

Oakville Museum Conservation

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Purpose statement

The ~~Town of~~ Oakville Museum acknowledges the inherent value of the artifacts and historical structures that make up its collection. The Museum will strive to:

- Maintain the physical, historical, and aesthetic integrity of the objects in the collections;
- Balance the provision of access to the collections and the preservation of the objects in the collections; and
- Aim for standards, both practical and ethical, current in the practice of conservation in Canada.

Scope

This procedure shall be applied when conserving, restoring or intervening in any way with the artifacts and historical structures that make up the Oakville Museum.

Procedure

The Oakville Museum will:

- 1) Implement a conservation practice that:

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- a) demonstrates its understanding of the distinction between preventive care and conservation treatment
 - b) demonstrates its commitment to the preventive conservation of the collection
 - c) establishes priorities for making decisions regarding conservation treatment
 - d) ensures that responsibility for the care of its collections is delegated to appropriately trained staff
 - e) demonstrates a commitment to consult with, and be guided by, the advice of qualified experts in conservation
 - f) demonstrates a commitment to ethical behaviour in the care of collections
 - g) meets Town of Oakville, provincial and federal legislative requirements that have an impact on the conservation of collections;
- 2) Demonstrate a commitment to protect the collection through proper care and handling by:
- a) implementing a program to instruct staff how to safely handle artifacts
 - b) ensuring that artifacts are durable enough to withstand their proposed use e.g., displays, interpretation, loans, hands-on activities
 - c) implementing safe packing, unpacking and transportation procedures;
- 3) Provide one or more exclusive spaces for the storage of the collection. These areas will be:
- a) used for collection storage only
 - b) large enough to store existing artifacts without crowding, and to accommodate projected future acquisitions
 - c) kept clean through the implementation of a regular housekeeping schedule performed by staff or volunteers with the necessary training
 - d) kept dark, except when staff are present
 - e) restricted to access only by designated appropriate staff (e.g., curator or registrar)
 - f) equipped with suitable and safe shelves, cabinets and artifact supports;
- 4) Maintain the safety and preservation of artifacts on exhibit by:
- a) ensuring that cases and floor spaces are large enough to hold artifacts without crowding or distortion
 - b) ensuring that artifacts on display are adequately supported with safe materials
 - c) using display materials (such as case materials, backgrounds, adhesives, labels) that are not harmful to artifacts
 - d) ensuring that exhibits are kept clean and maintained by staff trained in the handling of artifacts
 - e) ensuring that light-sensitive artifacts are displayed only for short periods of time
 - f) implementing a program of regular inspections of artifacts on exhibit to check for losses and damage
 - g) updating collections records to reflect changes in location e.g., storage to display;
- 5) Ensure the security of the collection by:
- a) protecting artifacts from water damage
 - b) protecting artifacts from theft and vandalism, including restricting access to artifacts

- c) establishing written standard procedures to deal with emergencies and disasters, and training of all staff in these procedures;
- 6) Provide an appropriate environment for artifacts in all storage and exhibit areas by:
- a) reducing visible light levels to accepted standards
 - b) removing as much ultraviolet radiation as possible
 - c) maintaining relative humidity and temperature levels within an appropriate range for museum artifacts
 - d) reducing dust and pollution through a combination of physical plant (e.g. use of vestibule, appropriate air filtration) and preventive procedures (e.g. use of door mats, no smoking rules)
 - e) implementing a regular cleaning and maintenance schedule of the museum and storage spaces performed by staff or volunteers with the necessary training
 - f) implementing preventive pest management procedures, including regular inspections for pests in the museum and inspection of all incoming collection and non-collection material
 - g) implementing a program of regular checking and recording of environmental conditions, with follow up procedures to correct deficiencies;
- 7) Ensure that conservation treatment procedures will not damage artifacts and are carried out in accordance with professional standards of practice by:
- a) ensuring that individuals treating artifacts have an appropriate level of training in conservation
 - b) ensuring that all conservation treatments are properly documented and the documentation is retained on file ensuring that conservation treatment carried out in the museum takes place in a separate space that is appropriately equipped and ventilated according to health and safety standards.

References and related documents

[Ontario Heritage Act](#), [R.R.O. Regulation 877](#), [Grants for Museums](#)
[Standards for Community Museums in Ontario](#), [Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport](#)
~~[Community Museum Standards](#)~~
[Preventive Conservation Guidelines for Collections](#), [Canadian Conservation Institute \(CCI\)](#),
[Department of Canadian Heritage](#)
Collections Development Guideline
Artifact Deaccessioning and Disposal Procedure
Collections Management Procedure
Research Procedure
Exhibition Procedure

Definitions

~~**Curator of Collections:**~~ a professionally trained employee of the Town of Oakville with expertise in and the responsibility for determining the significance of the artifacts or specimens in the collection.

Conservation: encompasses both preservation and restoration. It is the application of science to the examination, maintenance and treatment of artifacts or specimens. Its principal aim is to stabilize and maintain artifacts and specimens in their present state.

Preservation: consists of non-intrusive actions taken to slow or stop deterioration and to prevent damage. This includes protection from harm, extremes of temperature and relative humidity, excessive light and ultraviolet radiation, incorrect storage or display methods, careless handling, dust, dirt, pests and other problems which may result from an inadequate physical storage and untrained staff.

Restoration: the removal or modification of existing material, or the addition of new material in order to reinstate earlier known aesthetic, historical or scientific values. Restoration includes cleaning, mending, removal of corrosion and tarnish, replacement of missing parts and other processes.

Preventive conservation: consists of non-intrusive actions taken to slow or stop deterioration and to prevent damage.

Conservation treatments: involve interventions causing changes in the physical properties or structure of the objects.

Responsibilities

The Curator ~~of~~ [and](#) Collections [Coordinator](#) is responsible for the preservation of artifacts in the Museum's collection. It is recognized that museum staff, volunteers and users also have a role in the care and preservation of the collections.