**NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

**Museum Collection Access Policy and Procedures (Sample)**

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| **Park Name:** | | **Division / Branch:** | |
| **Effective Date:** | **Duration:**  Until amended or rescinded | | **Target Audience / Distribution:**  All park staff |
| **Approved by Superintendent**  (Print Name): | **Signature:** | | **Date Signed:** |

**Statement of Purpose:**

To establish park Museum Collection Access Policy and Procedures (“policy”) for [*Park Name*]  
 museum collections. The National Park Service (NPS) and [*Park Name*] make collections available for research and education, subject to applicable laws and regulations, the NPS mission, and NPS *Museum Handbook* Part I, Chapter 14: Museum Security. The curator, as designated custodial officer for the collection, manages access to collections to make them widely available, subject to staff availability, object condition, and space and security considerations.

This policy applies equally to museum objects and associated records, archival and manuscript items, and information about these resources prepared by park staff in the course of their official duties. It is implemented together with the NPS Visitor Log (Figure 14.6) and Conditions for Access to Museum Collections (Figure 14.7) when accessing collections in storage.

1. **Facility Name**:
2. **Times of Operation**: Hours of access to the park's museum collection are .
3. **Access Procedures**:
4. Collections storage is designated as a dedicated and *secure area* with restricted access in a secure structure, and is separated from curatorial offices, work, research, supply, and other spaces in accordance with NPS Museum Security Standard (1).
5. Access to secure collection areas and museum objects, including storage cabinets, exhibit cases, and associated keys is strictly controlled as authorized by the superintendent and implemented by the curator as designated custodial officer for the collection. Unaccompanied access is limited to the curator and designated museum staff with routine assigned, hands-on collection management and care responsibilities, in accordance with the park Museum Key Control Policy and Procedures (Figure 14.8). All other park staff and visitors need to contact the curator in advance to access collections storage.
6. a. By signing the Visitor Log, all visitors certify agreement to the Conditions for Access to Museum Collections when entering secure collections storage. The curator accompanies and monitors visitors and non-museum park staff at all times, and intermittently monitors museum interns and Volunteers in Parks. Researchers and visitors must display temporary visitor pass.

b. Researchers must work in a designated research room or space separate from collections storage and be continuously monitored by designated museum staff. Museum staff brings selected material to the research location.

c. In the event of an emergency\*, designated emergency response staff authorized by the superintendent in writing have access to secure areas in accordance with the park's Museum Security Plan

and Museum Collections Emergency Operations Plan (MCEOP).

\*See MHI, Chapter 10.A.2, What kinds of emergencies are addressed in this chapter?

1. Granting of access to enter collections storage and/or research spaces ***does not*** automatically grant permission to use museum objects, archival materials, or museum records. Only persons with a legitimate need to use collection objects will be granted access with prior approval from the curator. Access is contingent on object condition, staff availability, and space and security considerations. If access and/or use may subject the object to damage, preservation takes precedence.
2. If the curator determines that NPS has a legitimate and demonstrable government interest in preventing dissemination of information in photographs, film or video that could threaten the security of the collection, then NPS may restrict or place other appropriate limitations on photography or filming within restricted collection storage spaces.

**Figure 14.5. Museum Collection Access Policy and Procedures (Sample)**

1. **Eligibility for Access to Collections and Collections Storage**:

The superintendent or designated custodial officer for the collection grants access to the collections to visitors, including:

* + - 1. *Researchers requesting access to collections* must make an appointment with the curator. Researchers selecting objects for study in collections storage must be accompanied at all times by curatorial staff. Once a selection is made, curator moves selected objects to the separate research room or space. Researchers working with archival items must complete the Researcher Registration Form (*MH* II Figure D.8).
      2. *Representatives of Indian Tribes or Native Hawaiian organizations having official business for examining archeological or ethnographic collections.* Curator will contact the superintendent and park or regional cultural anthropologist and regional curator to determine appropriate procedures. Access will be provided in the research room or other designated space outside of collections storage.
      3. *Individuals requesting access to NAGPRA determined or eligible items*. Curator will contact the park and/or regional NAGPRA coordinator and regional curator to determine appropriate access procedures in accordance with 25 USC 3001 et seq and 43 CFR part 10: Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation.
      4. *Contractors providing service(s) for the museum program such as a conservation condition survey,* whose work requires evaluation of museum collections in storage or on exhibit. Conservation treatment must be conducted in a separate room or space from collections storage.
      5. *National Park Service staff from Regional Office, Washington Office (WASO), centers, or other parks on official business* which requires evaluation or work with the collections or with park museum records.
      6. *Park maintenance and protection staff in the performance of assigned official duties* have accompanied access to spaces and/or rooms housing collections, but *not* to objects, storage cabinets, exhibit cases, or locking museum key box.
      7. *Employees of construction or service companies who require access to collections storage or exhibit areas to service or maintain the building or its utilities and systems*. Employees are only permitted accompanied and monitored access in designated areas where they are to work under the terms of a contract or purchase order issued by or for the park. These employees *do not* have access to objects in storage and on exhibit or to the locking museum key box under any circumstance. The Superintendent or curator has the authority to restrict access otherwise granted by this paragraph, under such circumstances where it is deemed advisable.
      8. *Fire department first responders during an emergency incident* access the structure using the emergency access key box (KnoxBox®) located on or near the structure exterior. During an emergency, *designated park staff* with written emergency authorization by the superintendent may enter collections storage if the space is directly affected. The curator is to be notified of all emergency access by first responders or designated emergency staff.
      9. *Other individuals or groups may be provided limited access to collections storage,* as determined by the Superintendent or curator that such access will be to the mutual benefit of the individuals/groups and the park, and subject to staff availability and other space, security, and collections considerations. These include tours for non-museum park staff orientation, as well as NPS and non-NPS students, educators, members or staff of museum organizations or historical societies, local political/governmental officials, families of park employees, visiting NPS employees not on official business who wish to view the collection, or prospective researchers who are considering applying for permission to use or view the collection.
      10. *Individuals or representatives of organizations, institutions, or corporations desiring to use collection objects or records for commercial purposes.* Such persons must satisfy the Superintendent that the proposed use of objects is legitimate and aligns with park purposes and the NPS mission, and does not threaten collections security and/or visitor and resource protection. The request should not reflect adversely on the park, the National Park Service, or a Native American tribe or Native Hawaiian organization if the request is for tribal materials. This access does not authorize publication, distribution, derivative works, exhibitions, reproductions, or other non-research activity.

1. **Review and Update:** This policy is reviewed annually and updated every five (5) years or as needed.

**Figure 14.5. Museum Collection Access Policy and Procedures (Sample) (continued)**