Historic House and Small Institution Hazard Survey

AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR CONSERVATION’S HEALTH AND SAFETY NETWORK
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A fire occurred on August 3, 2017 in Torrey Hall, a historic building that houses the University of Vermont’s Pringle Herbarium. The fire burned for 7 hours. The collection was largely undamaged because of protective cabinetry and the actions of the fire fighters. A strong relationship with local fire stations and a detailed plan can be tremendously beneficial to collections’ safety in emergencies.
Overview & Introduction

• Goals of the Survey:
  • Help historic houses and small museums and cultural heritage institutions mitigate disasters and other H&S issues
  • Help make the H&S of staff, volunteers, and visitors a focus
  • Create a priority list of H&S concerns to allow for gradual improvements starting with the highest risks
Overview & Introduction
Background and Survey Development

Dumbarton House, Washington DC

Tudor Place, Washington DC
Survey Structure & Format
Survey Structure & Format

The survey is organized by hazard type (one hazard type per tab). The hazard types are:

1. General Policies and Procedures
2. Building Structure
3. Building Systems
4. Outdoor Spaces
5. Chemical Hazards
6. Collection Based Hazards
7. Compressed Gas and Spraying
8. Work Practices
9. Fire Hazards
10. Equipment
11. Transportation
Work Practices
This section includes activities in which many historic houses engage: ergonomics, first aid, housekeeping, personal protective equipment, radiation, sharps, and working at heights. We recognize that not all historic houses have all of the listed hazards. Skip sections that don’t pertain to you. The term employees in this section includes everyone exposed to these hazards (staff, contractors, volunteers, interns, etc.).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work Practices</th>
<th>Response (Enter 1 for Yes and 0 for No)</th>
<th>Comments/Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ergonomics</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning &amp; Policies</td>
<td></td>
<td>15-2% of workplace non-fatal occupational incidents are injuries such as sprains/strains etc. and only 4.8% are illnesses from toxic exposure. Ergonomics matter. Resource: AIC wiki on Ergonomics in Collections Care.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees have access to resources on work station ergonomics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If work stations are not ergonomically sufficient, equipment is replaced in a timely fashion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ergonomics Planning and Policies total (out of 2)</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Training</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training is provided on how to properly lift heavy or awkward items</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ergonomics Training (out of 1)</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hazards</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees who stand for long periods of time (security staff, docents, and volunteers, etc.) have access to rest stations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time is built in to all staff schedules to allow them to use the rest stations or take movement breaks from sedentary tasks</td>
<td></td>
<td>Resource: AIC Health &amp; Safety Network Guide, Stand Up and Stretch!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees who stand for long periods of time (security staff, docents, and volunteers, etc.) have access to resources on proper footwear and body positioning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work areas are adequately illuminated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ergonomics Hazards total (out of 4)</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ergonomics related resources/hazard communication posted in employee and volunteer break areas</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ergonomics posters are commercially available. Example: Compliance Posters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ergonomics Communications Total (out of 1)</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tips for Completing the Hazards Survey

• Try to be as honest as possible
• You may need to duplicate some tabs and answer them for individual building structures (for example, the tab Building Systems may need to be answered for the main museum as well as an annex or garage)
• You can work on the survey over time and accomplish tabs in any order
• You may need to speak with other members of staff for specialist information
• Download the Survey Here
• AIC Health and Safety Wiki
Hazards versus Risks

HAZARDS

Examples of hazards that may be encountered in a historic house:

• Historic Window Glass
• Hazardous Museum Collections
• Pesticide use

MITIGATING RISK

The risks presented by the hazards can be mitigated through several methods including:

• Safety & handling protocols
• Use and quantity
• Route of exposure

Resources on Hazardous Collection Materials:

AIC Wiki: Hazardous Collections
Arsenic and Old Lace: Controlling Hazardous Collection Materials
Scoring the Survey

Urgent

Some cause for concern

Low risk
### Historic House Hazards Results Summary & Score Guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tab</th>
<th>Section</th>
<th>YOUR SCORE</th>
<th>Risk Category by Range of Scores</th>
<th>Possible Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Policies</td>
<td>Policies and Plans</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0-3</td>
<td>4-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employee Safety</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0-6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collective Staff Knowledge</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Structure</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0-7</td>
<td>11-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exits</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0-5</td>
<td>8-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aisles</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0-5</td>
<td>8-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stairs</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0-5</td>
<td>11-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Toxic Building Materials</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0-10</td>
<td>12-16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Confined Spaces</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0-2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Building Systems</td>
<td>Ventilation</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0-10</td>
<td>13-14</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Electrical</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0-17</td>
<td>18-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pipes and Plumbing</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0-4</td>
<td>6-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Spaces</td>
<td>Planning &amp; Policies</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0-4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0-3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hazards</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0-12</td>
<td>13-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0-1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemical Hazards</td>
<td>Planning and Policies</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0-8</td>
<td>10-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0-2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control of Chemical Hazards</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0-6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chemical Hazards Communications</td>
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<td>0-2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collection Based Hazards</td>
<td>Hazards</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0-28</td>
<td>27-33</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Policies, Planning, and Mitigation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0-8</td>
<td>9-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0-1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0-3</td>
<td>4-5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Example Tab: Outdoor Spaces

Special thanks to Dr. Jerry Foust, Collections Manager at Dumbarton House. He supported the initial building tours, has edited the survey, and as you are about to see, has supplied answers to the tab ‘Outdoor Spaces.’
What to Do After Completing the Survey

Examples of Safety Professionals

• **Industrial Hygiene:** (e.g., CIH, Certified Industrial Hygienist). A specialist that identifies and addresses unhealthy work practices that may result in injuries or illnesses.

• **Occupational Safety:** An Occupational Safety Professional (e.g., CSP, Certified Safety Professional)

• **Fire Protection:** Fire protection engineers (e.g., PE, Professional Engineer)

• **Health Physics/Radiation:** Radiation safety is a specialty for some IHs.

• **Occupational Medicine:** Occupational medicine is a specialized field, usually obtained through a Master’s program in public health after an MD is earned.

• **Environmental Science/Health/Protection:** Environmental protection is a broad area, usually requiring a minimum B.S. in environmental science, environmental or public health.

Resources on Finding a Safety Professional:

- [AIC Health and Safety Wiki on Finding a H&S Professional](#)
- [AIHA Find a Consultant Tool](#)
Historic House Survey: Resources

Survey
AIC Beginner's Guide to Health and Safety
AIC Health and Safety Wiki
AIHA Consultants Directory
AIC Health and Safety Forum

US Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)
WorkSafe: New Zealand's primary workplace health and safety regulator
Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety
EU Occupational Safety and Health Administration Wiki (EU OSHA)
Our Work Continues

- Our team plans to continue improving the survey.
- Future changes depend on feedback from actual users.
- If you complete the survey, please consider leaving feedback via a brief Google Forms survey.
- You can access the survey on the wiki page and via this link: Feedback Survey.
Acknowledgements

We would like to thank a number of people who generously helped us design and edit this survey:

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