

Safety and Security

As the old saying goes, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. The best time to think about the safety and security of your staff, volunteers, and visitors as well as your collections is before something bad happens. Though we can never be fully prepared for every possible scenario, taking the time to assess the weaknesses in our buildings, systems, and procedures and then correcting them can either prevent many bad situations from occurring or at least lessen their impacts. As always, human health and safety should always be considered first before concentrating on protecting the collections. Aside from disaster planning and management, securing collections from potential theft is an important part of security procedures in museums, archives, and other organizations. A lot of theft can be prevented by simply eliminating opportunities, such as never allowing visitors or other outside personnel unsupervised access to the collections on exhibit or in storage, securing storage areas through the use of locks or coded access, and only allowing certain staff members access to collections storage. Many other tips can be found in the resources below.

Collections and General Museum Security

- American Alliance of Museums
 - ["Facilities and Risk Management"](#)
 - ["Suggested Practices for Museum Collections Space Security"](#)
- Arts Council England: [The Museum Security Toolkit](#)
- Connecting to Collections Care
 - ["Security for Collections: Preventing Loss and Planning for Any Budget" Webinar](#) (Presenter: Elsa Huxley, Heritage Preservation)
 - ["Practical Nuts & Bolts Strategies: Day-to-Day Protection of Small Museums" Webinar](#) (Presenter: Stevan Layne, International Foundation for Cultural Property Protection)
- Lawrence J. Fennelly: [Museum, Archive, and Library Security](#)
- Minnesota Historical Society: ["Thinking Ahead about Museum Protection"](#)
- National Park Service: [Museum Handbook, Part 1: Chapter 9 – "Museum Collections Security and Fire Protection"](#)
- Northeast Document Conservation Center: ["Collections Security: Planning and Prevention for Libraries and Archives"](#)

Fire Protection

- Canadian Conservation Institute
 - ["Automatic Sprinkler Systems for Museums"](#) (CCI Notes 2/8)
 - ["Fire Protection Issues for Historic Buildings"](#) (CCI Notes 2/6)
 - ["Museum Fires and Losses"](#) (CCI Notes 2/7)

Visitor Safety

- Association of Science, Technology Centers: ["Keeping Visitors Safe Around Exhibits"](#)
- F. Howie: [Safety in Museums and Galleries](#)

- Sherry Butcher-Youngmans: [*Historic House Museums: A Practical Handbook for Their Care, Preservation, and Management*](#)
- Timothy Ambrose and Crispin Paine: [*Museum Basics*](#)