

THE TOWN OF FORT FRANCES

Section: Community Services

Policy: Museum Conservation

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1. Purpose

As a museum's collection is to be kept in trust for future generations, the Fort Frances Museum & Cultural Centre will ensure the preservation of its collection through sound preventive conservation measures.

2. Definitions

Conservation is the application of science to the examination, maintenance, and treatment of artifacts and archival material. Its principal aim is to stabilize artifacts and archival material in their present state. It encompasses both preventive conservation and conservation treatment.

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

Conservation Treatment involves interventions causing changes in the physical properties or structure of the object.

Restoration involves removal or modification of existing material, or the addition of new material in order to reinstate earlier known aesthetic, historical, or scientific value.

3. Conservation Procedures

The Museum will achieve conservation of the collection by the following means:

- a) The Museum will ensure that there are good preventive care measures in place to protect the collection from damage. In the event that conservation care is required, the museum will ensure that appropriate measures are taken.
- b) The Museum will be committed to preventive conservation of its collection through regular assessment and good housekeeping practices.
- c) The Museum will ensure that only those who have training pertaining to conservation treatment will be responsible for collection management.
- d) The Museum will refer to up-to-date Canadian Conservation Institute (CCI) Notes when basic conservation treatment is required on objects.

- e) The museum will consult qualified experts when deemed necessary for objects that require more intensive treatment.
- f) The Museum will be committed to ethical behaviour in the care of its collection.
- g) The Museum will meet all municipal, provincial and federal legislative requirements that apply to the conservation of its collection.

The museum will be committed to protecting the collection through proper care and handling by way of the following:

- a) Ensuring that staff are trained in the safe handling of artifacts, and that instruction and practice are carried out periodically to reaffirm the training.
- b) Ensuring that any artifact that is to be exhibited or used for hands-on activities or interpretation can withstand the use.
- c) Carrying out safe packing, unpacking and transporting of artifacts, and ensuring that staff are appropriately trained in those procedures.

The museum will provide a separate space for the storage of its collection. These areas will be:

- a) Designated for collection storage areas – for artifacts only.
- b) An area large enough to store the collection without crowding and will be large enough to accommodate future growth.
- c) Organized by type of object or material.
- d) Subject to a regular housekeeping schedule.
- e) Exposed to as little light as possible – only when staff are in the room.
- f) Restricted to museum staff only. No visitor will have access to storage areas without knowledge and permission of museum personnel.
- g) Equipped with suitable shelving, cabinets and cupboards to provide for safe storage and support of artifacts. Poly-foam will be used where needed to prevent slippage. Mylar or aluminum foil will be used where off-gassing is possible.

The Museum will maintain the safety and preservation of the artifacts while on exhibition by:

- a) Ensuring that cases and floor spaces are large enough to exhibit the artifacts without crowding or distortion.
- b) Ensuring that any artifact that is on exhibition has adequate support that will not be harmful to the artifact.
- c) Constructing cases, artifact mounts or supports, labels and backgrounds out of material that is safe for the artifacts: i.e., adhesives, film and cardboard will be archival quality and acid-free.
- d) Ensuring that only trained staff will be allowed to clean or handle artifacts during exhibition planning, preparation or construction.
- e) Ensuring that artifacts are removed from exhibition prior to reaching recommended time limits for that item (CCI Notes).
- f) Monitoring exhibit areas for damage or loss.

The Museum will ensure the security of the collection by:

- a) Taking all necessary measures to protect the collection from water or other damage through regular inspection and maintenance of the building; i.e. including water pipes, eaves troughing, and drainage.
- b) Protecting the artifacts from theft and vandalism by restricting access to the collection while on exhibition by using cases that are locked; keeping small artifacts out of reach; restricting bags, knapsacks, etc, from the exhibit area; and by regular monitoring of the objects while on display. The museum will ensure that the security system is activated after hours and that the collection storage area is restricted for use by staff only or by the approval of the curator or designate.
- c) Following sound preventive measures to prevent the occurrence of a disaster. In the event of a disaster, museum staff will follow standard procedure to handle the emergency or disaster as laid out in the Museum's Disaster Plan. All staff will be required to be completely aware of the contents of the plan and will be trained to carry out the duties listed within the plan.

The Museum will ensure that the artifacts within storage or on exhibition have an appropriate environment by:

- a) Ensuring that visible light levels are maintained at acceptable standards (CCI Notes).
- b) Ensuring the absence of ultraviolet light.
- c) Maintaining humidity within a 40 to 60 percent range and temperatures within the 20 to 22 degrees Celsius range. Trained staff will monitor rooms daily for humidity and temperature readings using a thermohygrometer. Records will be kept and deviations reported so that corrective measures can be taken promptly.
- d) Limiting dust and pollution by keeping the interior door on the vestibule closed, and by regularly replacing filters and cleaning ductwork. The Museum will use doormats at all entrances and will regularly vacuum storage and exhibition areas. There will be no smoking within the building.
- e) Carrying out weekly cleaning and regular maintenance of the facility by trained personnel.
- f) Ensuring that a weekly monitoring schedule for pests is carried out by the placement of pest traps throughout the facility and that materials that are prone to moths are checked for evidence of infestation on a regular basis. Garbage will be removed from all areas nightly to a sealed bin in the shipping area, then removed twice weekly by cleaning staff. No food or drinks will be allowed in the collection storage area.

The Museum will ensure that conservation treatment will not damage artifacts and are carried out in accordance with professional standards of practice by:

- a) Ensuring that staff are trained to an appropriate level for basic conservation, and using up-to-date CCI Notes for reference. Staff will consult with a professional conservator on any matter that goes beyond their training.
- b) Carrying out conservation treatment in an area that is separate from the exhibition and storage areas and appropriately equipped and ventilated in accordance with health and safety standards. The Museum will adhere to Town of Fort Frances Health & Safety Policies during any conservation treatment (i.e. wearing proper safety equipment).

4. Policy Review & Approval

The Conservation Policy will be reviewed every three years by the Curator, Museum Advisory Committee and Community Services Manager. Recommended changes will be forwarded to Town Council for approval.