


# STAFF AND VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT FOR COLLECTIONS CARE


## Assessing Skills

- Physical risks to collections come from many quarters:
  - Exhibition
  - Theft
  - Research
  - Education programs
- Staff, volunteers, and the public can cause unintentional damage when handling collections objects



## Assessing Skills

- Good for both staff and volunteers.
- Base assessment of staff on strategic plan
  - Combat inadequacy and upset with good communication
- Surveys or questionnaires



- Assessing Skills
- Attracting, Retaining, and Managing Volunteers
- Training Staff and Volunteers

## Assessing Skills

- Examples:
  - *reCollections Caring for Collections Across Australia, Chapter 5: Managing People* (Collections Australia Network)
  - Sample Volunteer Application (Yale Peabody Museum)

## Volunteers

### Attracting, Retaining, and Managing Volunteers (or Interns)

- Remember, volunteers are free



### Attracting, Retaining, and Managing Volunteers (or Interns)

- Why do people volunteer?
- What benefits do you offer for volunteers?
- Do you require volunteers to fill out an application?




### Attracting, Retaining, and Managing Volunteers (or Interns)

- Can you take on volunteers?
- Do you have the right environment for it?
- Do you have appropriate projects for volunteers to work on?
- Volunteering is done by choice and volunteers will be selective of the where's, when's, and what's.

### Attracting, Retaining, and Managing Volunteers (or Interns)

- Managing volunteers
  - Written policy
  - Staff supervision
  - Defined projects and expectations
  - Ownership
  - Evaluate



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## Training

## Training Staff and Volunteers

- Plan
- Activities
- Resources
- Mentor

Above all, have fun!

## Resources

- Support materials for any training session
- Keep them simple and direct – think the quick references we get with new electronics
- Depending on your audience, provide further readings

## Plan

- Who is this training for – staff or volunteers – or both?
- Is there an existing baseline of knowledge or do you need to start from scratch?
- Who will perform the training (and are they a good choice)?
- When training, focus on three main messages – and repeat them

## Mentor

- Don't train and abandon!
- Regularly communicate with staff or volunteers on how things are going, inspect work, plan new training

## Activities

- When training in-person, don't try to cram too much information into a session – get people up and active!
- Be sure everyone involved in a session gets a chance to DO the work and not just watch and listen
- Be sure to build in some form of assessment

## You don't need to reinvent the wheel!

- Taking Care* (articles on collections care topics) (Museum Conservation Institute, Smithsonian Institution)
- Wyoming State Museum Collections Care Manual* (Wyoming Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources)
- In Safe Hands?* (webinars) (The British Library)
- Saving Your Treasures* (videos and articles) (NET Nebraska PBS and Nebraska State Historical Society)

## Collections Management

- Who? – Staff only preferably, experienced volunteers if needed
- *Different labeling methods* (video) (South Australian Community History)

## Handling Collections

- Who? – everyone!
- Hands-on training important
- Museums
  - ▣ *Handling Museum Objects* (article) (Heritage & Libraries Branch, Ontario Ministry of Culture)
  - ▣ *The Care and Handling of Objects* (article) New Bedford Whaling Museum
  - ▣ *Artifact and Rare Book Handling: To Glove or Not to Glove?* (video) (Minnesota Historical Society)
  - ▣ *Saving Your Treasures* (videos and articles) (NET Nebraska PBS and Nebraska State Historical Society)
  - ▣ Volunteer Training Bank (articles and presentations) (Museum of London)

## Storage

- Who? – Staff and supervised volunteers/interns
  - ▣ Who will depend on what and in what condition
- What supplies, materials, and space will you need?
- Hands-on training important
- *Storage Containers, Supports, and Mounts* (article) (Minnesota Historical Society)
- *Storage Furniture* (article) (Minnesota Historical Society)

## Handling Collections

- Libraries
  - ▣ *Care and Handling of Books* (video) (Yale University Library)
  - ▣ *The FUNdamentals of Book Care in Five Easy Lessons* (video) (George Mason University Libraries)
  - ▣ *Conservation and Collections Care* (video) (Cadbury Research Library)
  - ▣ *Handling Harvard's Special Collections* (video) (Harvard College Library)
  - ▣ *Murder in the Stacks* (Library Preservation) (video) (Columbia University)

## Storage

- *Caring for Cultural Objects: Collections Management Tips* (video) Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture)
- *Saving Your Treasures: How to Fold & Roll Textiles for Storage* (video) (NET Nebraska PBS and Nebraska State Historical Society)
- *General Collections Handling Guidelines* (article) South Australian Community History

## Security

- Who? – everyone!
- *Test Your Awareness: Take the Test* (video) (Transport for London)
- *Test Your Awareness : Whodunnit?* (video) (Transport for London)

## Monitoring and Housekeeping

- Who?
  - ▣ Monitoring – Volunteers
  - ▣ Housekeeping – Staff and experienced volunteers
- Sustainable Preservation Practices for Managing Storage Environments (register for free webinars) (Image Permanence Institute)
- *Housekeeping Schedule* (article) (South Australian Community History)

## Questions?



## Health and Safety

- Who? – everyone!
- Retrieval of collections
- PPEs for disaster recovery
- Gloves
- Chemical usage
- First Aid



## Homework

- Read or watch one of the collections care training resources shared in this webinar (posted at <http://www.connectingtocollections.org/courses/collections-care-basics/>). Briefly describe how you will use this information to train staff and/or volunteers at your institution.

## Training Providers

- Heritage Groups
  - ▣ Heritage Preservation, IPI, AAM, SAA, regional groups
- Regional Conservation Centers...
  - ▣ BACC, Gerald Ford Center, MACC, NEDCC, CCAHA, Lyrasis, Amigos...
- State Agencies
  - ▣ State Archives, State Library, State Museum, State Historic Records Advisory Board (SHRAB)...