

# California Preservation Program – Part 3 Collections Care: Handling, Access, Storage, and Exhibition

12/12/2013

The California Preservation Program  
Presents

Laura Hertz Stanton

PRESERVATION BEST PRACTICES

SESSION 3:  
COLLECTIONS CARE: HANDLING,  
ACCESS, STORAGE, AND  
EXHIBITION

Thursday, December 12, 2013

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Today

- Handling
- Access
- Storage
- Exhibition



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Handling and Access

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Handling and Access: Getting Started

There are written handling guidelines for both staff and researchers



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Handling Procedures

- Staff
  - Handling
  - Moving
  - Carts
  - Transportation
- Researchers
  - pencils
  - limit # items
  - gloves with photographs
  - lockers
  - monitor



sherwords.blogspot.com

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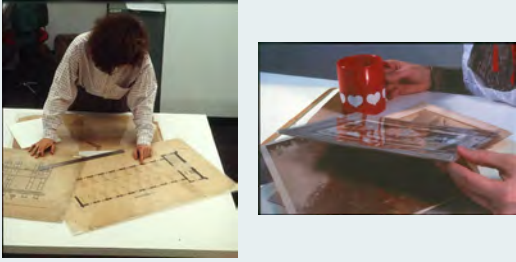
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### Mishandling



The first photograph shows a person leaning over a table covered with large, aged documents or maps. The second photograph shows a person holding a red cup directly over a photograph that is lying on a surface, demonstrating a risk of liquid damage.

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### Handling and Access: Getting Started

#### Preparation for Handling Objects

- Wash hands and dry thoroughly
- Remove jewelry (bracelets, rings, large belt buckles, etc.) and name badges.
- Remove items from top pockets



The photograph shows a person's hands being washed in a sink with a faucet. There are various items on the counter, including a bottle of soap and some containers.

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### Handling and Access: Getting Started

Gloves are available for use as necessary



<http://www.sharifphotographic.co.uk>

The photograph shows a pair of hands wearing white gloves. One hand is holding a ruler, and the other is holding a small, dark object, possibly a piece of film or a small artifact, demonstrating the use of gloves for handling.

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### Handling and Access: Getting Started

Carts are available to move collections throughout the building



Courtesy Athenaeum of Philadelphia

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### Handling and Access: Getting Started



Landing spaces are available in collections storage spaces to aid in retrieval and return to storage

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### Handling and Access: Getting Started

Staff members are trained in appropriate handling techniques



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### Handling and Access: Good

Mounts and supports are available to staff and researchers using the collections



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### Handling and Access: Good

- ❑ A system is in place for reporting and recording damage to collections materials
- ❑ Enclosures are marked for collections that are fragile and/or require special handling instructions
- ❑ Only specially trained staff move collections materials
- ❑ Access to fragile materials is limited until rehousing or conservation treatment can be completed



Image via the Brooklyn Museum

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### Handling and Access: Better

- ❑ Collections materials are in protective enclosures for transportation, handling, and research
- ❑ Conservators and art handlers are consulted and retained for moving large, awkward, or particularly fragile materials



Archival Polyester L-Velopes,  
<http://www.universityproducts.com>

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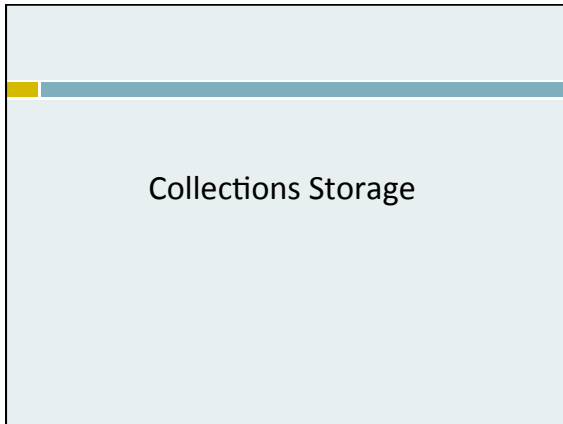
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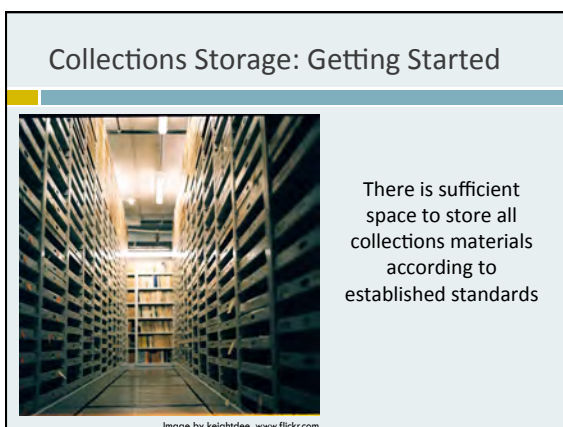
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### Collections Storage: Getting Started

- Shelving is in place and all collections are stored at least 3 inches off the floor
- Non-collections materials are not stored with collections materials

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### Collections Storage: Getting Started

Collections are housed using conservation-grade materials

What does “archival” really mean?

- Buzz words to look for:
  - Acid-free
  - Lignin-free
  - Buffered

Photograph courtesy of Joan Irving, Winterthur

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### Collections Storage: Getting Started

Avoid inappropriate fasteners and adhesives



- Avoid inappropriate fasteners and adhesives

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### Collections Storage: Getting Started



- Aisles are of sufficient width and are clear of collections materials
- Materials can easily be retrieved from shelving and necessary step stools and ladders are available

<http://www.archives.gov/preservation/storage/underground-facilities.html>

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### Collections Storage: Good

- Storage furniture is made from powder coated steel and accommodates collections of various sizes and shapes (rolled, oversized)
- There is room for collections growth
- Subject specialists and conservators are consulted regarding optimal storage for collections materials



[www.museum.spacesaver.com](http://www.museum.spacesaver.com)

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### Collections Storage: Good

Collections materials are stored by format



Images from the National Film and Sound Archive, Australia

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### Collections Storage: Good

Collections housing is refined and all materials are secure within boxes/enclosures



University Museum of Archeology and Anthropology

Single Roll Storage Boxes, [www.hollingermetaedge.com](http://www.hollingermetaedge.com)

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Photographs courtesy of Joan Irving, Winterthur

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### Collections Storage: Better

- ▣ Collections pieces are stored on or with specialized mounts that can be used for access and/or exhibition
- ▣ A space plan has been conducted to ensure that the space is being used at its maximum capacity



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### Collections Storage: Better

- ▣ Specialized storage environments are in place for collections materials with specialized needs
- ▣ Storage enclosures are regularly inspected to ensure they are still meeting the needs of the collections



Image via the National Park Service

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### Exhibition

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### Exhibition: Getting Started



rowanwilliams.archbishopofcanterbury.org

- Materials that are fragile or in poor condition are not placed on exhibition
- Only conservation-grade materials are used for exhibit mounts and mounts fully support the object on exhibit

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### Exhibition: Getting Started

- Food and drink are not permitted in exhibition areas and galleries are not used as special events spaces
- Exhibit cases are secure and are not harmful to collections materials
- Sensitive materials on exhibition are regularly rotated



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### Exhibition: Good



- Materials on exhibit are regularly checked for condition during the exhibition period
- Advice regarding mounts and appropriate exhibition methods is sought from qualified specialists
- Lighting levels can be, and are, adjusted to meet the needs of specific materials

Gleason Library at USF, www.flickr.com

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### Exhibition: Good

- Cases are designed to maintain specific environments for the collections
- Condition reports are completed for materials before and after exhibition



L Style Standard Case with Rolling Deck  
www.smallcorp.com

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### Exhibition: Better

An exhibition policy is in place that outlines guidelines for length of exhibition, lighting, and mounts



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### Exhibition Policy

- Selection
- Support
- Length of time on display
- Security
- Light
- Housekeeping



Seattle University Law Library

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### Exhibition: Better

- Records are kept for length of time and light levels for each collections piece placed on exhibition
- All collections materials to be exhibited are examined, treated (if needed) and mounted by a conservator who is part of the exhibition team
- Plans for what materials will be exhibited are made at least one year in advance so mounts and conservation treatment can be planned



Image via Artifact Advocate

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### Thank you and Questions

Questions about collections care?

Contact the California Preservation Program  
[info@calpreservation.org](mailto:info@calpreservation.org)



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Next Session

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Session 4: Planning and  
Prioritizing  
December 19, 2013

http://www.scmv.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/data-analysis-cartoon-1.gif

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California Preservation Program

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CalPreservation.org  
*Helping preserve heritage collections*

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