

Visiting the Minnesota State Capitol: Information for school groups and tours

Weapons screening will be in place at public entrances to the Minnesota State Capitol during the 2026 legislative session. This information is intended to help schools, educators and tour organizers plan ahead.

Weapons screening is a standard safety measure used in government buildings to support a secure, welcoming and accessible environment. The Capitol remains open to the public and continues to welcome students and educational groups.

What schools and tour groups should know

Where groups will enter

- All school and tour groups must enter through the south, ground-level public entrance beneath the Capitol steps.
- This entrance is fully accessible for students, chaperones and visitors with mobility needs.

When screening occurs

- Screening will be in place while the Legislature is in session, beginning Feb. 17. This includes Saturdays, when the building is closed to the public and in the evening hours when hearings are taking place.
- Public hours are:
 - Monday through Friday: 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
 - Saturday: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- The Capitol is closed to the public on Sundays.
- Note: When floor sessions or committee meetings extend beyond posted public hours, screening and designated public entrances will remain available so members of the public may continue to participate in the democratic process.

What the screening process looks like

- Students, chaperones and visitors will walk through screening equipment similar to what is used at other government buildings and museums.
- Backpacks, purses and larger items will go through an X-ray machine.
- Most people move through screening in seconds, though additional screening may be required if an item cannot be identified.



Planning tips for schools and educators

To help groups move through screening efficiently, schools are encouraged to:

- Limit backpacks, large bags or unnecessary items
- Avoid bringing prohibited items or objects that could delay screening
- Build extra arrival time into itineraries, especially early in the session
- Prepare students in advance so they know what to expect
- Plan to take any pictures outside of the Capitol before or after your visit

Accessibility and assistance

- The entrances and screening areas are ADA accessible.
- Capitol Security staff are available to assist groups with disabilities, medical devices, strollers or service animals.

Additional safety reminders for group leaders

- Stay with your group at all times
- Report unusual or suspicious activity to Capitol Security
- Do not touch or move unfamiliar or suspicious objects

Prohibited items

- Weapons and dangerous items: Firearms (unless authorized), explosives, ammunition, knives, blunt-force objects, clubs, batons and items deemed dangerous by security. [Dangerous weapons are defined in Minnesota statute.](#)
- Contraband: Illegal substances and alcohol.
- Event or protest items: Balloons, spray paint, spray chalk, sidewalk chalk, tape (duct, gaffers, masking), and candles or open flames.

Maps, FAQs and additional visitor information are available [online](#).

