

## Exhibition of Artifacts: Policies and Procedures

### *Artifact Selection*

- A. Artifact selection is subject to the Curator of Collection's approval.
- B. Incorporate artifact conservation and lighting considerations in design.
- C. Artifacts will be handled and/or supervised by the collections unit during all phases of exhibit design, production and installation.
- D. Loaned artifacts must be processed by collections unit and handled or supervised by the collections unit during all phases of exhibit design, production and installation.

### *Exhibit Production*

To properly safeguard the collections of the Historical Society of Central Florida, Inc. and those that are on loan, the Collections Unit may suspend installation progress until the standards and policies, and procedures specified below, are met.

#### A. Construction Phase of Exhibit Installation

Construction shall not take place around exposed artifacts in order to avoid exposure to dust falling debris and possible incidents from the obstruction of carts and tools. Materials used in exhibit construction shall include only those materials deemed to be safe for the artifacts on display.

1. Exhibit Construction Materials for cases, partitions and wall construction:

Formaldehyde free materials, such as:

MDF panel products: Medex, Medite II, or other brands

Dimensional lumber: Poplar, Pine

Counter top Laminates: fine to use where no edges are exposed on case interiors

Other forest products: only if necessary, prime with proper paint

Fabric without sizing glue in it

2. Painting

All painting of exhibit materials (walls, cases, mounts) should ideally be done 3 weeks prior to artifact placement. Artifacts will not be placed into an environment containing paint that has not cured for a minimum of three (3) weeks.

- a. Painting procedure

Use non-formaldehyde substrate such as Medex or poplar sealed with a minimum of 2 coats of latex or acrylic paint. Formaldehyde substrates (used as a last resort or sparingly) require a minimum of two (2) coats of oil based wall paint. Paint off site to avoid vapors harmful to visitors, staff and other exhibits.

- b. List of approved paints
  1. Acrylic paint (water based) is the best choice. Use it on formaldehyde free substrate or properly primed formaldehyde content substrate.
  2. Oil base (Alkyd) paints. Only if using formaldehyde content products is unavoidable. Paint off site whenever possible.
  3. Other: Use water base varnish and stains for prop work, over coating, etc.

#### B. Artifact Mount Construction

1. The Curator of Collections or Collections Manager must approve design.
2. Exhibits staff must use professional regard and care when measuring artifacts or fitting the mounts to the artifacts. The Curator of Collection's or Collections Manager's presence may be required on occasion for this process.
3. Artifacts will not be held or stored in exhibits workshops or offices.
4. List of approved construction materials for artifact mount materials: Acrylic, polyester, brass, stainless steel, acrylic paint, polyester felt, latex adhesives, mylar, ethafoam and other materials approved by the collections unit.

#### *Exhibit Installation*

Artifacts shall be handled by Collections staff, trained Exhibits staff and approved supervised History Center staff and volunteers. Collections staff shall be responsible for examining and cleaning artifacts for display.

#### A. Handling artifacts:

1. Always provide a safe, clean environment before handling the artifact.
2. In most circumstances use clean cotton gloves when handling artifacts  
Exceptions: glass, ceramic and fragile documents.
3. Wash hands thoroughly before handling artifacts without using gloves.
4. Do not handle objects by their handles or other weak parts.
5. Secure loose or moving parts, remove unattached components and transport separately.

#### B. Transporting artifacts:

1. When picking up an artifact, know ahead of time where you will put it down.
2. Whenever possible, transport an object in a stable cart padded with polyethylene foam or carpet. For transporting small objects, use carrying bin.
3. If moving two or more objects together, use padding between the objects.
4. Clear a pathway before transporting an object: make sure doors are open, lights are on, obstructions removed, etc.
5. Prepare and clear the installation area before transporting artifact to it.
7. If transporting the artifact by hand, make sure the object is properly supported with both hands. Always use two hands.

#### *Lighting*

Exhibits staff shall be responsible for installing, evaluating and monitoring case and other exhibit lights during the length of an exhibit. Collections staff shall be responsible for monitoring the lux levels and for rotating or replacing sensitive objects on exhibit. Light damage is accumulative.

A. Lighting guidelines and standards

Use Ultraviolet Light filters (UV) whenever possible. If filters are unavailable, use incandescent lamps that have a lower output of UV.

B. Consider Infrared Light (IR) (sunlight and incandescent lamps have a high IR component) which causes heat buildup

C. Refer to ICC/CCI Notes on the lighting requirements of artifacts.

D. Examples of Optimum artifact light requirements:

Artifact type	Optimum Lux (lx) or Foot Candles (f)	Ultraviolet Light microwatts per lumen (uW/lm)	Rotation schedule
Organic (leathers, furs, quills, etc.)	50 lx, f 5	75 uW/lm	
Textiles	50 lx, f 5 or lower	75uW/lm or lower	every 3 months
B&W photographs	5 lx - 100+ depends on base & coating	lower then 75uW/lm	
Works on paper	50 lx or as low as possible		
Coins & Medals	50 lx, f 5	75uW/lm	
Rubber & plastics	low	lower	

E. Rotate light-sensitive artifacts

Exhibit interpretive team shall be responsible for selecting alternates for light sensitive artifacts that require rotation

Collections staff shall be responsible for scheduling and rotating light sensitive objects on display

F. Monitoring and recording light levels

Exhibits staff shall be responsible for general light checks and replacing lights in exhibits

Collections staff shall be responsible for monitoring and recording lux levels in all or selected exhibit areas and cases. See below for schedule.

*Access to the Gallery during Exhibit Installation*

Restricted access to a gallery during the construction and artifact installation phases of an exhibit will insure the safety of the artifacts and the safety of the people working in the gallery. Restricted access will limit the museum's liability should someone get hurt while visiting the gallery or should someone break an object or should an object disappear from the premises.

A. Access will be limited to those directly involved with the installation.

B. Staff not directly involved should request permission to enter gallery during both the construction and artifact installation process of the exhibit.

C. PR staff must make an appointment for media with person(s) responsible for installation in order to view the gallery during construction and artifact installation.

D. Appropriate signage will be posted indicating to the public that the gallery is under construction and not to enter.

E. Physical measures for securing the gallery from the visitors, can include:

1. Stanchions
2. Folding screen
3. Alarms
4. Closed doors
5. Signage
6. Staff vigilance: polite request by present staff for visitor(s) to return to other areas of the museum.

### *Exhibit Maintenance*

Exhibit maintenance will be a collaborative effort between Exhibits staff, Collections staff and Maintenance. However, all museum staff members are expected to immediately report problems to any Collections or Exhibit staff members, when they notice them in the galleries

- A. Exhibits staff shall monitor daily and be responsible for the timely maintenance and repair of exhibit elements.
  - 1. Exhibits staff member shall do a daily walk through. The walk through should include the following:
    - a. light inspection
    - b. check for vandalized exhibits
    - c. pick trash out of exhibit cases/vignettes
    - d. check for water leaks
  
- B. Collections staff shall monitor and be responsible for all artifacts on display
  - 1. Collections staff shall view exhibits every Monday
  - 2. Place, monitor and record readings taken from fade strips, insect strips, etc.
  - 3. Monitor and record light readings for selected exhibits/artifacts
  - 4. Monthly cleaning of exhibits/artifacts
  - 5. Establish rotation or replacement calendar for sensitive objects.
  - 6. Rotate or replace objects with the assistance of Exhibits staff
  - 7. Monitor humidity and temperature levels
  
- C. Maintenance staff shall be responsible for
  - 1. Cleaning the exterior of exhibit cases  
Acceptable cleaning materials for cleaning acrylic cases (Plexiglas, Acrylit or Perspex) clean with a mild soap and water solution and wipe with a soft cloth or the blue towels
  - 2. Maintenance staff is NOT responsible for cleaning any artifacts that are out in the open (not in a case).
  - 3. Exhibits staff is responsible for cleaning props.

### *Damage to Artifacts on Exhibit*

When the safety of an object is at risk due to construction or environmental conditions, Exhibits/Collections staff reserves the authority to close off a gallery or exhibit area until the problem is addressed and remedied. The Collections Unit and the Exhibits Unit shall handle damage to artifacts collaboratively.

### *Environment*

The majority of the artifacts on public display are plastic, fabric, metal and wood. The temperature should be kept within 65-70 degrees. Humidity should be kept around 50%. While drastic changes in temperature can be damaging to artifacts, sharp changes in humidity do the most damage over time. Certain areas of the building have different needs.

Closed stacks	65-68	50% humidity	not open to public
Changing Exhibit Hall	68-70°	50% humidity	depending on type of objects & lender's requirements
Changing Exhibit Hall	whatever is comfortable when no artifacts are on display		
Exhibit Galleries	65-70°	50% humidity	
Courtroom	65-68	50-55% humidity	for the mural and the woodwork
Registrar's office	65-70°	50% humidity	at all times