basics of how trolleys operate. If you’d like, you can demonstrate by raising and lowering a trolley pole or by using the fake trolley pole at the back of the horse car.
3. **Be adaptable.** You should be able to change the content of your tour depending on your audience and time restrictions. If your group seems especially engaged with one topic, feel free to discuss it in more depth! For tours with children, see page 12 of the manual for engagement ideas. Be prepared to shorten your tour by skipping or abbreviating sections if time runs out. Ideally, your audience should not be aware of these changes- each guest should feel as though they received the full experience.
4. **Engage your audience.** Always keep your audience’s attention. Engage in small talk before and after the tour. Make time to answer questions as well as ask some of your own. (What was your favorite trolley that you saw? Did you ever ride a trolley in Pittsburgh?) Also be sure to follow the suggestions on manual pages 8-10 and 18-19 for effective, high-energy communication.
5. **Connect to big ideas.** Your tour should highlight the significance of trolleys during America’s 20th century. However, do not just mention this theme at the beginning and end of the tour. During the discussion of each car, connect its design to the ways in which it improved or changed people’s lives.
6. **Keep guests safe.** This should always be your first priority. Help passengers as they board and disembark trolleys both on display and in active use. Make sure your safety instructions can be clearly understood. Follow the safety tips on pages 6-8 and familiarize yourself with the de-escalation strategies on pages 11-12.
7. **Be prepared and have fun!** You’re welcome to use notes during tours. Also, when you arrive for the day, make sure to check what cars are in the TDB so you know what’s there to talk about.