

Lock, Stock and Barrel: Firearms Collecting for Museums

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Common Questions Related to Firearm Collecting

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The National WWII Museum

Is it illegal?

- Federal Law
 - National Firearms Act
- State Law
 - Varies by state so be sure to contact a local ATF agent



Japanese, water-cooled aircraft model machine gun

Is it legal?

- Does the National Firearms Act Regulate...
 - Machine Guns? YES
 - Rifles? NO
 - Pistols? NO
 - Shotguns? NO (unless short-barreled)
 - Mortars and other destructive devices? YES
 - Silencers? YES



Japanese Knee Mortar

Is it legal?

- Regulated does not mean illegal!
 - Machine Guns, must be registered
 - Form 4
 - Non-registered machine guns, can be transferred to government entities (including museums)
 - Form 10



1928 Thompson
Sub-Machine Gun

Is it legal?

- Antique Firearms
 - Those made before 1898 are not regulated
 - Examples: musket or flintlock rifles
- Curio and Relics
 - Firearms more than 50 years old, or of special interest



Japanese Type 14 Nambu
pistol of Kamikaze pilot
which struck the USS
Saratoga

Am I legal?

- Curio and Relics (C&R) License
 - Is a form of an Federal Firearms License (FFL)
 - Allows for easier transfer and shipping



“Broomhandle”
C-96 Mauser Pistol

Physical Acceptance—In Person

- Require an appointment
- No live ammunition
- No loaded guns
- Be conscientious of those around you
- Be aware of your surroundings



Physical Acceptance—By Mail

- Four Factors (part 1)
 - Who is sending the gun
 - Usually a private individual to a licensed collector (this is where having the C&R is very helpful)
 - Who is receiving the gun
 - As a museum you can use a local licensed FFL dealer
 - Or use your C&R

Physical Acceptance—By Mail

- Four Factors (part 2)
 - What kind of gun it is
 - Antique
 - Handgun (in state vs. out of state)
 - Modern Gun (in state vs. out of state)
 - Method of shipment
 - USPS
 - Common Carriers



German G-43 Rifle

Physical Acceptance—By Mail

- General Guidelines
 - Insure packages for the full insurance value of the firearm(s)
 - Declare the contents (this is where knowing the law becomes helpful since many employees at shipping places may not)
 - Require Signatures
 - Pack like you would any artifact



German, STG-44

Helpful Links

- Shipping
 - <http://www.nramuseum.org/gun-info-research/how-to-ship-guns-and-ammo.aspx>
 - <https://www.ups.com/content/us/en/resources/ship/packaging/guidelines/firearms.html>
 - http://pe.usps.com/text/pub52/pub52c4_009.htm
 - <http://www.wikihow.com/Mail-a-Firearm>
 - <http://www.thegunzone.com/ship-guns.html>

Physical Control

- In Storage
 - Specialized Storage Cabinets
 - Controlled space within storage
 - Access
- On Display
 - Mounts
 - Cases
 - Firing Pins



Physical Control

- Handling
 - Always treat firearms as if they are loaded
 - Wear gloves
 - Be careful of working the actions on firearms
- Security
 - Where are firearms stored?
 - How are they stored?
 - Who has access?
 - How are movements monitored?

Physical Control

- Access
 - Designate who does (and does not) have access to firearms
 - Designate times when firearms ARE NOT to be accessed
 - Designate what happens in an emergency
- Inventory
 - Establish a firearms register
 - Establish a regular inventory of firearms
 - Do random spot checks
 - Have a witness

Physical Control

The screenshot shows a desktop environment with a sidebar of application icons and a main window titled 'Catalogue (1) - Display'. The sidebar includes icons for Catalogue, Accession Lots, Sites, Events, Exhibition Objects, Loans, Movements, Locations, Conservation, Insurance, Bibliography, Rights, Parties, Narratives, Multimedia, Condition Checks, Internal Movements, Valuations, Thesaurus, Gazetteer, Lookup Lists, Groups, and Task Templates. The main window displays a table of objects with columns for ID, Description, Current Location, and Storage Location. The table contains 31 rows of data, listing various firearms and their locations. The status bar at the bottom indicates 'Display 413 matching objects'.

	Summary Data	Current Location: (Current Location)	Storage L
30	1994.001.0587 Machine Gun, German. Object	[V1R2U31S6]	
31	1994.001.0709 Nagant M1895 revolver. Object		[V1R1U1]
32	1998.002.001.1 Carbine. Object		[V1R1U1]
33	1998.002.002.001 M1 Garand Rifle. Object	[Arms and Men Normandy]	
34	1998.002.002.002 M1 Garand Rifle. Object		[V1R2U3]
35	1998.002.002.003 M1 Garand Rifle. Object		[V1R2U3]
36	1998.002.002.004 M1 Garand Rifle. Object	[Arms and Men Normandy]	[V1R2U3]
37	1998.002.002.4 M1 Garand rifle. Object		[V1R2U3]
38	1998.002.002.005 M1 Garand Rifle. Object	[Normandy Gallery]	
39	1998.002.002.006 M1 Garand Rifle. Object		[V1R2U3]
40	1998.002.002.007 M1 Garand Rifle. Object	[Normandy Gallery]	
41	1998.002.002.008 M1 Garand Rifle. Object		[V1R2U3]
42	1998.002.002.009 M1 Garand Rifle. Object	[RTT C2-5-1]	[V1R1U1]
43	1998.002.002.010 M1 Garand Rifle. Object		
44	1998.003.001 RIFLE, GERMAN. Object		[V1R1U1]
45	1998.005.008 .50 Cal. Machine Gun, US. Object	[On display see notes]	
46	1999.021.008 Revolver, US. Object	[Arms and Men Normandy]	
47	1999.024.001 M1A1 folding stock carbine. Object		[V1R3U3]
48	1999.037.013ad BrowningM1919 .30 caliber machine gun, dummy receiver. Object	[Normandy Gallery]	
49	1999.047.021ab M1911A1 Colt .45 pistol. Object	[Arms and Men Normandy]	
50	1999.055.001 Japanese Type 38 Ariska Rifle. Object	[RTT C2-5-1]	[V1R1U1]
51	1999.085.001 Gun, Automatic Rifle. Object	[Arms and Men Normandy]	
52	1999.108.001 Springfield M1903 Rifle. Object	[RTT C2-4-2]	
53	1999.109.001ab MG 34 Dummy Gun. Object		[V1R2U3]
54	1999.119.001 Pistol, Luger. Object		[V1R1U1]
55	1999.127.002 US carbine Model M-1. Object		[V1R3U3]
56	2000.025.001 German P-08 Luger. Object	[Arms and Men Normandy]	
57	2000.025.002ab German P-38 9mm pistol. Object	[Arms and Men Normandy]	
58	2000.025.007AD RIFLE, GERMAN. Object	[Normandy Gallery]	
59	2000.029.001AE SUBMACHINE GUN. Object	[Arms and Men Normandy]	
60	2000.029.002AB GUN, MACHINE, GERMAN. Object	[Arms and Men Normandy]	

Display 413 matching objects

Preservation of Firearm Collections

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How do you manage the preservation of a firearms collection in your museum?

CONCEPTS

- Firearms are composite objects
 - Patina
- Preventative conservation
 - Tarnish/corrosion
- Restoration
 - Organic/inorganic
- Conservation
- Retreatability/reversibility
- Compatibility/stability
- Working order
- Firing order

Handling and Assessment

First level of preservation- preserving information

- Catalog/accession information is completed
- Object is labeled/tagged

Recommendations for Handling:

- Check for load in new firearms using a dowel or cleaning rod for muzzle-loaders
- If breech loading, open the breech or chamber and check for loads
- If loaded: remove cartridges and dispose of properly
 - black powder/ball found- contact gunsmith and set object aside, clearly marked

Systematic Survey:

- Assess the overall condition of each firearm
 - Catalog number/ correct name/ manufacturer/ serial number and any other markings
 - exterior examination: metal parts for corrosion, residues
 - wood parts for cracks, surface finish condition, mold, insect damage
 - interior of barrel: corrosion, residues
 - partial disassembly

Example of Survey Ranking Scheme

TABLE 1. Suggestions for Conditions Ratings used to Survey Objects

<i>Rating</i>	<i>Condition</i>	<i>Priority/Treatment Recommendation</i>
1.	Stable, no observed corrosion, breakage or structural problems	Low priority; surface cleaning only
2.	Stable, some previous corrosion observed, possible active corrosion	Low priority; surface cleaning; check on regular basis
3.	Stable, with active corrosion in several areas; wood fair to good	Medium priority; surface cleaning required; treat corroded areas
4.	Unstable; active corrosion observed; structure unstable; loose/broken parts.	High priority; stabilization treatment required; restoration may be part of overall treatment

Sample Condition Survey Worksheet

CONSERVATION CONDITION SUMMARY FORM

Accession number #: _____ Object : _____

Condition Assessor(s): _____

Date(s): _____

Conservation Assessment Summary:

Overall Condition Ranking (1= Poor/ 4= Excellent): 1 2 3 4

Treatment Priority (1-3): 1 2 3 4

Est. Hrs.: 0 1-2 2-3 3-4 5-6 6-8 10-12 12+

Condition Ratings:

Metal:

Barrel:

Corrosion: _____ Tarnish: _____ Scratches: _____ Residues: _____

Lock:

Corrosion: _____ Tarnish: _____ Scratches: _____ Residues: _____

Stock furniture:

Corrosion: _____ Tarnish: _____ Scratches: _____ Residues: _____

Wood:

Cracks: _____ Scratches: _____ Finish problems: _____ Mold: _____

Insect damage: _____

Other Materials:

Cracks: _____ Scratches: _____ Residues: _____

Condition Notes: (short narrative describing whether corrosion is stable or unstable, structural problems, other observations)

Examples of conditions



Examples of conditions



Handling, Storage, and Display

- Handling long-arms: always use both hands; lay external lock weapons with lock side up or use blocks. Be aware of length.
- Upright storage is best for long-arms- support at several point; affords best view without handling, space efficient.
- Labeling: attach laser printed labels with acrylic resin.
- Handguns- organize in padded drawers; store out of holsters and belts; store leather out of contact with metal.
- Storage Conditions: Avoid extreme fluctuations on high and low ends, allowing for annual fluctuations, e.g. Temp: 65-72, RH: 30%-55%; avoid basement storage if possible. Dehumidifiers can be installed; monitor.
- Light: Eliminate UV, Vis <150 Lux (<150,000 Lux hrs.) on exhibit; rotate collections.
- Avoid mounts that go into the barrel, or wrap around trigger guards. Mounts should be padded, afford support, but are easy to remove.

Storage examples



Storage examples



Storage examples



Storage examples



Storage examples



Cleaning and Treatment

- Cleaning w/o disassembly: wipe with dry, lint free cloth
- Do Not Use:
 - Metal polishes or cleaners
 - Wood polishes
 - “gun cleaners”
 - Oils
 - Varnishes
 - Spray or brushed

Disassembly

- Assistance from firearms collectors, if possible
- Refer to Tech Talk Part II
- Have proper ventilation for solvents and/or PPE
- Use exploded gun diagrams
- Assemble basic tools
 - Gun rods: long gun and pistol lengths
 - Brush and patch attachments
 - Gunsmith screwdriver set
 - Gun punches
 - Rawhide mallets
 - Dowels
 - Mainspring vise
 - Padded “Panavise” or equivalent

Basic Treatments

- Corrosion reduction
- Degreasing
- Cleaning of metal and wood components
- Barrel interior stabilization
- Coating/waxing
- Documentation of interior parts and conditions for further intervention

Disassembly





Resources

- CCI Bulletin No. 16: Care and Preservation of Firearms:
http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2016/pch/NM95-55-16-1995-eng.pdf
- Gun Digest Exploded Gun Drawings- Free Download link:
<https://freedownloadxgundigestbookofexplodedgundrawings.wordpress.com/2014/03/20/gun-digest-book-of-exploded-gun-drawings-free-download/>
- Link to MNHS “Tech Talk” Series: <http://www.mnhs.org/shpo/lhs/techtalk.php>
- Current Link to the “Track of the Wolf” website- resource for black powder supplies, parts, and books: <https://www.trackofthewolf.com/>
- Image Permanence Institute website- provides valuable information for understanding storage climates and materials: https://www.eclimatenotebook.com/fundamentals_nl.php

QUESTIONS ?