

Mansion Coat Check Guidelines for Visitor Services Volunteers

Revised: November 18, 2025

Hillwood offers a secure and complimentary coat check room, located in the mansion entry hall, to support the comfort of our guests and ensure the safety of the mansion, collection, and visitors. The coat check is managed by Hillwood's Security team as they oversee the liability and risk of checked items. When assigned to the mansion, visitor services volunteers (VSVs) assist Security with receiving and returning items, while also offering exceptional customer service and light interpretation to visitors throughout the mansion.

This resource is designed to clarify coat check procedures and address frequently asked questions, ensuring a smooth and efficient experience for visitors, staff, and volunteers.

Questions?

While on volunteer duty, please direct any questions about coat check operations or the bag policy to the nearest Security team member. If you encounter a visitor who is resistant about our coat check policies, kindly refer them to a Security team member for further assistance.

Bag Policy

Visitors must check oversized* bags, totes, backpacks, and bulky items upon entering the mansion. This policy also includes any other items that cannot be carried reasonably and safely in these spaces:

- Oversized coats and outerwear. These items may not be carried throughout the mansion and must be worn or checked.
- Oversized bags, purses, and backpacks.
- Hillwood shopping bags, regardless of size.
- Water bottles. If a guest asks for an exemption due to medical reasons, please direct them to a member of Security.
- Any other oversized item that does not fit inside the bag check box, such as a selfie stick.

***Oversized** = Any item that does not fit in the bag check box (11" x 14" x 8"). [Boxes](#) are located in the visitor center and the coat check room for easy measurement.

Security staff stationed inside the mansion entrance (by the glass doors) will determine which items must be checked and direct guests accordingly. Hillwood volunteers and staff can also inform guests about the bag policy while in the visitor center, which gives visitors the option to leave items not permitted in the mansion inside their vehicle. Please note that all visitors are instructed to leave luggage in their vehicle.

VSV Responsibilities at the Coat Check

Please follow the guidelines below when stationed to assist Security with the coat check.

- Each hanger and cubby in the coat check are numbered and correspond to a numbered claim tag.

- When accepting an item to check, inform the visitor that they will receive a tag to reclaim their belongings.
- Ensure the item is stored properly. If you are storing an item inside a cubby, close the door after placing items inside. (**Note:** these doors do not lock.)
- Make sure the tag number matches the hanger or cubby used before distributing it to guest(s).
- Return tags promptly to the matching cubby or hanger when guests retrieve their items.
- On the rare occasion of cubbies and/or coat rack reaching full capacity with checked items, please notify Security who will give instructions on how to adjust coat check procedures.

Storing Coats and Outerwear

- Hang coats, jackets, and similar garments on hangers. If all hangers are in use, please consult with a Security team member about storing these types of items.
- You may place up to two coats per hanger, depending on size and weight, to avoid overcrowding.
- Scarves may be tucked securely into coat sleeves if a guest prefers to store them together.

Storing Bags, Purses, and Backpacks

- Bags such as purses, backpacks, or shopping bags are stored in cubbies.
- Bags should never be stored on hangers, as this can damage the items and create safety issues.
- All Hillwood shopping bags, regardless of size, must be checked.
 - When time allows, museum shop staff will inform guests at the time of purchase that Hillwood shopping bags must be checked when visiting the mansion.

Storing Miscellaneous Items

- Water bottles must be checked upon entry and are not permitted to be carried in a guest's bag or on their person. If a guest asks for an exemption due to medical reasons, please direct them to a member of Security.
- Other items that do not fit the size requirement must be checked.
- Multiple items belonging to one guest or group may be stored together if space allows.

Backpack Policy Update

- Small backpacks (those that fit inside the bag check box) may now be worn on the back. Guests are no longer asked to wear small backpacks on their front.

Additional Notes

- A guest may carry multiple bags (e.g., a purse and tote) as long as both fit within the bag check box together.

- For larger bags and items that do not fit into the cubbies with doors, such as oversized backpacks or selfie-sticks, please utilize the large, open compartments (to the left of the painting inside the coat check).
- Children may carry soft toys (e.g., stuffed animals) through the mansion. Remind families to be mindful of their surroundings when doing so. Feel free to use one of the examples below:
 - “You’re welcome to bring the stuffed animal along—just a quick reminder to be mindful of the artwork and displays as you explore. Some of the spaces can be a bit tight!”
 - “That’s a great stuffed animal you’ve got there! Just make sure they stay close to you and don’t bump into anything while you’re exploring, okay?”
- If you encounter a visitor who is resistant, upset, or confrontational about Hillwood’s bag check policy, kindly refer them to the nearest Security team member for further assistance.

Bag Policy Exceptions

On rare occasions, Hillwood understands that a visitor may need to keep their oversized belonging on their person while in the mansion. Exceptions will be determined by Hillwood Security personnel.

- If you encounter a visitor who shares that they need to keep their large item in the mansion for an exceptional reason such as a medical need, please direct them to a member of Hillwood’s Security team. Visitors granted permission to keep an oversized item on their person will receive specialized guidance on safely navigating the mansion from a Security team member.
- To help Hillwood volunteers and staff identify individuals who have been granted a bag policy exception and received prior guidance, visitor bags will be tagged with an orange ribbon tied around the strap to indicate their item is permissible (Fig. 1). If you notice a visitor carrying a large item with one of these identifying ribbons, please note that the visitor will not need further instructions about our bag policy.



Figure 1. The orange ribbons seen above will be tied around the strap of a permitted item for guests who have been granted exemption from the bag policy while in the mansion.

If a guest expresses an unexpected question or concern about Hillwood's bag policy, please direct them to a member of Hillwood Security or visitor services staff.

If a Visitor Loses Their Tag

If a guest cannot find their coat check tag, please refer them to a Security team member. Security will follow their established protocol for resolving missing tag situations.

Items Stored Outside the Mansion

- **Strollers** must be parked outside the mansion and exhibition spaces (including the dacha and Adirondack building).
 - **Wet umbrellas** may be placed in the stand outside the mansion, under the porte cochère.
 - **To-go coffee cups or open lids (including containers with a straw)** of any kind are not permitted to enter the mansion and must be finished or disposed of outside in a nearby trashcan.
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Lost and Found

On the rare occurrence when an item is unclaimed in the coat check after Hillwood closes, Security takes it to the front desk in the visitor center to be catalogued in the lost and found.

If a visitor believes they have lost an item, please instruct them to call 202.686.5807, email info@hillwoodmuseum.org, or visit the front desk in the visitor center. The visitor services team logs all items found turned into staff. Items will be kept for three calendar months.

Questions

Thank you for supporting Hillwood's visitor experience and protecting the collection. Your attention to detail, warm presence, and collaboration with Security help keep the mansion safe and enjoyable for all.

If you have questions about the coat check process or encounter a tricky situation while on shift, don't hesitate to:

- Ask a nearby Security team member
- Reach out to the volunteer management team:

Volunteer Department

202.686.8528

volunteers@hillwoodmuseum.org