

Modern Museum to Drop Fee on Mondays

By GRACE GLUECK

In an effort to make its facilities "available to more members of the community," the Museum of Modern Art will suspend its \$1.50 admission fee, the highest of any museum in the country, one day a week. Starting Feb. 9, the museum will be open free every Monday from 2 P.M. until 9 P.M.

"The museum has long been concerned that its admission fees may have precluded access to its resources by many people in the city," said Walter Bareiss, chairman of the museum's operating committee. He pointed out that at the same time, the income derived from admission fees and membership was "absolutely essential" to the museum's continued operation.

"We receive no subsidy from the city, state or Federal government, have a very

limited endowment, and are dependent on the public for our financial support," he noted. In 1968-69, the museum's admission fees accounted for \$804,000 of its total income for \$5,896,600.

All of the galleries will be open on Mondays, and three film showings—at 2:30, 5:30 and 8 P.M.—will be offered.

Although the new free day runs from 2 to 9 P.M., it is seven hours long just as the present Monday hours, which runs from 11 A.M. to 6 P.M. are. This avoids what a spokesman calls "the expensive problem" of overtime for the museum's guards, and provides additional evening hours for visitors.

The trustees' action in suspending the fee on Mondays, the museum's lightest day, was taken in response to urging by several groups. The most insistent has been the

Art Workers' Coalition, a loose-knit organization of artists, writers and filmmakers who have staged a number of protests at the museum. For the last few months a free-admission committee, composed of museum staffers and members of the Coalition, has been studying the question.

The museum has also been pressed by college student leaders and editors of college newspapers to institute a free day. Last year, as an experiment, it instituted a program of reduced rates for college students four evenings a week, with special entertainment thrown in.

The free Monday program is also experimental for a six-month period. It will give the museum a chance to determine the effect upon its general economics and whether the program can be continued without a special

subsidy.

Besides the Modern, three of the city's six major art museums, the Whitney, the Guggenheim and the Jewish also charge admission.

The Art Workers' Coalition is negotiating with the Whitney, where the admission fee is \$1, for a free day.

The Metropolitan and the Brooklyn Museum, both of which received city support, have no entrance fee at the present time (although the Metropolitan charges \$1 for special exhibitions, except on Mondays).

On three successive Monday evenings beginning this week, the Modern Museum garden will be open free, weather permitting, from 6 P.M. until 9 P.M. to allow visitors to take part in an outdoor section of the current exhibition, "Spaces." Admission will be through the gate on West 54th Street.