

Risk Management

Broadly defined, risk is the chance of something happening that will have an undesirable impact on the achievement of objectives. Risk is measured in terms of the potential consequences and likelihood of the risk being realized. Risk management involves the identifying, analyzing, evaluating, treating and monitoring of risks.

There are a number of potential risks to the collections, staff and public as well as general museum operations and therefore it is necessary to incorporate risk management into all areas of planning and operations. Museum policies and procedure areas that involve risk management include:

- disaster plans/emergency preparedness plans
- collection preservation and conservation
- building and grounds maintenance
- acquisitions and collections management
- insurance and liability
- security
- health and safety
- job classifications and training
- management of resources

While many museums, particularly small ones may not develop a formal risk management policy, the process of considering potential risks can be useful in other areas of policy development. It should be remembered that while risk management is the responsibility of the museum governing body, it should be done in cooperation with the museum management and staff. Also, the policy should be broad enough to be applied all aspects of the museum's planning but specific enough to be suit the individual needs the museum.

For most museums, the central goals of risk management will include:

- the avoidance of injuries to staff and public
- the preservation of the museum's collections and building(s)
- ensuring that the museum is both accountable and sustainable through preservation of the museum's purpose and management of its resources

For more information on this topic see:

Guidelines for the Operations of Community Museums in Newfoundland and Labrador

The Museum Building and Physical Safety – Page 29

Public Access and Public Services - Page 33

Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Plans – Page 35

Insurance – Page 37

Security – Page 57

Resources for Risk Management Plans

British Columbia Museum Association

Best Practices Module: Risk Management Plans

<http://www.museumsassn.bc.ca/Images/Archives/BP%207%20Risk%20Management.pdf>

Western Australia Museums – Museum Management

<http://www.museum.wa.gov.au/services/map/musmanage.asp>

- MGNSW Accessible Arts Access Audit
- NSW: Just Because its Old: Museums and Galleries in Heritage Houses
- Building and Site Requirements

Examples of Risk Management Plans

National Museum of Australia Risk Management Policy

[http://www.nma.gov.au/shared/libraries/attachments/corporate_documents/policies/risk_management_policy/files/18356/POL-C-019_Risk_management-1.0_\(public\).pdf](http://www.nma.gov.au/shared/libraries/attachments/corporate_documents/policies/risk_management_policy/files/18356/POL-C-019_Risk_management-1.0_(public).pdf)

Examples Available Offline

The Spurlock Museum – Insurance of Collections and Loan Policy

<http://www.spurlock.uiuc.edu/policy/insurance.html>

The Royal Air Force Museum's Policies

<http://www.rafmuseum.org.uk/london/policy-performance/collections.cfm>

The Royal Air Force Museum's Policy for Indemnity and Insurance Objects under the Control of the Museum

The Royal Air Force Museum's Policy for Management of Risk To and From Objects