

HERITAGE BULLETIN

Tips, Ideas & More to Help Preserve Oregon's Heritage

29

SIMPLE STEPS FOR COLLECTIONS CARE

JULY 2015

There are many no- and low-cost activities your organization can do that will improve its collections care. This Bulletin offers 10 simple steps you can take to care for the treasures in your collection.



Call a Mentor.

Trained in collections care, MentorCorps is a network of volunteers who work directly with Oregon museums, libraries and archives to improve the care of cultural artifacts and prepare for emergencies. Oregon Heritage MentorCorps will provide helpful advice to get you started.

Glove Up.

Invest in a pair of cotton or nitrile gloves and use them for handling metal or photographs. Look for them in your local drug or beauty product store. Cotton gloves shouldn't have any sticky beads or treading and nitrile gloves should be powder free. If you don't have gloves, be sure to wash your hands before and after handling materials.



Box It.

Store materials in boxes. This simple step will keep items dust free, protected from light and provide a buffer against temperature fluctuations as well as added protection when moving. If you have a choice, look for acid free / lignin free materials. Avoid newsprint and bubble wrap as they can discolor and damage fragile materials.

Raise It.

Storing things two inches off the floor will buy some time in case of emergency and will allow for cleaning.





Keep Things Where You Are.

What's good for people (stable temperatures) is good for artifacts. Consider keeping the most fragile items in the most stable environments. Avoid basements and attics.

Monitor.

Set up a schedule to check your collections on a regular basis to look for evidence of deterioration or pest activity.

Ban Food.

Keep food outside of collections storage and processing areas. Make sure everyone knows where food should and shouldn't be located. Take out the trash regularly.

Digitize.

Scan photos and records and photograph three dimensional objects. This allows you to access and share fragile materials without handling them. It also provides documentation prior to possible disaster damage. Scan or photograph using an uncompressed file type like TIF.



Record.

Most collections are only as important as their stories. Create a system for keeping records and maintain it.

Freeze It.

Quarantine incoming textiles by placing them in double plastic bags and into the freezer. When removing, leave them bagged until the materials are back to room temperature to prevent condensation.

Further information:

- Oregon Heritage MentorCorps
<http://mindyourcollections.org>
- Connecting to Collections Community
<http://www.connectingtocollections.org>

