

# Reopening museums – collection care considerations

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# Be Prepared !

- Familiarise yourself with current collection care advice / standards, your conservation & collection care policy & plan.
- If you have access to existing/past records for environmental monitoring/pests, interpret and familiarise yourself with them.
- Talk with people carrying out any building / collection checks. What's happening ?
- Work out a collection care plan of action for your return to work.
- If you need to re-start or change settings on BMS / HVAC / heating systems, can you do this safely, will you need a company to come in and do this, what are the possible effects on collections ?
- Do you need to order now any materials / equipment / service companies you will need on return ?



# I've got a little list

- There are currently several checklists available for lockdown, risks to collections & re-opening (see useful links list).
- devise a plan of action suited to your museum, collection requirements and circumstances.
- Be realistic about what you can achieve, what the main risks to your collections are and plan & prioritise accordingly.
- How does this fit into Government guidelines / institutional plans for reopening / health & safety issues ?
- Will you need help to undertake these checks ?
- Record and document any findings including images.



# First things first

- Health & Safety.
- Building / collections area walkaround – prioritise vulnerable areas / collections / known trouble spots.
- Water damage / water ingress / mould.
- Pests.
- Environmental conditions.
- Dust.
- Physical Damage.
- Check Salvage kits are up to date.
- Check items on loan and that they meet loan agreement / GIS requirements.



# All change ?

- Have new routes been rearranged through the museum ?
- Are fragile or open display items now close to new routes ?
- Is ventilation being increased ?
- How might any changes impact on deposition of dirt or environmental conditions ?
- Are alcohol based hand sanitisers sited near collections ?
- How can you mitigate any issues arising from any changes?



# Keep it clean !

Distinguish between collection objects and general non-object cleaning.

Disinfectants/general cleaning agents aren't recommended for use on collections.

Fogging or electrostatic wholesale disinfection is not currently recommended for collections. (Canadian Conservation Institute & National Center for Preservation and Technology)

There is Government advice on cleaning in non-healthcare settings, which can be applied to non collection surfaces / areas.

Think about application methods of any disinfectants or chemicals used in collections spaces even if they are not being used on objects.

Will staff / volunteers need training in cleaning techniques and types of cleaner used.

Ensure suitable equipment and materials are available and kept separate for different types of cleaning.



# A “touchy” subject

- Firstly try and avoid the need to clean collection objects at all.
- Secondly: If objects are touched, quarantine for a minimum of 72 hours if possible.
- Last resort is to clean objects. Seek advice from a conservator first if possible. Document any cleaning.



# Moving collections

- Can you avoid moving the objects ?
- If moving collections, follow usual good handling and manual handling practice.
- If you can't move larger objects whilst safe distancing, follow Govt guidelines re what to do in those circumstances.
- Undertake risk assessments to reflect this.
- Communicate clearly regarding planned movement.
- Do not compromise safe manual handling.
- Quarantine items after moving where possible for at least 72 hours.
- If external firms are involved they should be able to supply risk assessments / method statements.





# In summary

- Start planning now for your return.
- Order necessary materials and equipment.
- Prepare checklist for action when museum opens.
- Carry out checks and document findings.
- Respond to any problems.
- Communicate to staff and volunteers re plans and any new / amended procedures and practices.
- Train staff / volunteers in any new procedures and practices.
- Try to reduce touching and handling of collection objects, to minimize need to clean and risks to people.
- Continue to carry out regular checks of collections to ensure no new problems arise.

