



Conserve O Gram

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Checklist For Planning The Shipment Of Museum Objects

Movement of any kind endangers museum objects. Mechanical, biological, and chemical damage may occur while transporting an object from one location to another, whether within a storage room, between buildings, between parks, or between a park and another institution. While the museum object is on-site, the curatorial staff uses various management techniques (e.g., labeling storage containers clearly and using specialized containers and carts) to eliminate the need for movement or to minimize dangers during movement. The threats to an object during movement to an off-site location increase in both magnitude and variety.

Whether shipped to a conservation laboratory for treatment, to a neighboring park as part of a traveling exhibit, to a collections center for storage, or to a distant institution for exhibit or research purposes, the object(s) will be subjected to dangers that can be identified and minimized or avoided through advance planning. Addressing all the variables of the external environment, as well as the unique needs of each museum object, is a complex process. This *Conserve O Gram* provides a checklist to facilitate that process.

A missed step in the process can be disastrous, compromising valuable aspects of the museum object, or eventually increasing its rate of deterioration. The checklist is designed to ensure that no crucial step is overlooked. The checklist can serve as a tool for tracking preparations during current projects, or for planning for future or emergency situations when shipment will be necessary. Park staffs are encouraged to photocopy the checklist for use. Categories may be added to the checklist to meet

specific park needs (e.g., shipment of culturally sensitive objects).

This checklist addresses the planning steps for object shipment, including procurement of commercial shipping services, insurance, security and environmental requirements, and staff coordination. The checklist does not specifically address documentation except to indicate at what point in the process loan agreements and other forms must be completed. Guidance on packing and shipping techniques is provided in the NPS *Museum Handbook*, Part I (Rev. 9/90), Chapter 6.

References

Horne, Stephen A. *Way To Go! Crating Artwork for Travel*. Hamilton, NY: Gallery Association of New York State, 1985.

Mecklenburg, Marion F., ed. *Art in Transit: Studies in the Transport of Paintings*. Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1991.

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Checklist For Planning The Shipment Of Museum Objects

1. Reason and Need for Shipping

- Conservation Treatment
 - Problem identified during Collection Condition Survey
 - Emergency treatment due to inadvertent damage
 - Discovery of active, significant deterioration (e.g., infestation or rust)
 - Other _____
 - Park priority
 - curatorial priority (significance relative to collection/park program needs) _____
 - conservator's priority (urgency of treatment) _____
- Exhibit
- Exhibit preparation
- Scientific preparation
- Curation and storage

2. Funding Source, Time Needed, Assistance of Other Park Staff

Refer to NPS *Museum Handbook*, Part I (Rev 9/90), Chapter 12

- Funding for conservation treatment is available
Source _____
- Funding for transportation/shipment is available
Source _____
- Funding for staff, supplies, other expenses is available
Source _____
- Personnel are available
Source _____
 - Staff trained in handling techniques and procedures
 - Staff provided with a schedule for the day of shipment

3. Method of Shipment/Transportation

Refer to NPS *Museum Handbook*, Part I (Rev 9/90), Chapter 6

- Contact conservation lab, collections center, non-NPS institution/agency for special instructions (e.g., shipping and/or handling)
- Shipment has been coordinated with staff of receiving facility
- Consult with appropriate American Indian and Native American groups when shipping culturally sensitive objects
- Criteria for commercial transport
 - Level of experience moving the type of object _____
 - Appropriate equipment/vehicle available (e.g., Air-ride van)
 - Site-specific facility requirements can be met (e.g., small-body truck or lift gate available)
- Hand-carried or via courier (refer to Section 5 of this checklist)
- Delivery/postal services
 - Confirm carrier's ability to provide services requested (e.g., delivery to remote areas)
 - Determine information required to ensure delivery (e.g., accuracy and format of street address)

4. Insurance Requirements

Follow procedures outlined in *NPS Museum Handbook*, Part II (under revision), Chapter 4

- Insurance waived (e.g., government self-insuring status in effect)
- Insurance required, prepare required documents
 - Obtain signatures from authorized park staff
 - Documentation signed by all parties (e.g., borrower) and returned to curator

5. Security Requirements

Refer to *NPS Museum Handbook*, Part I (Rev 9/90), Chapter 9 and Part II (under revision), Chapter 5

- Stipulate security practices and precautions to be followed during transport
- Complete Standard Facility Report
- Stipulate security and fire protection conditions at the conservation laboratory, museum or repository
- Select courier to accompany object, as necessary
 - Prepare travel documents (e.g., travel authorization, travel advance, and reservations)
 - Travel documents and arrangements completed

6. Environmental Requirements

Refer to *NPS Museum Handbook*, Part I (Rev 9/90), Chapter 4 and Part II (under revision), Chapter 5

- Complete Object Condition Report (Form 10-637)
- Stipulate temperature, relative humidity, pest control and light levels during transport, especially in inclement weather
- Stipulate temperature, relative humidity, pest control and light levels while at the conservation laboratory, museum or repository

7. Procurement Process

- Prepare appropriate procurement document
 - Cite applicable requirements from preceding checklist sections (e.g., environmental requirements)
 - Identify contacts (staff and contractor) who will be assigned to the project until its completion
 - Specify who will pack object and method of packing for outgoing shipment
 - Specify who will pack object and method of packing for return shipment
 - Ensure that documents specify departure date and return date
 - State object's travel time
 - Delays will/will not change cost or return date
 - If acclimation period is needed after object returns to site, contract specifies procedures for making damage claims *after* period of acclimatization
- Process procurement documents
- Review/evaluate contract proposals (if applicable)
- Award contract (if applicable)

8. Documentation

Follow procedures outlined in NPS *Museum Handbook*, Part II (under revision), Chapters 4 & 5

- Prepare documentation forms as required
- Obtain signatures from authorized park staff
- Documentation signed by all parties (e.g., borrower or contractor) and returned to curator
- Install Object Temporary Removal Slip (Form 10-97)
- Update catalog records
- Maintain reference file of all signed documents and receipts, and of other project-related materials
- Instructions provided to borrower

9. Packing

Refer to NPS *Museum Handbook*, Part I (Rev 9/90), Chapter 6

- Conduct risk assessment relative to method of transportation
 - Examine object and assess inherent weaknesses
 - Identify hazards en route
 - Determine packing method (consult conservator)
- Procure appropriate packing materials well in advance
- Schedule case/crate construction well in advance of shipment
- Pack object
- Enclose inventory and packing and unpacking instructions
- Apply appropriate exterior labels (e.g., *FRAGILE*)

10. Off-Site Monitoring

- Schedule regular contacts with conservator, museum, or repository
- Obtain copy of publications generated by the loan (e.g., research report)
- Adjust insurance coverage, loan forms and other factors as needed to respond to changes in the schedule
- Schedule return of object to site (if appropriate)
- Schedule delivery of object treatment report and photo documentation to site (as applicable)

11. Object Returned to Site

- Prepare secure area in which the object can acclimate prior to unpacking; isolate and monitor for pest infestation
- Inspect crate and packing materials, and complete Object Condition Report on object
- Report any damage immediately to the shipper through appropriate channels
- Update catalog records
- File documentation in accession, catalog or loan file
- Discard all packing materials

12. Other Considerations

- Attach additional sheet(s) as needed pertaining to site- or object-specific requirements

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