



Where to go when ya gotta go:

The best public restrooms that Boston has to offer

One of the perils of touring around a city is trying to find conveniently located bathrooms. While there is always a McDonald's or Burger King, most fast food emporiums insist you be a customer and even then you have to request somebody to unlock the door. Regular restaurants aren't very happy either having tourists tromp through their dining establishment. So it's always good to know where any public restrooms are located so you can better plan your journey. As a public service, here's a list of Boston's better placed FREE public restrooms.

The Boston Public Library on Dartmouth Street in Copley Square. Enter the main building, go by the security equipment and check-in desk, take a left before the stairs and follow the signs (which will direct you to take a right at the end of the corridor and then a left), Check out the lions guarding the elegant stairway going up to the main reading rooms. After the pressure is off, take a walk through the lovely center courtyard. Of course, if you're lucky enough to be staying in one of Copley Square's great hotels – like the Marriott Copley Place, Westin Copley Place, The Lenox or Fairmount Copley Plaza - you only need to go there to appreciate the architecture. Open 9 AM – 5 PM Monday-Saturday (longer during the summer) and 1 PM – 5 PM Sundays.

The "New" State House on Beacon Street atop Beacon Hill. That's the one with the big gold dome and right near the XV Hotel. Enter through the security entrance to the right, past the statue of General Thomas J. Hooker. Pass security, take a left and then follow the signs. It's not exactly a short walk down the twisty corridors of the State House, so only plan on this if you absolutely can't wait. Open 9 AM – 5 PM Monday-Friday.

The Boston Common Visitor Center in the middle of the Tremont Street side of Boston Common, about half way between the Nine-Zero and the Ritz Carlton Hotels. Generally open 9 AM – 5 PM daily.

The National Park Service Visitor Center in back of the Old State House at the corner of State and Devonshire Streets, almost across the street from the new Ames Hotel. Open 9 AM – 5 PM daily.

Faneuil Hall on Congress Street and also on the Freedom Trail. Go to the backside of the building (near Quincy Market) and enter through the CENTER doorway, up towards the Great Hall. At the top of the first set of stairs, the Ladies Room is to the left and Men's Room is to the right. When you finish, check out the Great Hall, the REAL Cradle of Liberty. Or have lunch across the street at the Millennium Bostonian Hotel. 9 AM – 5 PM daily, except when there are special events.

Quincy Market (behind Faneuil Hall) has the only public bathroom open from early in the morning until late at night (at least 8 AM to 9 PM). From Faneuil Hall, walk along either side of Quincy Market until just before the Dome. Enter the doors under the glass canopy and look for the round "Rest Rooms" sign going down a set of stairs essentially under the Quincy Market Building. Note that you can enter or exit from either end towards the North or South Market Buildings, so remember which way you went in. Obviously, from the opposite end, the Harbor-side near the Marriott Long Wharf Hotel, the Rest Rooms are located after the dome.

The North End Information Center is located on the Freedom Trail between the Old North Church and Copp's Hill Burial Ground on Hull Street. Usually open 9 AM to 5 PM.

The Charlestown Navy Yard Visitor Center (The Bunker Hill Pavilion) in Charlestown, located at 55 Constitution Road near "Old Ironsides" just past the Marriott Tudor Wharf Hotel. Open daily 9 AM – 6 PM.

Let me also add two "Honorary Mentions": The two city-owned Pay Toilets, the first located on Congress Street by City Hall and across from Faneuil Hall and the other by the entrance to the New England Aquarium. These both cost a quarter (25 cents) each, but have become their own sort of tourist attraction. You'll often see folks taking pictures of these, I guess, rather unusual self-cleaning pay toilets. Open 9 AM to 6 PM.

- Alan Maltzman of BostonCityWalks.com