



Preservation Pre-Assessment

A Preservation Assessment as conducted by the Museum Specialist from Utah Arts and Museums is a technical assistance program that provides small to mid-sized Utah Museums with a general review of museum policies and practices in regards to how it handles its collection. The assessment will provide the museum with an outside perspective on their current collections care practices and provide constructive feedback on areas of improvement. This is not a test but rather an opportunity to receive external feedback for the overall improvement of collections care. Several benefits of going through a preservation assessment include:

- Assisting in identifying priority collections care needs
- Leveraging the assessment for collections care funding in grant proposals—this will make for a stronger argument
- Leveraging the report to get staff and board members in agreement on the importance of preservation and collections care in your museum
- Preparing your for national level assessment programs such as the Conservation Assessment Program (CAP), the Museum Assessment Program (MAP), and national accreditation programs

The preservation assessment begins with a short form to fill out on the type of organization your museum is and what kind of collection the museum houses. We request that the museum provide the following *prior* to the onsite visit for the Museum Specialist to review (if available):

- Collections management policy
- History of structure
- Emergency preparedness plan, if one exists
- Environmental monitoring records, if it exists
- Any site maintenance records, if they exist
- Any recent (read: 10 years) significant collections projects

What to expect from the Preservation Assessment

	Museum's Responsibility	Museum Specialist's Responsibility
Getting Started	*Request assessment *Provide any relevant collections documents *Provide photos *Request dates	*Acquire needed documents, including pre-assessment *Coordinate site visit *ID critical staff to meet /interview
During Site Visit	Facilitate site visit: unlock doors, provide access to all storage and exhibition areas, coordinate with staff	*Conduct assessment , take photos, interview key staff
After Site visit	*Answer all follow up questions from the Museum Specialist	*Follow-up with museums with final report date, no later than three weeks following assessment

The assessment covers 11 areas of policies, practices, and conditions present in your museum:

1. General Museum Information (pre-assessment worksheet)
2. Staffing (pre-assessment worksheet)
3. General Building/Facilities
4. Temperature and Relative Humidity
5. Illumination
6. Pest Control
7. Collections and Collections Policies
8. Exhibitions
9. Storage
10. Emergency Preparedness
11. Safety and Security

Pre-Assessment Worksheet:

Type of Organization:

What goals does the museum have for this survey? (Check all that apply, and elaborate if there are areas of special concern.)

develop a long-range preservation plan for collections

improve collections care

increase staff awareness of collections
preservation concerns

improve environmental conditions

increase institutional commitment to
collections

Comments/special concerns

improve the preservation of the building

use as a tool to obtain funding for
collections care

Other _____

On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 = low, 10 = high), rate collections care as a priority of your institution:

General Information

Governance:

Who governs the museum?

state county municipal private non-profit tribal government
other _____

Is the organization university controlled? yes no

1. Is there a long-range preservation plan? Y N
2. Does the plan identify special collections care projects? Y N

3. Does the institution set aside funds for the care of collections? Y N

Staffing:

1. Does the museum have staff responsible for the preservation of the collections? Y N
If yes, please list name and title:

2. Does the museum have staff responsible for the maintenance of the building? Y N If
yes, please list them:

3. Does the museum provide collections handling and care training to its staff? Y N

Collection:

What kind of collection do you have?

How many objects? _____

- What percentage of the museum's permanent collection is inventoried? _____% (Inventory: Itemized listing of objects and their locations for which the museum has responsibility.)
- Date of the last inventory _____
- How often are inventories conducted? _____
- What percentage of the museum's permanent collection is cataloged? _____% (Catalog: Collection divided into separate meaningful categories with entries that contain descriptive detail [including physical description, provenance, history, accession information, etc.] for each object.)

Next steps:

Tips/Reminders before the visit:

- Must have access to all parts of the building where collections are stored, temporarily or permanently, so remember to unlock and secured doors or have keys available for site visit
- Museum should help identify key staff—please invite select board members or governing authority to participate

Flow of site visit: What to expect

- Introductory discussion: Key staff members present, any volunteers and select board members. Remind the museum that this isn't a policing visit or something that will be used to judge the museum in any negative way. Invite people to air any concerns or grievances and provide commentary at this time.