

# Caring for Collections during Lockdown



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# How to prepare for closing the museum building & leaving your collections in lockdown...

- Turn off **electrical equipment** - if appropriate
- Turn off **water** - if it is okay to do that
- Do what you can to minimise the risk of **arson**
- Empty **bins/** dispose of **food** (or store in sealed containers)
- Empty **fridge**, switch off if possible and leave door open
- Check **exterior** of building/s
- **Security** – are cases/ drawers locked/ CCTV/ alarms
- **Cover collections** on open display/ storage
- Contact **contractors** (e.g. security/ maintenance/ cleaning)
- Review **loans** (in and out)
- Contact **insurers**
- Update **risk assessments**
- Review **emergency plan**

## Should you visit your museum to check security & environmental conditions?

The Government Indemnity Scheme guidance issued on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 states that...

*DCMS, have confirmed that people can travel for work purposes and attend their place of work, but should only do so where that work cannot be carried out from home. **This would therefore permit people whose attendance is necessary to provide security or to ensure the preservation of cultural objects to travel to their place of work.** When travelling and at work, people should always try to observe the 2 metres distance rule.*

<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/GIS%20Advice%20on%20Meeting%20Security%20and%20Environmental%20Conditions.pdf>

# Museum Galleries Scotland have provided a template on their website for a letter that can be adapted to meet your needs...

*“The person carrying this letter has been identified as a key worker – a member of staff or a contractor whose role is essential to our critical ongoing operations and maintaining safe storage of our museum collections. This group is very small and has been reduced to the smallest possible number.*

*This means that their presence is required at our museum building/s to ensure the security and protection of the collection items on site; the safety of critical staff; and other such critical functions such as the payment wages and invoices to suppliers.”*

<https://www.museumgalleriesscotland.org.uk/advice/coronavirus-guidance-for-museums/caring-for-collections-during-covid-19/>

## If you can access your collection regularly or periodically...

- Don't work on site without permission from your governing body, risk assessments, insurance, appropriate lone working procedures or PPE
- You can't do any work for your employer if you've been furloughed
- Take a checklist
- Take recording equipment & tools

# If you can access your collection regularly or periodically, what are the main things to check?

- Pest activity
- Environmental Monitoring
- Evidence of mould growth
- Light
- Dust
- Building issues
- Security
- Collections condition checks

# Museum Site Visit Template Checklist

Created to help staff and volunteers who wish to undertake regular site visits at their museum for collections care and security purposes during the current Covid-19 lockdown.

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*[Run through checklist here...](#)*



# What if you can't get into your museum at all?

- Are there people who can go in such as security or non-collections staff?
- If so...what are the **PRIORITY** tasks they would need to undertake?
- What training/ support/ resources would they need to be able to do this?
- Can you access your environmental monitoring system remotely?



## **If possible, take the opportunity to do some ‘behind the scenes’ tasks such as...**

- A Benchmarks in Collections Care assessment
- Documentation
- Marking and labelling
- Writing/ updating plans and policies for Accreditation
- Repacking collections (if you have the materials)
- Housekeeping/ cleaning
- Creating digital resources, access to collections and engagement activities for people to do at home
- Analyse environmental monitoring data and pest activity
- Commission conservation work
- Planning for reopening/ what you will do when you get back on site

# How might we be able to prepare for this sort of scenario in the future?

## Review lessons learned from the experience

Put systems in place that would enable you to deal with this more easily in the future such as:

- Remote access to environmental monitoring
- Methods of maintaining stable environment whilst closed
- Relationship with contractors
- Review/ update emergency plan (including salvage kits) and risk assessments

# How might we be able to prepare for this sort of scenario in the future?

- Ensure 'digital museum' is fit for purpose
- Guidelines for using social media to engage people whilst site is closed
- Resources for staff/ volunteers working at home
- Develop training resources for non-collections people who might be responsible for collections during closure
- Back-ups for computerised documentation

**If you knew this was going to happen again...would you make plans to move some collection items off site?**