



Environment and Building Systems Workshop Part A Cleaning Stations Activity

Gallery Clean

General Tips and Guidelines:

1. When cleaning within tight object-filled spaces, body awareness and spatial awareness is EVERYTHING. Remember, you are not cleaning your home, and you're not dusting your belongings. You are cleaning collection objects so they will be best enjoyed by future generations.
2. Plan movements, bring only what you need, and avoid being cluttered in your movements. For example, do not try to carry too many things. Place cleaning materials on a cart, table or in a carrying basket or bucket. Keep them contained. Do not sit your tools on top of objects. Use the floor only if necessary, but ensure it is clean, or place a barrier clean cloth or board between your tools and the floor. You want to keep your tools clean until they are used on objects.
3. Do not reach to clean objects (above your head, behind a barrier, or anywhere you cannot see what you're doing. If you cannot safely access an object, then do not clean it.
4. Always carefully assess your object before beginning cleaning. Observe the object from multiple angles and always practice good object handling skills that we have discussed in previous workshops.
5. Always use clean hands, and wear nitrile gloves when handling objects.
6. When possible, move objects from display space to another sturdy surface. Clean object, then replace to display location.
7. Mentally list (and/or jot down) the components of your object. For example: Note the significance of the object and any of its previous deterioration.
8. Assess the level of soiling. If the object is not in need of cleaning, then do not attempt to clean the object. If the object cannot be cleaned safely with the tools you have, then do not clean the object. Remember: Do no harm
9. If cleaning, test a small, inconspicuous part of the object with your cleaning tool (i.e. cosmetic sponge, soot sponge, swab). Determine the best method and proceed with caution.
10. Work slowly and consistently. Set realistic expectations about what you can cover in any one cleaning period. Haste will introduce additional risk and potential

harm for objects. Clean one section of the gallery at a time if needed, gradually working your way through the entire space over multiple days or longer.

Additional Guidelines from Museums and Galleries of New South Wales: “Cleaning in Museums Helpsheet” from History SA

Tools of the cleaning trade

You will require different tools to clean the museum space, display and storage areas and collection objects. The following list covers all of these. A vacuum cleaner with adjustable suction level and micro-vacuum attachments for cleaning objects. Soft paint and craft brushes, shaving brushes, jewelers and watchmakers brushes. Micro-static cleaning cloths (such as Scotchbrite products from the supermarket). Other lint-free cloths, such as cotton sheeting. It is worth having a good selection of brushes and cloths on hand to be used exclusively for object cleaning tasks. When cloths get dirty, wash them thoroughly, rinse well in clean water and allow to dry.

When to clean

Establish a cleaning and housekeeping schedule. See the Help Sheet, Housekeeping schedule for guidance on how to write one. How often cleaning needs to be done depends on the layout of the museum, type of collection items, opening hours, general environmental conditions and how and where objects are displayed. Observe how and where dust gathers in your museum. Devise a cleaning schedule that sets out how often particular items and spaces, such as display areas and stores, should be cleaned. Keep a log of cleaning activities to be done and make sure each job is marked off with date and time of completion. Incorporate pest checking and management as part of your cleaning program.

Dealing with dust

In the museum space

The best way to control dust in your museum space is to use a vacuum cleaner. Vacuuming removes the dust, whereas dusting and sweeping often just redistributes it. Cleaning the museum space includes paying attention to floors, walls, skirting boards, door frames, window sills and ceilings as well as behind, around and outside of display cases. Curtains that are museum fixtures rather than display items can be vacuumed and washed or dry-cleaned regularly. Fabric covered seating for visitors and workers should also be vacuumed. Desks and cupboards can be wiped down with a cloth slightly dampened with water. Rubbish bins should be emptied daily. Using common sense preventative techniques to reduce dust in the museum space will mean less damage to collection items. It also makes for a less arduous cleaning program. Provide doormats for visitors which are

Commented [1]: Can you be more specific with this source material? Is the document you are referring to the "Cleaning in Museums Helpsheet" from History SA? <https://mgsw.org.au/sector/resources/online-resources/collection-care/cleaning-museums/>

While MGNSW hosts it, it is actually a History SA resource. I downloaded and put in the folder of stuff you are not planning to print.

Commented [2]: Hi Megan, I am correcting this. That is the correct source. What does SA stand for?

Commented [3]: It is History Trust of South Australia, Community Museums Program, Cleaning in Museums, accessed at Museums Galleries New South Wales at the URL above. I cannot find the resource at History SA website.

Commented [4]: Thanks for this Megan. Can you also let me know what you think about the things I've selected to print? I'm thinking I may also print the vacuuming guidelines sheets you added. Let me know if there's anything I've selected that I SHOULD NOT print

Commented [5]: Sorry Marie, I am out the door and cannot stop to review this at the moment. Print what you think, link the rest. I do think you need only one example of the plan so not both MAA and Elgin but one, or none, as the template is pretty explanatory. Sorry I don't have time right now. If you need me to, I can look Sun or Mon.

Commented [6]: No worries, Megan. Thanks for all your help. I've got it!

vacuumed daily or shaken out well away from the museum entrance. Use seals around doors and windows and try to keep windows closed at all times. If the building allows, you can reduce the amount of dust that enters the display areas by installing double doors or creating a separate foyer area rather than allowing direct entrance into the museum space from outside.

In display and storage areas

Vacuuming is also most appropriate for these areas. Shelves (with objects removed) can be wiped with a cloth slightly dampened with water. Make sure that the shelves are fully dry before replacing the objects. A damp surface will encourage the growth of mold. Remember to turn the cleaning cloth regularly so you don't just re-distribute the dirt. Avoid using polishes, cleaning sprays and detergents. They can leave harmful residues which could cause damage when they come into contact with objects. The exterior of display cases can be cleaned using commercial products, but always apply the cleaning product directly onto the cleaning cloth, rather than onto the case surface, to avoid product entering the case.

Reflections on Gallery Clean:

