

Collection Care: Hazardous Materials

Does your organization have lace, taxidermy, old medicinals, firearms, or old dental, medical, or veterinary equipment in its collections? These items and many others may have the potential to harm staff and volunteers if not handled, stored, and displayed correctly. Tips on identifying and caring for potentially hazardous collection items appear below. When in doubt, always ask lots of questions. If the resources below do not cover your concerns, the [State Historical Society of Iowa](#) as well as local colleges and universities may be able to assist with further information and guidance. Additional resources may be found in the “Caring for Your Collections” toolkits, which are organized by type of object. See especially, [“Natural History Collections.”](#) [“Plastics and Modern Materials.”](#) and [“Organic Materials.”](#)

General Guidelines

- Connecting to Collections Care
 - [“Arsenic and Old Lace: Controlling Hazardous Collection Materials” Webinar](#) (Presenters: Kerith Koss Schragger and Anne Kingery-Schwartz, objects conservators; and Kathryn Makos, certified industrial hygienist)
 - [“Handling and Exhibition of Potentially Hazardous Artifacts in Museum Collections” Webinar](#) (Presenter: Neil Cockerline, Midwest Art Conservation Center)
- Museum Galleries of NSW (Australia): [“Hazardous Materials in Museum Collections”](#)
- National Park Service:
 - [“An Introduction To Respirator Use In Collections Management”](#) (Conserve O Gram Series, December 2000, number 2/13)
 - [“Hazardous Materials in Your Collection”](#) (Conserve O Gram Series, August 1998, number 2/10)

Specific Concerns

- American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC): [“Risk Management Plan: Sample Checklist for Pesticide Residues”](#)
- Canadian Conservation Institute
 - [“Lead in Museum Collections”](#) (CCI Notes 1/8)
 - [“Mercury in Museum Collections”](#) (CCI Notes 1/7)
- National Park Service:
 - [“Arsenic health and Safety Update”](#) (Conserve O Gram Series, September 2000, number 2/3)
 - [“Fossil Vertebrates As Radon Sources: Health Update”](#) (Conserve O Gram Series, July 1993, number 2/5)
 - [“Guidelines For The Handling Of Pesticide Contaminated Collections”](#) (Conserve O Gram Series, January 2002, number 2/19)
 - [“Handling And Shipping Cellulose Nitrate Film”](#) (Conserve O Gram Series, June 2003, number 2/20)
 - [“Health and Safety Risks of Asbestos”](#) (Conserve O Gram Series, September 1999, number 2/11)