

Use this salvage priority checklist to assist you with salvaging your collection in an emergency.

Salvage Priority Checklist	
Tick when completed	
1. Choose items	
2. Check loans	
3. Assess safety	
4. Draw up list/s	
5. Arrange by location	
6. Keep copies safe	
7. Plan removal	
8. Plan storage	

1. Choose items

Decide which are the most significant objects in your museum.

- Which objects most clearly reflect the scope of the collection and the mission of the museum?
- Which objects have great significance to the community?
- Which objects are well documented, with their origin?
- Are these items accessioned? If not, why not?

2. Check loans

Identify objects on loan to the museum.

- What is the museum's responsibility to the owners? Make sure that the actions to be taken in an emergency are agreed with the owners.

Top tips:

- The museum's **Aims and Acquisition Policy** can help with prioritising objects
- Consider different **emergency scenarios** when drawing up your lists
- Keep the lists **safe and secure** – these lists could be useful to a thief!

3. Assess safety

Decide which objects can be reasonably salvaged by untrained people.

Scenario	Consider
A neighbouring building is on fire and dense smoke is entering the museum.	Would it be safer to remove items at risk or protect them in situ (e.g. with temporary covers)?
A neighbouring building is on fire and there is a likelihood that the fire may spread to the museum. The Fire Brigade have offered to remove items from the museum before the fire reaches it.	How will they remove items from their cases or mounts? Where will these items be stored once they are removed from the museum? What risks will they be exposed to outside the museum?
The museum is at risk of flooding or a leak.	Can objects at risk be made safe within the museum?
Part of the building has fallen down.	Are items at further risk from falling masonry or dust?
After a fire in the building.	Once it is safe to enter will you remove the items on the list first or clear the museum room by room?

For each potential scenario, consider:

- Which priority items would be most at risk.
- What would be needed to keep them safe in situ.
- What further risks they would be exposed to by removing them from the museum.
- Where they would be stored while outside the museum.
- How the process would be documented.

You may have already considered these scenarios as part of the preparation of the museum's Emergency Plan. If not, then this would be a good time to review and complete the Emergency Plan.

4. Draw up lists

Draw up a Salvage Priority List. Different lists may be appropriate for different risks.

5. Arrange by location

Arrange the items on the list by area – so that people can identify the items in one room or gallery before moving on to the next. Within each area, you can list the items in order of priority.

The list should include:

- An overall plan of the museum
- A plan for each area (with the objects marked on it)
- A description of each item (preferably with a small picture) and its location
- Instructions for removing each item from its mount or case, safe handling and protection from further damage

6. Keep copies safe

People may assume that items are on the list because of financial value, not significance. The list includes instructions for removing the items and would be very useful to a thief.

- Keep copies of the list sealed for greater safety, only to be opened in emergencies.
- Number each copy. Assign a copy to each 'list holder' and get them to sign and date it.
- Keep a sealed copy of the numbers and list-holders with the Emergency Plan.
- Regularly recall the lists for revision.
- Keep at least one copy in a safe location outside the museum.
- If a sealed copy has been opened unnecessarily, this should be investigated.

7. Plan removal

Consider how items are to be removed from cases or mounts.

- If keys or special tools are required, will they be accessible and readily identifiable.
- Consider having a spare set of keys and tools kept in a locked, secure container with the off-site copies of the lists.

8. Plan storage

Identify and prepare a secure place to keep the items when they have been removed from the museum.

- Keep the items in a nearby building, a rental vehicle or a self-storage unit (with security).
- Draw up an agreement to be signed with the owners of the space to ensure that it will be made available for use at short notice in an emergency.
- Consider storing packing and emergency materials there.

Additional resources

- Be Prepared - Guidelines for Writing a Disaster Preparedness Plan (Australia)
<https://aiccm.org.au/disaster/disaster-planning>
- The Museum Security Toolkit
<https://collectiontrust.org.uk/resource/the-museum-security-toolkit/>
- Security for Museums Libraries and Archives: A Practical Guide 2003 (Re:source)
<https://collectiontrust.org.uk/resource/security-in-museums-archives-and-libraries-a-practical-guide/>
- Building an Emergency Plan 1999 (Getty Conservation Institute)
<https://collectiontrust.org.uk/resource/building-an-emergency-plan-a-guide-for-museums-and-other-cultural-institutions/>

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