

Brant Museum and Archives

Maintenance Manual

Purpose:

This maintenance manual contains guidelines and procedures for maintenance and care of collections. It will identify what needs to be done, when it needs to be done and who does it.

A regular housekeeping routine can detect or prevent problems such as:

- mould, pest and insect infestations
- leaks and other maintenance problems
- abrasive dust and dirt
- structural damage from improper storage or overcrowded shelving
- chemical degradation of unstable materials such as photographic negatives
- unusually changes in temperature and humidity

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Schedules of maintenance activities

All staff has a responsibility to ensure the following activities are completed at specified frequency. The Curator should monitor artifacts on exhibit and in storage as well as all storage rooms.

Daily:

- check for damage/vandalism to building
- check for damage/rearrangement to displays (fallen mounts, vandalism, etc.)
- check washrooms for cleanliness, sufficient supplies, overflowing garbage cans

Weekly:

- collect all garbage and recycling to place at curb for collection (Monday night – BMA / Wednesday night - MHM)
- sweep or vacuum all exhibit areas
- sweep or vacuum all traffic areas - hallways, kitchen, bathrooms, offices

Bi-weekly:

- wash white cotton gloves
- dust and clean off work surfaces
- clean washrooms, kitchen

Monthly

- dust artifacts on open display
- vacuum and/or damp mop storage room floors
- change charts on hygrothermograph units
- complete visual inspection of entire museum (Section 3)
- check charge on fire extinguishers

Bi-Monthly

- thorough check of building for signs of leaks, damage, pests
- inspect collections for signs of deterioration

Every 3 months

- change furnace filters

Every 6 months

- re-hydrate and calibrate hygrothermographs

Yearly

- test smoke detectors and alarm system
- inspect fire extinguishers.

Duty Roster

Duty Assignment-Daily

Task	Person
check for damage/vandalism to building	Director
check for damage/rearrangement to displays (fallen mounts, vandalism, etc.)	Curator
check washrooms for cleanliness, sufficient supplies, overflowing garbage cans	Everyone

Duty Assignment-Weekly

Task	Person
collect all garbage and recycling to place at curb for collection (Monday night)	Office Manager
clean washrooms,	Assigned weekly
Clean kitchen	Do own dishes and tidy after self
dust and clean off work surfaces	Everyone

Duty Assignment-Monthly

Task	Person
change charts on hygrothermograph units	Curator
complete visual inspection of entire museum (Section 3)	Curator
check charge on fire extinguishers	Office Manager
Test emergency lighting	Office Manager

Duty Assignment-BiMonthly

Task	Person
thorough check of building for signs of leaks, damage, pests	Office Manager/Curator
inspect collections for signs of deterioration	Curator

Duty Assignment-3 Months

Task	Person
change furnace filters	Executive Director

Duty Assignment-6 Months

Task	Person
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Duty Assignment-As Necessary

Task	Person
check light levels (new displays)	Curator
dust artifacts in closed exhibit cases	Curator
empty dehumidifiers or replace water in humidifiers	Summer Students

Bi- Yearly (fall and spring) Big Clean Up (for 3 sites)

Task	Person
Vacuum and sweep floors on main floor	Everyone divided
Vacuum and sweep floors in storage areas and exhibit spaces	Everyone divided
Dust open and closed exhibit spaces	Everyone divided
Clean up and throw out garbage	Everyone divided
Clean windows	Everyone divided

Seasonal

Install magnetic window coverings on all windows in the fall.

Remove magnetic window coverings in the spring.

Snow removal from walkway in the winter.

Emptying dehumidifiers in the summer.

Museum-safe cleaning products and practices

Basic Rules when handling artifacts:

1. Wear white, cotton gloves when handling any objects made of wood, paper, cloth, fabric, metal.
2. When handling glass or ceramics NEVER wear cotton gloves as these smooth objects could easily slip out of your hands. Make sure your hands are CLEAN and DRY. (No moisturizer residue).
3. When moving small objects that have handles – NEVER carry them by their handles. Always support every object from the bottom, or the sturdiest point. Handle joints become weak with time and can easily break cause the object to fall.
4. When moving paper objects, always place a rigid support (such as cardboard or matte board) underneath the paper object to support it evenly. Make sure the board is larger than the object to ensure corners and edges are protected.
5. NEVER move or carry chairs by their backs or arms. Always use two hands and grip the seat of the seat to move it even a short distance. Never drag furniture.
6. When moving large objects such as desks, dressers, beds, etc. always have more than one person to do the lifting. Plan your route ahead and make sure doors are propped open and that the way is clear of tripping obstacles. NEVER pick-up dressers or mantles by the edge of their tops – always remove drawers to get a good grip on the main frame. Tops can easily be pulled loose from the weight of the main frame and drawers.
7. If you need to reach an object or a lighting fixture that is above your head, do not stand on a chair - especially not an accessioned (ie: artifact) one. Use a proper step ladder and do not reach for something outside of your grasp.
8. ALWAYS USE TWO HANDS.

(Mild) Conservation for Various Types of Museum Objects

Note: Regular removal of dust and dirt is essential as dust and dirt can attract insects and mould spores and is abrasive to surfaces.

Conservation: Defined as the profession devoted to the preservation of cultural property for the future. Conservation activities include examination, documentation, treatment, and preventive care, supported by research and education.

Silver

See CCI Note 9/7 for more information

Handling: When handling silver, always wear clean, cotton gloves. The oils and salts on our hands can mark the silver and leave permanent fingerprints.

Cleaning: The process of removing tarnish also removes a certain amount of underlying silver, therefore, polishing or tarnish removal should NOT be done frequently on museum objects. Always check to determine if the object has any hollow parts (handles, etc) or gilding or other surface inlays, including silver plating. If any of these are of concern, consult CCI Notes or a conservator. Wash or swab with anionic detergent (W.A. Paste or Orvus) by dissolving 5 mL of paste in every litre of distilled water. Immerse or swab the object, then rinse with clean distilled water and dry with a soft cloth. If polishing is necessary to remove tarnish, use a polish cloth such as Birks Silver Polishing Cloth which is least abrasive. An alternative is a gentle paste such as Hagerty's. Remove polish residue with an anionic and distilled water rinse.

Ceramics & Glass

See CCI Notes 5/1 for more information

Handling: Before picking up any glass or ceramic object, study it carefully for damage, weak spots, or previous repairs. Look for loose parts, like lids etc. that can fall if the object is tipped or turned over.

Cleaning: For objects in good condition -> Remove loose dirt with a soft-bristled brush. Wash using distilled water (tap water may be acceptable depending on its pH level) with the water temperature being lukewarm or cooler. Do not use detergents. Glass and ceramic should be air dried slowly, never heated to dry.

If the glaze on the surface of the object is flaking or coming off, do not wash. Also, never wash low-fired ceramics as they may turn to mud when in contact with water. Never try to remove stains from glass or ceramic without consulting a professional conservator.

Glass & Acrylic (ie: Plexiglas) Display Cases

See CCI Note 1/2 for more information

Handling: Two or more people are required to move display cases, or to hold the swinging lid in the upright position while the inside surface is cleaned.

Cleaning: Transparent plastics should be cleaned with product specific cleaners – see CCI note. Glass can be cleaned using household cleaners such as Windex. However, with most display cases, there are attached components that can be affected by cleaners and even water (ie: wood frame around glass window). To avoid damage, spray the Windex sparingly in the centre of the glass and use a lint-free cloth to spread it to the outer edges.

Unfinished Wood

See CCI Note 7/1 for more information

Handling: Firstly, make sure that the object really needs to be cleaned. Rule of thumb, dirt is bad but patina is good. Patina is generally defined as the natural deterioration or traces of products applied to the object while it was in use. Dirt acquired through improper storage should be removed, if it can be done safely.

Cleaning: Most surface cleaning can be done with a soft brush and a vacuum. Gently sweep the dirt into the nozzle of the vacuum. If there is concern that there are loose parts of the object, always cover the end of the vacuum nozzle with cheesecloth (held in place with a rubber band) to prevent parts from being sucked up. A stiffer bristle brush can be used on surfaces that appear to be more stable.

Finished or Painted Wood

See CCI Note 7/2 for more information

Handling: Half the value of a piece of furniture resides in its finish, so it is important to protect the coating. Finishes include: dry pigment, paint, clear finishes, oil and wax.

Cleaning: Painted surfaces – dust with a damp, lint-free cloth (test an unobtrusive area first to see if any colour is removed). If the paint is flaking, do not wash.
Clear finishes – light and water can damage the finish. This includes dampness from mopping around the legs of furniture.

Metal

Handling: Use clean cotton gloves as your hand oils can contaminate, but metals can actual harm you as well.

Cleaning: A soft brush and a gentle vacuuming (nozzle covered in cheesecloth) is usually enough

Paintings

See CCI Note 10/13 for more information

Handling: Make sure that the painting is stable before handling it – check for flaking paint and loose frames. Plan your intended route before moving a painting, make sure the way is clear and there is a safe place to lay it down or stand it up. Take your time. Only carry one at a time. Never carry a painting by the top or sides of its frame. Always wear lightweight cotton, or latex gloves to avoid transferring oils from your hands. Always have two people for large works.

Cleaning: Never attempt to clean a painting without assistance from a trained conservator. Dust stable frames (ie: no loose paint, varnish etc) with a brush.

Removing dust from artifacts:

- use a soft, lint-free, micro-fiber cloth for smooth and undamaged surfaces such as glass, glazed ceramics, finished furniture
- use soft bristle brushes for irregular surfaces such as beadwork and baskets
- vacuuming for textiles (using a variable-speed vacuum with nozzle covered by a piece of cheesecloth) as well as in conjunction with a soft brush for other objects

DO NOT use:

- products such as pledge or commercially treated dusting cloths on artifacts
- feather dusters as the feathers can break and scratch surfaces, also tends to release dust into the air

Visual Inspection Guidelines – Daily

1. Inspect the ceilings and walls for water damage, and the floors for signs of pests or insects.
2. Notify the Curator if there are any issues or problems.

Room/Area	Ceiling	Walls	Floors	Comments
<i>Exhibits</i>				
- Victorian Parlour				
- Temporary space				
- Edwardian Bedroom				
- Pioneer Room				
- Hurley Print/General Store				
- Pottery/Barber				
- Brant Square				

Visual Inspection Guidelines – Weekly

1. Inspect the ceilings and walls for water damage, and the floors for signs of pests or insects.
2. Place a checkmark in the box once it has been visually inspected.
3. Record any issues or problems in the Comments section

Date: _____

Completed by: _____

Room/Area	Ceiling	Walls	Floors	Comments
<i>Exhibits</i>				
- Victorian Parlour				
- Temporary space				
- Edwardian Bedroom				
- Pioneer Room				
- Hurley Print/General Store				
- Pottery/Barber				
- Brant Square				

Visual Inspection Guidelines – Monthly

1. Inspect the ceilings and walls for water damage, and the floors for signs of pests or insects.
2. Place a checkmark in the box once it has been visually inspected.
3. Record any issues or problems in the Comments section.

Date: _____

Completed by: _____

Room/Area	Ceiling	Walls	Floors	Comments
<i>Storage</i>				
- Attic				
- N room				
- M room				
- Glass/Ceramics				
- Metals				
- Z room				
- R550/framed storage				
Temporary Artifact Storage (near kitchen)				
<i>Work/Staff Spaces</i>				
- back work room				
- kitchen				
- program room				
- gift shop/front desk				
- library				
- main office				
- director's office				
- washroom upstairs				
- washroom downstairs				
- basement				

Emergency Equipment Inspection - Monthly

1. Inspect each fire extinguisher and pull station to make sure they are not damaged or blocked from easy access.
2. Check each fire extinguisher with a dial to ensure it is properly charged. The needle should be pointed in the green area.
3. Sign the fire extinguisher inspection tags with your initials and the date.
4. Record any issues or problem in Comments section.

Date: _____

Completed by: _____

Fire Extinguishers

Location	Dial Y/N	Inspected	Comments
Main Office	N		
Hallway near bathroom (lower)	Y		
Program Room	Y		
Kitchen	N		
Back Work Room	Y		
Hallway near bathroom (upper)	Y		
Exhibits near Hurley Printing	Y		
In Attic near textiles	Y		
Metal Storage	N		

Fire Pull Stations

Location	Inspected	Comments
Main Office		
Hallway near front door		
Emergency exit (lower)		
Top of stairs		
Emergency exit (upper)		
Inside door to attic		
Z room/top of back stairs		

1. Test each emergency exit light by pulling down on the black "Test" switch until the lights come on.
2. Record any issues or problems in the Comments section.

Emergency Exit Lights

Location	Switch tested	Comments
Exit from Offices		
Emergency Exit (lower)		
Program room (front)		
Program room (rear)		
Front Door		
Above Door to Attic		
Exhibits by Waterous window		
Exhibits by Eye glasses		
Exhibits Brant Square (front)		
Emergency Exit (upper)		
In attic at top of stairs		

Big Spring Cleaning Day:

Location (BMA)	Assign	completed
Victorian Parlor		
Dust		
Vacuum		
Sweep		
Check lighting		
Clean windows		
Temp Gallery/Gift Shop		
Sweep		
Dust exhibit cabinet		
Dust display cabinet		
Clean windows		
Clean counter		
Check lighting		
Kitchen		
Mop floor		
Sweep floor		
Clean counter		
Clean appliances		
Clean fridge		
Check lighting		
Programming room		
Sweep		
Mop floor		
Library		
Dust		
Vacuum		
Clean away papers		
Bathroom (Downstairs)		
Mop floor		
Clean sink		
Clean toilet		
Replace toilet paper and towel and replenish soap		

Dust		
Clean windows		
Bathroom (Upstairs)		
Mop floor		
Clean sink		
Clean toilet		
Replace toilet paper and towel and replenish soap		
Clean mirror and window		
Edwardian Bedroom		
Sweep		
Vacuum		
Dust		
Clean window		
Hallways		
Vacuum/Sweep		
Pioneer room		
Sweep		
Dust		
Permanent Gallery space		
Vacuum		
Sweep		
Dust open and closed areas		
Clean glass display cases		
Storage rooms		
Sweep		
Dust (Cobwebs)		

Location (MHM)	Assign	completed
Gift Shop		
Sweep		
Dust		
Tidy desk		
Clean window		
Programming Kitchen		
Mop floor		
Sweep		
Clean counters		
Clean appliances		
Programming Room		
Vacuum		
Sweep		
Office (Left)		
Sweep		
Dust		
Office (Right)		
Sweep		
Dust		
Kitchen		
Dust		
Sweep		
Hallways		
Sweep/vacuum		
Upstairs craft room		
Vacuum		
Dust		
Maid room		
Sweep		
Dust		

Parlour		
Sweep		
Vacuum		
Dust		
Clean windows		
Girls bedroom		
Sweep		
Dust		
Clean windows		
Parents Bedroom		
Sweep		
Vacuum		
Dust		
Anne's Room		
Sweep		
Dust		
Library		
Dust		
Vacuum		
Sweep		
Boys room		
Sweep		
Dust		

Location (MIS)	Assign	completed
Gift Shop		
Sweep		
Dust		
Exhibit space		
Vacuum		
Dust		
Desk		
Dust		
Sweep		
Land registry		
Vacuum		
Dust		
Clean desk tops		
Deeds Storage		
Vacuum		
Put boxes away		
Dust		
Temp exhibit space		
Vacuum		
Dust		
Bathroom		
Mop floor		
Sweep		
Clean toilet		
Clean mirror		
Clean sink		
Replenish soap, toilet paper, towel		
Storage area		
Dust		
sweep		