

Collections Access Policy

Chester County Historical Society

General Statement

The Chester County Historical Society recognizes its responsibility to provide public access to its collections and to information about them through exhibitions, research library, programs and the historical society web site. It strives to meet this responsibility without compromising its standards for care of the collections.

Public and Restricted Access

The following policies are to insure the safety of the personnel and collections housed in the buildings owned or used by the Chester County Historical Society. Overall, granting of access (authorization to enter a restricted area) is the sole prerogative and authority of the Executive Director

1. The curator, librarian or photo archivist are responsible for museum, library and photo archives storage areas respectively, exhibit spaces in progress on which they are working, and their offices and work areas. Each of these staff members may provide access permission for persons under their supervision. They are responsible for any access granted. Allowing access automatically places responsibility on that staff person for any actions of the person(s) granted access.
2. Normally, access will be granted only for those areas to which each staff person is responsible during regular working hours and will not include after-hour access. After-hour access may only be granted by the Executive Director and only in exceptional circumstances.
3. Handling and retrieval of collections (library, museum, photo archives) is under the supervision of and may be restricted by collections staff. Each area has its own access policies that must be adhered to by anyone granted permission to view the collections.
4. Staff will also provide access to information about the collections but will not reveal such information as donor identification (unless permission has been given by the donor), appraisal value, and other information that may be deemed privileged.
5. Access to collections is for personal use only. Separate restrictions and fees apply to the commercial use of the collection.
6. Staff other than the curator, librarian and photo archivist, and volunteers, interns and contract workers will not normally have access to collections areas without the knowledge and/or permission of the responsible staff member. Limited access of a specified duration may be granted and only if deemed in the best interests of the institution.
7. Staff other than the curator, librarian and photo archivist, and volunteers, interns and contract workers are generally not authorized to allow others access to any restricted areas of the museum or library. Anyone doing so automatically assumes liability for any actions of the person or persons granted entry.
8. Any unidentified person(s) known to be without permission to enter a restricted area of the museum or library should be immediately reported to the responsible staff person or the Executive Director. Determination of authorization or the need for removal of persons from restricted areas is a function of the Executive Director. Difficulty in removing a person, clearly without authorization, from a restricted area may require contacting the police.
9. Other than public access doors, all unattended doors of ingress/egress to any collections area will remain locked and be key/wand accessed only. Doors may not be blocked open or left unlocked unless someone, normally a staff member, is in attendance.