

# **Collections Care and Conservation Policy**

## **Jewish Museum London**

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**Name of governing body:** The Board of Trustees of the Jewish Museum London

**Date on which this policy was approved by governing body:** April 2013

**Date at which this policy is due for review:** April 2018

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Caring for the collections is a fundamental duty for all museums. This policy includes a combination of preventative and remedial conservation measures, designed to ensure long-term preservation.

- Preventative conservation covers the measures necessary to slow down or minimise deterioration of museum objects, specimens and structures.
- Remedial conservation involves a treatment to an object or specimen to bring it to a more acceptable condition or state in order to stabilise it or enhance some aspects of its cultural or scientific value.

The museum is obliged to meet minimum standards under the terms of the Accreditation scheme administered by the Arts Council. This policy will guide the work the Jewish Museum London does in the field of collections care and conservation and will help to deliver the statements made in this policy.

## **2. ETHICS AND LEGISLATION**

The following guidelines and standards will guide the museum in the area of Conservation and Care of collections:

- Museum Association Code of Ethics
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- COSHH Regulations 2002

## **3. STANDARDS**

The museum has utilised Benchmarks in Collection Care 2.0 in the scoping of this policy.

## **4. COLLECTIONS CARE AND PREVENTATIVE CONSERVATION**

The museum is committed to managing the collections in accordance with the sector guidance set out in *Benchmarks in Collection Care*.

### **4.1 Collections Condition overview**

The condition of the collections will be regularly assessed, and condition records maintained.

Staff training in preventive conservation practice such as environmental monitoring and basic cleaning will be kept up to date.

Remedial conservation is undertaken on objects according to acuteness of need and exhibition requirements, subject to funding.

Vulnerable objects on display, eg paper items and albums or books will be checked regularly and rotated according to a schedule agreed by the curatorial team.

### **4.2 Environmental control and monitoring**

The Museum will utilise a series of environmental control measures and monitor the environment on a regular basis, to minimise risks to the collection caused by excessive light levels, fluctuations and extreme temperatures and/or relative humidity (RH), infestation by pests, dust, acidity and atmospheric pollution.

The Museum aims to ensure that all its collections are stored in stable environmental conditions.

Data on Temperature and Relative Humidity is recorded through the Museum's Building Management System.

Light and UV readings are taken weekly throughout the museum building using a handheld device. Equipment will be calibrated and maintained according to manufacturer's instructions.

Data recorded through the Building Management System and handheld devices will be collated and acted upon when given cause for concern. Records of events (eg museum exhibition openings) or maintenance problems that may have impacted upon changes in environmental conditions will be recorded and compared with data.

All lights must have UV filters.

Air conditioning systems will be regularly serviced.

The curatorial staff has responsibility for environmental monitoring and control, in liaison with contractors where appropriate.

#### **4.3 Provision of suitable buildings**

The museum will seek to ensure that all collections are housed in buildings that meet agreed minimum standards of construction and condition.

The curatorial team will work with the Visitor Services Team (who are responsible for the upkeep, maintenance and security of the building) in collaboration with external contractors to ensure that the best possible conditions in the building are maintained for the collections.

Collections are safeguarded through the following systems:

- Risk assessment and management
- Building Maintenance
- Mechanical and Electrical (M&E) Maintenance
- Building Management Systems
- Environmental Monitoring Systems
- Intruder Alarms
- Fire and Evacuation Systems

#### **4.4 Housekeeping**

There will be regular cleaning of storage and display areas by members of the curatorial team.

Insect traps are monitored weekly to check for infestation of stores. Trap contents will be recorded and the area monitored rigorously to locate and eradicate the source.

#### **4.5 Storage**

Regular assessment of the storage areas will be carried out. Advice may be sought from conservators or other outside personnel with regard to standards of storage.

Items in the collection should be stored appropriately according to their size, material etc.

Storage areas should be kept tidy and free from obstruction, with all material shelved or boxed appropriately.

Inert buffering materials such as melinex and acid free tissue paper will be used in storing objects. Objects should be boxed only in acid free museum boxes.

#### **4.6 Handling**

The handling, packing or moving of objects is supervised by curatorial staff.

Handling aids such as gloves or book supports will be used where necessary.

Staff will be trained in object handling, and the public will be supervised when handling objects.

### **5. REFERENCES TO OTHER POLICIES AND PLANS**

The Museum's Emergency Plan sets out what the museum will do in the event of a fire, flood or other disaster that threatens the safety and condition of the museum collections.

The Museum's Collections Care and Conservation Plan contains a review of current conservation and care practice and recommendations for future work, in line with Benchmarks in Collection Care 2.0.

### **6. PROFESSIONAL CONSERVATION ADVICE**

The museum will seek regular professional advice on its approach to collection care activities.

For everyday collections advice and preventative conservation advice we are in touch with the Collections Care Development Officer at the Museum of London.

The museum will seek the expertise of a qualified Conservator for any planned remedial conservation work. Conservators will be employed according to their specialisation and expertise and will be included on the Conservation Register operated by the Institute of Conservation (ICON) and where available, a professionally accredited conservator should be used.

All conservators must provide full written and photographic records of work undertaken.