

## Chicago Historical Society – Chicago History Museum Artifact Handling and Transport Procedures

### Personal Attire

- Clean cotton, nitrile, vinyl, or latex gloves should be worn when handling artifacts. Gloves protect you and the museum object(s). For example, oils from your skin can leave damaging residues on the surface of an artifact. Alternatively, an artifact may have been treated in the past with a potentially hazardous material. Therefore, gloves will provide necessary protection. Change gloves frequently to reduce the risk of transferring any potentially damaging materials to and from artifacts. Avoid the use of cotton gloves when handling slippery or smooth materials (like glazed ceramics and glass), or when handling artifacts with flaking surfaces, or for handling corroded metals and jewelry as they can snag and/or catch on these fragile materials.
- Wash your hands before and after handling museum artifacts/specimens even when wearing gloves, and especially before eating.
- Remove anything from your attire and body that is loose or dangling, that might be abrasive, or could scrape or catch on an artifact such as: chains, ID cards, rings, keys and key rings, belt buckles, items clipped onto your belt, pockets or other articles of clothing, and anything that could potentially fall out of your pocket.
- Vinyl, latex or nitrile surgical gloves and a lab coat or apron should be worn when handling artifacts, especially items in the following categories as they contain toxins that may be absorbed through the skin:
  - Packaged medicine or drugs
  - Infected/used medical or dental equipment
  - Mercury from thermometers or the backs of deteriorating mirrors
  - Beads made from poisonous seeds or other plant material.
- A dust/mist particle mask, vinyl, latex or nitrile surgical gloves and a lab coat or apron should be worn when handling objects suspected of having a particle irritant present. Some of the following items may be sources of toxic particles that can be ingested or inhaled:
  - Biocidal treatments on objects made fur, feathers, hide, buckskin/leather, and textiles made from proteinaceous fibers (some treatments that may have been used include arsenic, lead white, DDT and borax).
  - Objects made from lead with white corrosion products (small cast lead figures, bullets, pewter, stained glass window coming, etc.).
  - Lead-glazed or uranium-glazed ceramics.
  - Degraded silk clothing and other textiles.
  - Pigments such as lead white, zinc white, cadmium red and yellow, cobalt blue, Naples yellow or Paris green in their powdery form or flaking.
- Avoid the use of make-up and perfume

### General Handling Guidelines

- Do not eat, drink or smoke near artifacts.
- Use pencils or computers for note-taking when working around artifacts, as ink pens can leave permanent marks.
- Do not handle artifacts unless it is absolutely necessary.
  - Use boxes, bags, or trays where appropriate for the moving and transport of artifacts.
  - In general, use a cart for larger object rather than carrying them by hand for any distance.
- Carry only one artifact at a time, no matter how small.
- Know exactly where you will place or put an object before you pick it up.
- Map out a lifting or moving operation ahead of time to anticipate potential problems.

### Prior to Lifting/Handling

- Consider each object as unique and irreplaceable.
- If an artifact must be handled, first examine it carefully to determine the following:
  - The condition of the piece and note any special features or handling precautions.
  - Extent and location of any damage, and insecure, loose and/or fragile areas or elements.
  - Best location(s) for gripping and supporting the object. Avoid areas that have applied decoration such as feathers, paint, gilding, and beading, and avoid rims, handles, or other projections or protrusions.
  - Presence of flaking, friable or powdery surfaces, or elements at risk to damage and loss.
  - Identify the object's center of gravity, and any areas that may require additional support.
- If possible, secure loose or mobile parts, and if necessary, remove/separate component pieces before handling.
- Plan and carry out a test lift to determine the weight and/ or center of gravity, and to determine how to move an object (e.g. whether there are enough handlers, etc).
- Know the location of where you are moving or transporting an artifact to before picking it up.
  - Make sure the new location is clean, and padded, and the route is clear of any obstructions.
- Be aware that even the most basic and well intended cleaning of an artifact can cause irreversible damage. Leave the cleaning of artifacts to Collections staff such as the Conservator or Collection Manager.
- Use common sense in handling and moving artifacts. If you have any doubts about whether the way in which you propose to handle an artifact or in fact are handling an artifact is harmful, there is probably good reason. If and when you are not sure about how to proceed, get in contact with someone who has the training and background to deal with the situation such as Conservator, Collections Manager or Registrar.

## Handling

- Pick up an artifact gently but firmly, with both hands. Always use both hands to lift and/or carry an artifact.
  - Pick up small objects with one hand while using the other hand to cradle and/or support the object. Keep in mind that small objects are often more easily carried with an auxiliary support such as a tray or padded board.
- Pick up an object in such a way as to distribute the weight evenly.
- Whenever possible, lift an object from the underside or underneath while supporting its full weight.
- Avoid touching friable materials, powdery surfaces or delicate parts.
- Provide a rigid support such as a padded tray for artifacts that might bend such as textiles, costumes, jewelry, metals and fibers as repeated flexing can cause breakage.
- Delicate and small artifacts should be placed in a padded box, tray or other suitable container for transport.
- Carry only one artifact, tray or container of artifacts) at a time, no matter how small.
- The weight and size of an artifact will determine how many people are needed to move it. No one person should lift an artifact that weighs over 50 lbs.
  - If two or more people are needed to move heavy, large and/or awkward objects, then designate a person to act as a “spotter,” to direct movement and provide guidance.
  - Do not push, pull, drag or slide large or heavy objects. Call for assistance if an artifact is too heavy for you.
- When placing an object on a table, cart, or pedestal, or in a case, make sure the artifact is securely positioned, adequately supported and away from any edges before removing your hands.
- Speak with a conservator if you feel uncomfortable or uneasy about handling any artifact, or if you think moving an object may damage it.
- Report all damages or possible damage immediately to notify Collections Management staff immediately (Conservator, Collections Manager or Registrar). If an artifact is broken, or pieces are broken off an object during handling, keep all broken, detached pieces no matter how small or insignificant. Place in a zip-lock bag or a box and label with the object accession number and date. Supply info on how the accident occurred.
- Never discard reusable packing and support materials. Obtain OK of Conservator, Collection Manager, or Registrar prior to throwing away packing and/or support materials. Prior to discarding materials, be sure to search them thoroughly for fragments and/or small objects that may be at the bottom of the box, inside wadded up packing materials, etc. This is particularly important if damage has been noted. Retain old packing and support materials in crates and storage boxes, bags, etc. for future reference for repacking, or make sure the Registrar’s department has documented/noted packing methods and material.
- Never place an object directly on the floor. Use carpet pads, blocks, or foam.
- Two people are necessary when a ladder is required to place or retrieve an artifact – one to steady the ladder and to pass the work to or to take it from the other.

## Transporting Artifacts

- No object should be removed from collections storage, conservation, display or the workroom without consulting Collections Manager, Conservator, or Registrar.
- Follow proper logging procedures.
- Plan your move: Prepare a place beforehand to receive an object being moved; plan where it is being moved and how it is going to get there.
- Never hand carry objects further than necessary, and always use a box, tray or cart when possible.
- Artifacts should be placed on a cart (or rack) if they are to be moved out of a room. Bring carts or moving vehicles to the object – Never the object to the cart.
- Move slowly and be aware of the artifact(s) and your surroundings.
- Artifacts should not bump or vibrate during the move.
- Never lift objects up and over other objects.
- Check carts and vehicles for cleanliness, stability and maneuverability before loading.
- Cart surfaces, trays and boxes should be padded with a clean layer of Ethafoam (polyethylene foam) or tissue paper for transporting museum artifacts. And there should always be a clean layer of archival material under and on top of an artifact when it is transported out of a collections or exhibition area – i.e. replace the cushion material when it becomes dirty.
- Artifacts transported on a cart should be cradled with foam, tissue paper or soft weight/sand bags to prevent movement and to provide support. Use scrunched up wads of tissue paper or foam blocks to support vulnerable elements or portions of an object.
- Ensure the cart is adequate in size for transporting a given artifact – whenever possible, the cart should be large enough to hold the object without any overhang.
- Provide extra padding between artifacts on a cart to avoid possible contact, abrasion, rolling, etc. Avoid rolling artifacts up in bubble wrap or tissue.
- Do not overload trays or carts, and NEVER stack artifacts on top of one another.
- Protect and secure large objects in transit with pads, foam, blankets and ties if necessary.
- If using a dolly to move an oversize artifact (crated or uncrated), at least three people are required: Two to support the object, while the third places the dolly under the center of the artifact as it is lowered in place on the dolly.
- Never transport installation hardware or tools on the same cart surface as an artifact.
- Anticipate your route. Check to make sure you have a clear path, drive carefully, and move slowly.
- Two people should be present when moving a loaded cart or an artifact through the museum, particularly the public areas – One person to push the cart, and the other to walk ahead to clear the path, provide help through doorways and over thresholds, and to keep visitors away.
- Designate a spotter when moving a full cart or large objects – a spotter can watch for objects that move with vibration or are top-heavy.
- Pay attention to irregularities in the floor and lift carts over bumps and thresholds to avoid vibration. Shocks and vibrations can cause severe damage to fragile artifacts.

- For large carts, use three people – one person pulling or pushing, one on the side spotting the artifact(s) and ensuring that nothing shifts, and another to open doors, handle elevators, etc.
- Avoid heavy traffic areas if possible.
- Generally it is preferable to transport objects in their natural, upright orientations unless necessary to lean or lay the materials down for the sake of stability.
- Never leave objects unattended unless in a locked collection storage or work area that has been approved by the Registrar.

### Work Space, Installation Areas and Installation

- Exhibition areas must be as clean as possible before artifacts are brought in and installed.
- All construction must be completed in the exhibition area before artifacts can be installed, including drywall, electrical, painting, and lighting work.
- Temporary holding or staging areas for objects must meet the same general requirements as exhibit areas.
- Work tables and holding areas should be away from drafts, direct sunlight, unfiltered artificial light and heat.
- Work tables and holding shelving should be in a clean dust free area, and padded with Ethafoam or Volara, and covered with acid-free tissue or muslin as required. Keep work surfaces clean, and change coverings often.
- Only personnel specifically trained and assigned to artifact handling, mount-making or artifact installation should be handling or moving artifacts.
- Lights for cases containing sensitive materials should be kept off during installation, and only turned on to make lighting adjustments.
- Touch-up spackling and painting may not take place inside a case that has objects installed in it. If this work is necessary, the object(s) must be removed from the case prior to any work taking place.

## Reporting an Accident

- Should an artifact sustain damage or possible damage during handling, transport or installation, immediately contact your supervisor, a Conservator, Collection Manager and the Registrar. If an accident occurs to an object on display in one of the Museum's galleries, also contact the senior Security officer currently on duty. Then, secure the area to prevent loss or further damage to the object or pieces thereof.
- Ideally, after the appropriate staff arrives the following steps should be taken:
  - Do not move anything unless movement prevents an artifact from sustaining more damage.
  - If an artifact is broken, or pieces/parts are broken off an object during handling, collect and keep all broken, detached pieces no matter how small or insignificant. Never discard even the smallest fragments after an accident – no matter how small. Place any detached pieces/parts in a zip-lock bag or a box and label with the accession number of the object and the date.
  - Document the incident by writing up an accident report that includes the date, time, location, artifact number(s), description of the artifact, and a description of the damage and how the damage occurred.
  - Photo-document the object and the area.
  - Do not attempt to repair the artifact or clean up on your own. Additional damage frequently occurs from well-intentioned but uninformed attempts to clean up after an accident. Do not try and test-fit broken elements as rubbing them together along the break(s) will make later repair more difficult.
  - Do not dispose of packing, padding or support materials without checking it for small objects or fragments that may have escaped notice.

## Special Handling Considerations

### Paintings

If a painting is framed, check to see if it is secure in the frame before picking it up. Also, check the hardware to ensure it is secure.

Carry a framed painting with one hand beneath and the other at the side of the frame, where the frame is solid. Never pick up painting by gripping the top section of the frame, or by the stretcher. Handle mounted works only by the mount. Never carry any framed object by its hanging wire.

Hold a frame by its strongest part. Gessoed and gilded frames and those with protruberances are especially fragile; gilded surfaces and small protruding decorations should not be touched. Always hold a gessoed frame by the uncarved back edge.

Do not touch the front or back of a painting, or allow anything to rest against either surface because it can cause distortion and damage. It should NEVER be necessary to touch the surface of a painting or 2-D artwork. Fingerprints on surfaces of artwork or a frame can damage or spoil the finish. They can cause some varnishes to bloom and might necessitate treatment of the whole surface as a result.

Handle and move only one picture at a time. Large paintings should be moved by two or more persons.

Handle an unframed canvas or panel at the edges only. Wear gloves and provide rigid support underneath where necessary. Always use two hands no matter how small.

Whenever possible, move framed paintings on an A-frame or side cart fitted with arms. The cart should have a padded surface. Secure paintings in place before moving. If using a dolly to move an oversize painting, three people are required: Two to support the painting, while the third places the dolly under the center of the artwork as the painting is lowered in place.

Paint surfaces should never come into contact with padding materials, rather they should be placed at the corners.

Paintings that must stand temporarily on the floor should be gently placed on skid-proof pads, inert ethafoam blocks, or padded wooden two-by-fours.

Do not hammer nails into the walls when a painting is below. Remove the painting so that plaster dust does not get on the surface.

## Works of Art on Paper, and Photographs

Do not expose works of art on paper or photographs to unfiltered fluorescent lighting or daylight.

Handle mounted works only by the mount and in a horizontal position, face up. Use padded carts or trays. Do not lift unmounted prints or drawings. Slide unmounted works into an acid free folder or Mylar sleeve or onto a clean acid-free board slightly larger than the object to provide rigid support. Then lift the board and artifact from below. Carry works in a tray or Solander box. Keep level.

Do not handle unmounted materials; they should be handled by the appropriate Conservator, Collection Manager or specialist.

Do not stack materials: Avoid slipping an unmounted and/or unsleeved drawing or photograph across another as emulsions and pigmented surfaces may be easily abraded, and cracked.

Do not touch the surface of any work of art on paper, or photograph. Oils and perspiration can be transferred and leave marks, lift fragile pigments, or be set into the emulsion of a photograph and cause local fading.

Surface dirt and pigments can be transferred easily from one object to another on gloves or hands. Wash hands and change gloves frequently to avoid contamination.

Do not place any works of art on paper such as pastels, charcoals, miniatures, and photographs face down.

Works of art done with friable materials such as charcoal, pencil and/or pastels are extremely vulnerable to damage from touching, rubbing and static. These easily smudged media should be carried by individually in a Solander box without tissue or covering. Transport materials with friable media horizontally whenever possible, even when framed.

Only rag-board and other acid-free materials are to come in contact with works of art on paper, photographs and books.

Do not place excessively dusty photographs in plastic sleeves as the gritty dirt may scratch the surface of the photograph within the enclosure. More importantly, do not attempt to clean an object, contact a conservator to do so.

Carry framed artwork or paintings with one hand beneath and the other at the side of the frame, where the frame is solid. Do not lift framed artwork or photographs by the top frame rail, as this can bow, allowing the glass or Plexiglas to pop through the frame front. Never carry any framed object by its hanging wire.

Protect prints, drawings, and photographs in transit and in storage by placing them in folders or portfolios and using interleaving sheets.

Consult with a Conservator or Collection Manager prior to rolling or unrolling collections. Do not attempt to flatten or unfold creased objects without first consulting with a Conservator or Collection Manager.

## Books

Do not stack open books, or stand a book on its fore edge.

This is especially noticeable with very smooth, calf-leather bindings. Don't stack heavy, fragile, valuable or delicate books, or carry them in such a way that they will rub against each other because the covers of books can be severely disfigured by abrasion and scratching.

Only rag-board and other acid-free archival materials are to come in contact with books.

Books should be placed in a sturdy boxed or wrapped in glassine, and transported in a flat position, not on their fore edges. Don't try to carry lots of books at once. You could hurt yourself, and if you drop the books you will damage them.

Do not stack heavy, fragile or rare books.

Do not attempt to close books that have been displayed open, as they may need conservation attention to ease them back into their closed position.

## Textiles

The most important rule for handling textiles is: do not handle textiles unless you must. In other words, always keep handling to a minimum.

Clean hands and gloves are essential. Whenever possible wear clean, cotton gloves when handling textiles. Wearing gloves will prevent the transfer of body-oil and dirt to the textiles. Keeping your hands clean is particularly important with textiles incorporating metal thread, because the metal will tarnish in reaction to acids from the skin.

When you do handle textiles, they should always be properly supported. Textiles that appear strong may, in fact, have areas of weakness which are not immediately visible or readily apparent. As a rule, all historic textiles should be regarded as fragile.

When handling flat textiles:

- Never pick them up by one corner. Always support the weight of the textile evenly;
- Small textiles should be carried either on a tray, in a box or on a board as this provides stability;
- Larger textiles should be rolled, and carried on the roller. Hold onto the part of the roller extending beyond the textile; and
- Never try to move a textile by yourself, if the size and weight of the textile indicate that you need two people. Carrying large textiles incorrectly can damage them, and the person carrying them could be injured.

When handling costumes, remember:

- Costumes should never be picked up by the shoulders;
- Always slide your arms under the costume and then lift;
- Ideally costumes should be moved in boxes or on a board as this gives stability to the object; and
- Don't carry items on a hanger without using your arms for additional support.

When handling accessories:

- Generally accessories should be transported on boards or in boxes. However, there are exceptions to this rule. Use your commonsense to decide the most appropriate way to handle them; and
- Accessories should always be evenly supported. For example, don't pick up a bag by its handle: use two hands to support it.

Use archival, acid-free materials for padding, and constructing trays, boxes, or rigid supports.

Avoid folding fabrics and textiles. If they must be folded, cushion and pad out the insides of the folds with scrunched sheets of acid-free tissue to lessen the possibility of creases forming.

At least two people are required for handling and moving dressed mannequins. Remove any loose articles of clothing or adornment such as hats, purses, etc, before moving a clothed mannequin. Cover the mannequin with clean, de-sized muslin, and carry by the framework of the mannequin rather than the textile. Be sure that garments do not drag on the floor.

Do not use pins or metal hardware to attach labels to fabrics or textiles.

If small accessory objects such as buttons or beads come loose, save and label them for the conservator.

Flat materials such as quilts, blankets and rugs that are in good condition and have no 3D or painted decorations may be rolled on an a storage tube made from inert, acid-free materials and of sufficient diameter and length. When rolling, place acid free tissue between layers of the artifact to prevent snagging, and be sure to tuck and roll with a little tension to prevent

wrinkles/creases. Be sure that there is enough room at the ends of the tube for hand holds. Fully support the roll when you carry it. Do not attempt to roll textile materials without special training from the Conservator and/or appropriate Collection Manager.

All areas, equipment and surfaces coming in to contact with textiles should be kept cleaned at all times. Cover work tables with clean, de-sized cotton muslin that is changed each day.

Avoid taking costumes and textiles into areas with unfiltered lights and daylight. Keep light levels to a minimum and be sure that all light sources are UV filtered.

Protect textiles and fabrics from dust accumulation. Artifacts should only be covered with archival materials (e.g. light cotton muslin, acid-free tissue paper). Be sure to place a "Caution – Artifact Below" sign on top of coverings or obscured objects so that others are aware of their existence.

Make sure there is adequate room on carts and tables before you place any textile or costume on it. The object should not drape over the edges or rest on other objects. If piles of flat textiles can't be avoided, place archival materials such as acid-free tissue between each object and limit piles to no more than 3 pieces. Never pull textile materials from the bottom of a stack. Always work your way down into a stack by removing items above first.

Some garments in excellent condition may be hung on padded fabric covered hangers, on hanging racks. However, consult with Conservator or Collection Manager to determine which garments are appropriate for hanging rather than boxed storage. Never hang heavy or fragile garments, or those made from silk, and do not hang garments using small straps.

### Three Dimensional Objects

Consider each object as unique and irreplaceable.

Always use gloves, and wear a lab coat when handling artifacts, especially those made from fur, feather, hide, leather and other organic materials as they may have been treated in the past with hazardous materials as a means of pest control. Wash hands and change gloves frequently to avoid cross-contamination.

Know the nature of the artifact and the materials you are going to handle, their structural composition and condition.

Carry only one object at a time, and when lifting and carrying an object, support the main part of its body. Never lift or grab an object by any projections or appendages such as handles, legs, spouts, etc.

Never lift a pot or basket by the edge or rim.

Objects with feathers, brittle fibers and powdery areas require special attention. Poor handling can worsen their condition. Avoid touching surfaces with weakly attached coatings, pigments charcoal or chalk. Protect these types of materials from vibration, air movement/currents and dust.

Use padded boxes, trays or carts when possible for transporting and moving artifacts.

Always check the stability of an object before lifting it; separate parts, remove lids, etc.

Never stack or crowd artifacts.

Separate individual artifacts and pieces with padding to protect against abrasion, chipping and breakage. Use padding made from stable inert materials like acid-free tissue, and polyethylene foam to support artifacts and as padding between artifacts.

Never put light weight and heavy weight objects in the same container or on the same cart. Pack and carry like with like.

### Ceramics, Glass and Enamelware

Wear surgical gloves made from nitrile or latex when handling glazed, polished or highly finished surfaces. Cotton gloves are sometimes recommended, however, they are not always appropriate because they can make it harder to hold onto slippery glass surfaces.

Use care in handling all kinds of ceramics because pieces may be mended in such a way that conceals breaks and repairs.

Never lift or carry ceramic or glass objects by handles, rims, spouts, or any projecting parts. Often these projections are weak and/or may have been repaired or restored in the past.

Use boxes or trays when possible for moving or transport, especially light fragile artifacts.

Carry small objects with two hands. One hand should support the bottom of the object, and the other hand should be placed at the side or the top to steady the object. Never carry more than one object at a time.

Never allow any part of an artifact to project beyond the edges of a carrying-box, trolley or storage area.

### Metals

The most important point to remember when you are handling objects with metal components, or objects comprised solely of metal is to always wear latex, vinyl or nitrile surgical gloves when

handling. Acids and salts from your hands can leave secretions and residues that tarnish, etch and corrode metals.

Use surgical gloves if the metal is corroded, flaking, rough, or has protruding elements since cotton gloves with gripper palms can snag.

Storage, packing and display materials in contact with metal artifacts should be acid-free and inert. Never place metal artifacts in contact with or in proximity to unsealed wood or wood products, wool felt, rubber, or non-acid free paper products as these materials can promote corrosion.

Whenever possible, use boxes, trays or other appropriate supports for metal objects.

Keep in mind that metals used in jewelry and other may be weak at the clasp, solder joins, or setting areas.

Be careful of sharp areas such as corners and edges or fraying ends of metallic threads they could damage other objects, snag, or hurt you.

### Bone, Antler, Horn and Ivory

These materials are particularly susceptible to chipping and fingerprint stains. Always use boxes and trays where possible, or wrap them before storage and transport.

Bone, antler, horn and ivory may crack, and warp with changes in the relative humidity, so they need extra protection from a fluctuating environment during transport, under photo- and examination- flood lights.

### Sculpture

Check for loose parts before handling. Be sure the base is firmly attached before lifting. If possible, a sculpture should be detached from its pedestal and each piece lifted and moved separately. If minor adjustment of the parts is necessary after they have been reunited then be sure the sculpture is held securely and steady as the pedestal is maneuvered.

Always move sculpture on flat carts or dollies where possible.

Whenever possible, carry and move a sculpture in the position in which it was made to be exhibited. If a sculpture must be laid down, first determine points of weakness that should be supported and padded. Keep in mind that laying a sculpture horizontal could put stress on areas not intended to bear weight.

Rigging equipment may be necessary for extremely large and heavy sculptures. If a sculpture is too heavy for a hydraulic lift, and must be hoisted use clean, non-snagging lint-free padding to protect the artifact from abrasion by ropes and chains.

## Furniture

Do not push or pull furniture; pick it up and carry it. Pushing furniture along the floor even a short distance can put strain on the structure. For instance at the point at which the leg is joined to the body, the piece might snap.

Check to see if large pieces were designed to be dismantled for transport, or constructed in parts that can be separated from one another.

Never grasp furniture by handles, arms, or carved decoration as it is unlikely that any such appendages or decorative elements will support the weight of the piece. For example, never lift chairs by the arms or the back. Chairs should always be lifted from under the seat rail.

Marble or glass tops should be removed and transported separately, preferably in vertical orientation.

Secure any loose or hinged parts or elements before transport. For example, doors, hinged leaves, and drawers should be locked (if possible) or secured with twill tape so that they do not open unexpectedly. A cabinet or chest can then be lifted by two or more persons, each with one hand supporting the piece from below and with the other supporting it from the side.

Most furniture should be transported upright on flat carts. Do not rest mirrors on carved decoration; if transported vertically, mirrors should be treated in the same manner as the frames of paintings, with padding to support their weight at relatively flat and uncarved points.

Pad furniture edges and projections when moving furniture through doorways or other areas where it may be bumped.

Don't touch the upholstered parts of the furniture because the acids and sweat on your hands may stain and degrade fragile or aged fabrics and leathers. Wear gloves if you must handle upholstery.

Always cover upholstered areas with clean cloth, Tyvek, tissue or polyethylene sheet before moving or storing.

Don't wrap lacquered furniture with plastic. Moisture can build up underneath plastic and this can cause the lacquer to develop white blanching. Tyvek can be used because it breathes.

### Insect Activity, Mold and Affected Artifact Material

Artifacts most at risk are those made from proteinaceous and/or organic materials including fur, feathers, hide, buckskin/leather, wool and silk, and wood. Also insect larva has been found to feed off synthetic materials in association with preferred edibles. Mold can also affect range of materials including but not limited to those listed above as well as textiles, fibers, paper and paper products.

Immediately report any suspected or possible evidence of insect activity or mold growth to the relevant Collections Manager, and to Conservation. Activity may be evidenced by the presence of live insects (adult, larva or eggs), casings and cast larval skins, frass, furry mold growth or mold spores and hyphae, and insect related damage to the artifacts including small holes and areas of loss.

Do not handle insect damaged or mold infested material/objects until Conservation staff arrives to assess the situation. Insect damaged areas on objects can be extremely friable and may come apart or collapse when grasped. Also, it is often difficult to identify an active infestation from evidence of activity and damage that occurred in the past. More importantly, movement increases the possibility of spreading eggs, larvae and spores.

Do not kill any insects that you find. At best, try and capture one in a small container such as a zip-lock bag, vial or plastic box. Mark the container with the date and object number from which it came and from where in the Museum. Bring it to Collections Management and/or Conservation staff for identification and evaluation of the danger it poses to the museum collections.

Artifacts that are actively infested or exposed to an outbreak of mold or insect activity should be isolated by sealing them in polyethylene bags or sheeting with tape. All artifacts stored and/or displayed in the vicinity of an outbreak should be should be isolated whether or not they show signs of activity as mold spores and insect larvae are not always readily visible or apparent.

Sources:

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