



CARE
FINDS
A WAY.

SENSORY FRIENDLY
SUNDAY



Going to a
SPRINGFIELD THUNDERBIRDS
HOME GAME

at the Mass Mutual Center Arena

SENSORY FRIENDLY NIGHT MADE POSSIBLE BY:



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SPRINGFIELD
COLLEGE



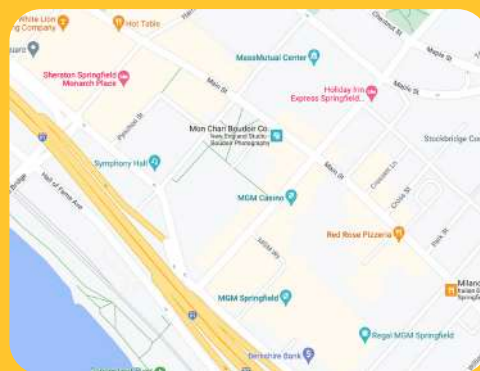
**I am going to a Springfield Thunderbirds
ice hockey game at the
MassMutual Center
in Springfield, Massachusetts.
I may go with my family or friends to the
MassMutual Center.**



My family or friends may park in the parking garage at the MassMutual Center. We only have to pay ten dollars to park. After we park, we may take the stairs or elevator to get to the street level. We will then walk across the Landing to the MassMutual Center.



Free parking is available at the MGM Springfield Parking Garage. Other alternative paid parking options are available with the Springfield Parking Authority.



Once inside, we may need to buy tickets at the ticket window. There might be a line to buy tickets or go inside, but that is okay. A lot of people like to see hockey games. If we already have our tickets, we will not need to wait in the ticket line. I will try to stand quietly and wait to get tickets or go inside the arena.



Once inside the MassMutual Center, we may have to walk up some stairs or elevator. There may be other people walking on the stairs or riding the elevator too. I can go quietly up the stairs or the elevator.



Near the top of the stairs or elevator, there is a metal detector that looks like a big doorway. There is a security guard there too. The security guard may ask us to take things out of our pockets or remove our coats or jackets. The security guard may also look through our bags. It is okay for security guards to do these things. Their job is to keep everyone safe.



One at a time, my family or friends and I will walk through the metal detector doorway. The metal detector might make no sound or might make a beeping sound. Sometimes the security guard will have to do an extra safety check. If I have to do the extra safety check, I will try to follow the directions and stand in one place with my arms out. I can stand like a statue while the security guard waves a long wand around me. The extra safety check helps to keep everyone safe too.



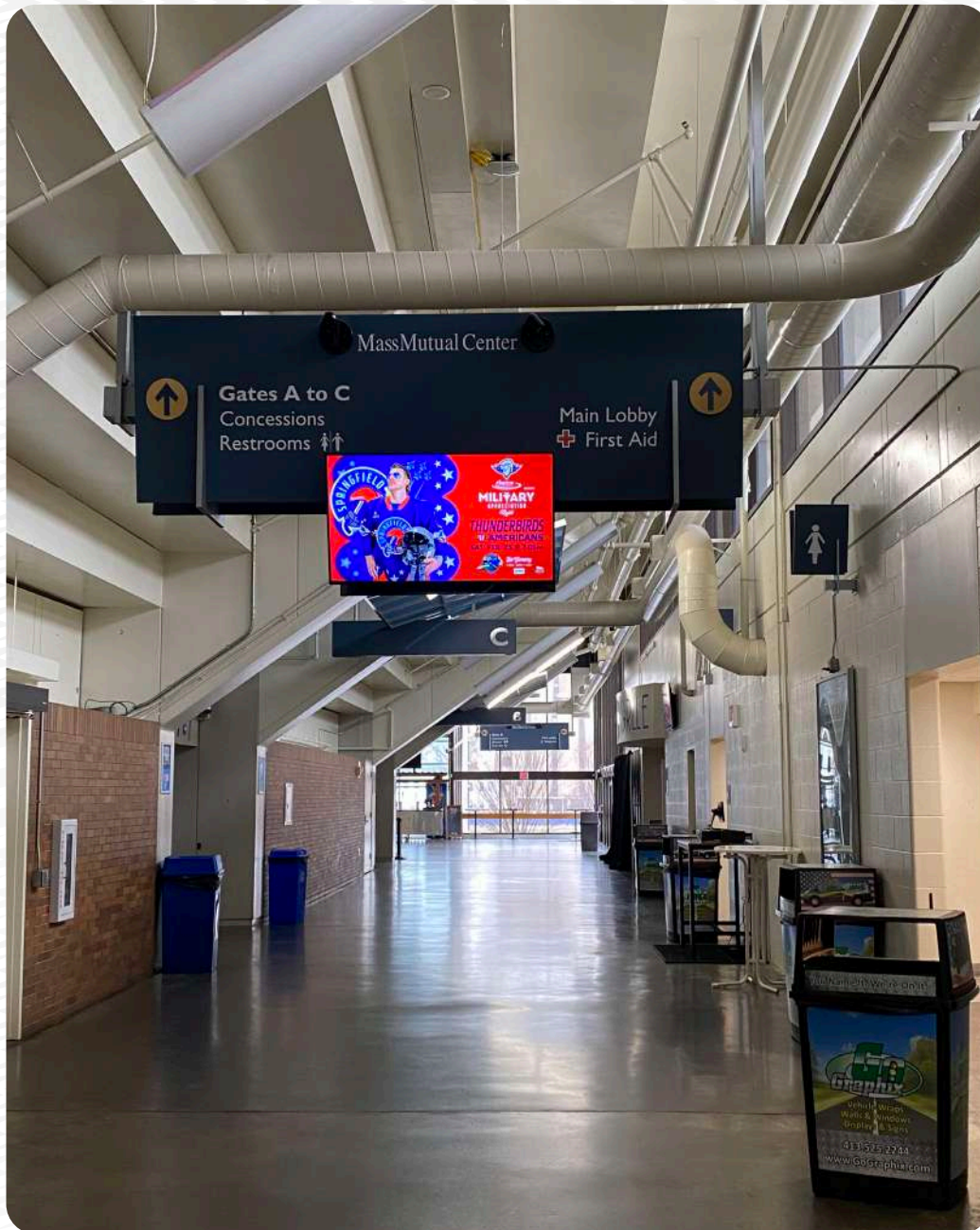
One of the security guards will check our tickets. The guard will use a small machine that scans the ticket or use the self scanner. Once all of our tickets have been scanned, we can go in the arena and get ready to watch the game!



Sometimes there are a lot of people in the arena. If there are a lot of people in the arena, it can get loud. It is okay if it gets loud; people are excited to see the Thunderbirds! If it gets too loud, I can cover my ears until it gets quieter. I can also give myself a big hug. A big hug can help me stay calm. If I brought headphones from home, I can put them on.



We will walk around the outside of the arena to find the section where our seats are. This is called the concourse area. Around the concourse there may be a lot of people. There are also places to buy food, drinks, and team merchandise.



My family or friends may stop and look at the food, drink, or team merchandise. Maybe my family will buy food, drinks, or merchandise, but maybe not. If my family or friends stops at any of the stores in the concourse, I can look at all of the choices.

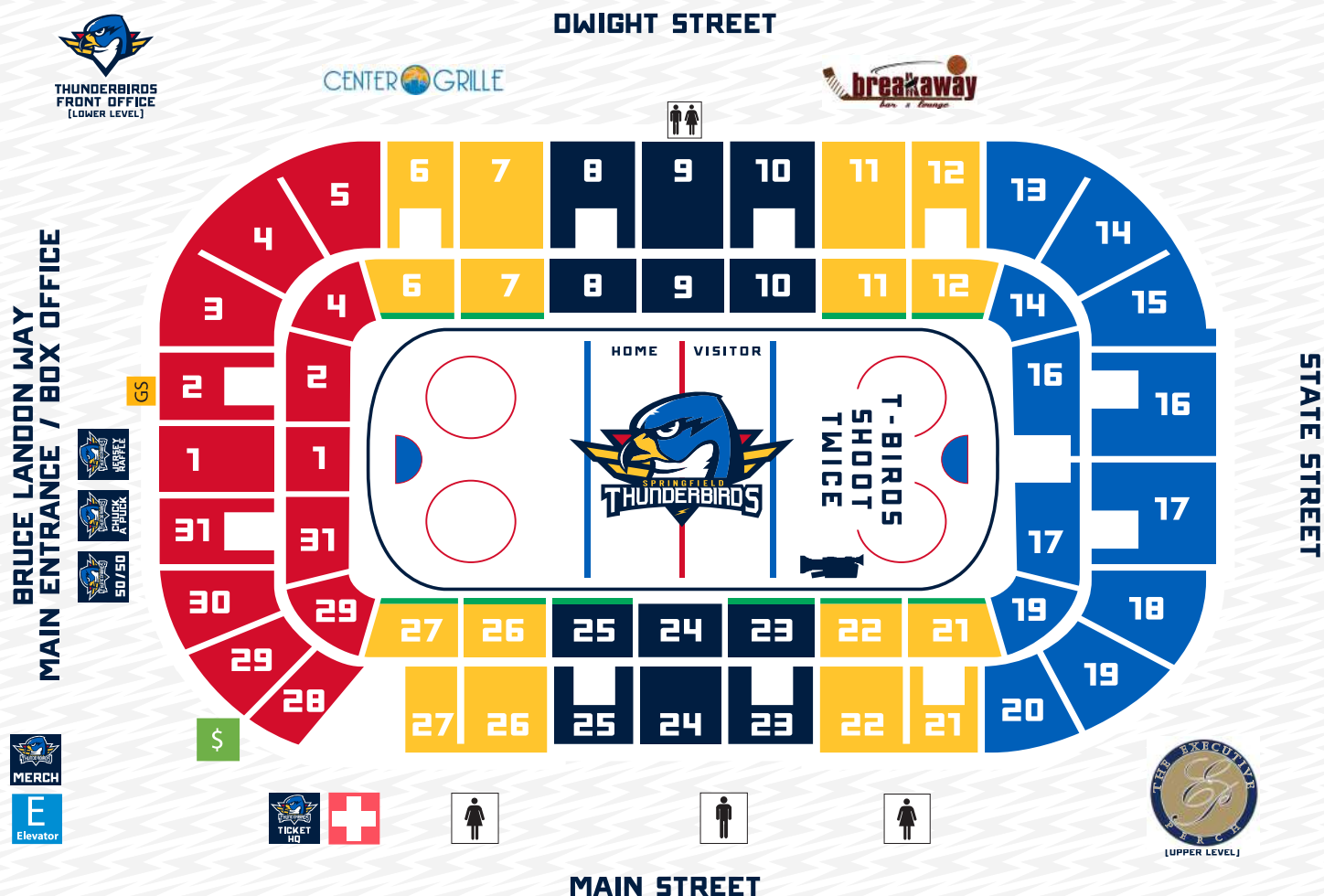


There are also bathrooms around the concourse. The bathroom toilets are automatic flush. Sometimes automatic flush toilets flush before you are finished. If it flushes before I am finished, I can push the button on the top to flush again. The sinks are also automatic.



After I go to the bathroom, I will wash my hands by getting soap, and rubbing my hands together under the automatic faucet. The bathrooms have air blowing hand dryers. Sometimes the air dryers are loud, but they are helpful for the environment. It is important to keep the environment clean. Sometimes the bathroom gets loud and has funny smells. I will try my best to stay calm because I won't be in the bathroom for very long.

When it is time to go to our seats, I can help my family or friends find where we are sitting. The section number, row number, and seat number are on the tickets. There are also signs around the concourse with the section numbers that can help us find our seats. If we have trouble finding our seats, there are helpers, called ushers, that can also help us.



To get to our seats, we might have to go up or down some stairs. There might be people already sitting in the row where our seats are. That's okay; they want to enjoy the game too! If I need to go past someone to get to my seat, I can say "excuse me" and walk carefully past.



There are many seats in the MassMutual Center and the seats are close together. I might have to sit next to someone I don't know, and it might feel like they are too close. If I feel like they are too close, I can sit with my arms close to my body. I will try to stay in my seat during the game.



It might feel cold in the arena. If I get cold, I can wear my jacket, a sweatshirt, or whatever I wore outside to go to the game. I can even bring my gloves, mittens, or a blanket into the game to keep me warm.



From my seat, I will be able to see the 360-sided jumbotron hanging from the ceiling over the center of the ice. The jumbotron has video screens that broadcast to each side of the arena. Sometimes there are advertisements, announcements, videos, or songs that play. I can watch the videos that are on the jumbotron. Sometimes the jumbotron is used to get the fans excited and it can get loud. If it is too loud, I can cover my ears and wait until it is not so loud. The light from the screens may be bright sometimes. If it is too bright, I can close my eyes until it is not so bright.



The arena has speakers all around it. There might be music over the speakers, or there might be voices, such as the Public Address Announcer. The job of the Public Address Announcer is to tell everyone what is happening before and during the game to help get them excited about the home team! The music also helps to get people excited. During the sensory friendly game, the music should not be too loud. If the music or the announcer is too loud, I can cover my ears until it gets quieter.



*Public Address Announcer
Steve Forni*



*In Game Arena Host
Kevin Johnson*



**Before the game starts,
the players will come out
on the ice to warm up.
They will skate around and
practice hitting the puck.**



The National Anthem will be played before the start of the game. During the National Anthem, players and fans can put their right hand over their hearts and stand in the direction of the flag. Some people will also sing along. I will try to be quiet during the National Anthem. If I know the words, I can sing along using my inside voice.



When the National Anthem ends, the hockey game will begin. At the beginning of the game, one player from each team and a referee will go to the center of the ice for the face off. The referee will drop the puck and the game will begin!



**Hockey games have three periods.
Each period is 20 minutes. After
each of the first two periods is an
intermission. The intermissions are
18 minutes.**



Period 1



Intermission



Period 2



Intermission



Period 3



Intermission

Shoot Out



Sometimes during the game, people and hockey pucks might hit the wall of the rink. It is okay; that is part of the game. Sometimes there may be the sound of a loud buzzer at the end of a period or when the Thunderbirds score a goal. Fans get excited when the Thunderbirds score a goal or make a good pass. Scoring a goal is very exciting. I can join the fans and clap for the Thunderbirds!



Sometimes players might get rough and fight over the hockey puck. The referee might blow a whistle so it does not get too rough. I can remember that this is part of the game and the referee is trying to keep players from getting hurt.



Here is an important rule to remember during the hockey game. If the puck is moving around the ice, I have to stay in my section. It is against the rules to move around the inside of the rink area while the puck is in play. This rule keeps me safe. If I need to take a break or go for a walk, I can wait until the puck is not in play. There are ushers at the doors that will let me know if I can walk safely. The ushers have signs that say “stop” when it is not safe. I can watch the ushers so I know when it is safe to take a break.



During intermissions, the ice crew workers and Zamboni come out to smooth the ice and make it safe. The Zamboni is a big vehicle that drives around the inside of the rink. The ice crew workers will use shovels to help clean the ice. This makes the ice safer for the players.



Also, during intermissions there may be other activities. The Thunderbirds mascot, Boomer, may come out on the ice. Sometimes people use t-shirt cannons to shoot t-shirts into the crowd. I can try to catch a t-shirt!



Intermission is a good time to use the bathroom, take a walk, or get something to eat or drink. People will move around inside the arena and out on the concourse. At the end of intermission, the next period will begin. When the next period begins, fans can get excited to see the players come out on the ice. I can watch them come out and clap for them too!



**During the game, I will try to stay
in my seat and watch the game. I
can cheer or clap for the
Thunderbirds when the score or
make a great pass.**



If I need a break, there are Cool Down stations where my family or friends can take me. The Cool Down stations are located behind section 17-19 on the concourse and in the Thunderbirds Family Room to the left of the MassMutual Center Box Office on the main entry level of the MassMutual Center arena. If I go to the Thunderbirds Family Room, I will need to take the stairs or the elevator to get there. There are also a limited number of sensory kits available to borrow at ticket HQ behind section 27



In the room there will be a few occupational therapy students from Springfield College. There will be activities in the room to help me feel better and get back to the game. When I am ready, my family or friends can take me back to the game.



After the third period, sometimes the Thunderbirds win, sometimes the other team wins, and sometimes there is a tie score. If there is a tie score, the game goes into overtime.



Overtime lasts five minutes, but there are only three players on the ice for each team. The team with the highest score at the end of overtime is the winner. Sometimes the score is still tied at the end of overtime. If the score is still tied, the Thunderbirds and the other team have a shootout



During the shootout, each team has three chances to score. If there is still no winner, the teams take turns taking shots at the goal until one of the teams scores. That team is the winner of the game. Overtime and shootouts can get very exciting!



When the game is over, it is time to leave with my family or friends. We will walk back to where we parked the car. A lot of people will be moving around at the end of the game. That's okay; they are all going home too. I will try to walk quietly back to the car. I can think about how exciting it was to see a Thunderbirds hockey game. Maybe I can come back again.

T-Birds



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