

DOI Museum Property Directives

Title: Master Glossary for DOI Museum Property Directives

Originating Office: Office of Acquisition and Property Management, Department of the Interior (DOI)

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This Master Glossary is the official compilation of all the definitions cited in the DOI Museum Property Directives (Directives) and related guidance documents. This Glossary will be updated as new Directives are issued or updated by the Office of Acquisition and Property Management.

Administrative office space: A non-museum space in which people within an organization conduct business, including education, and where museum objects are present but are not central to the purpose of the space. Examples include offices, conference and meeting rooms, hallways, classrooms, and reception areas.

Accessioning: The formal, documented process to legally add an object or group of objects to a museum collection. A single accession transaction occurs when one or more objects are acquired in the same manner, from one source, and at one time.

Accountable Property Officer (APO): A DOI employee assigned overall responsibility for a specified group of personal property items, including museum collections, and for ensuring the establishment and maintenance of accountability records to provide effective overall control over that property. Formerly known as “Accountable Officer.”

Acquisition: The act of obtaining museum collections/museum property. Approved methods of legally acquiring museum collections for accessioning are: donation, purchase, transfer, field collection, and exchange.

Agents of deterioration: Natural and human-caused phenomena that will adversely affect museum objects such as: direct physical forces; thieves and vandals; fire; water; pests; contaminants; radiation from light; and improper levels of temperature and relative humidity.

Agreement: A formal, written arrangement between two or more parties that identifies roles, responsibilities, and/or outcomes or products. For museum property, agreements are most commonly used for long-term curatorial services in non-bureau facilities, such as a curation or repository agreement, or for short- or long-term loans, such as a loan agreement.

Alloformation: In geology, the fundamental unit in allostratigraphic classification. An alloformation may be completely or only partly divided into allomembers, if some useful purpose is served, or it may have no allomembers.

Allomember: The formal allostratigraphic unit next in rank below an alloformation.

Allostratigraphic Unit: The mappable body of rock that is defined and identified on the basis of its bounding discontinuities.

Archives: The audiovisual, electronic, or text documents created or received by a person, family, or organization, public or private, in the conduct of their affairs and preserved because of the enduring value contained in the information they contain or as evidence of the functions and responsibilities of their creator, especially those materials maintained using the principles of provenance, original order, and collective control. Associated records are a subset of archives. Archives do not include current records or museum records.

Archival quality: The material properties inherent in a medium permitting its preservation under controlled conditions (e.g., acid-free paper.)

Armature: A metal rod, series of rods, or framework that supports a museum object for display purposes.

Associated records: All documentation generated by the activity of collecting and analyzing artifacts, specimens, or other resources that are or are subsequently designated museum property. Associated records are "associated" with objects collected and analyzed during such activities and should be maintained as part of the museum collections. Examples include site forms, field notes, drawings, maps, photographs, slides, negatives, films, video and audio cassette tapes, oral histories, object inventories, laboratory reports, manuscripts, reports, and printouts of computerized data. Electronic or digital documentation stored on a computer or server or stored on media, such as computer cards, tapes, disks, diskettes, CDs, and DVDs, are included. Also, refer to the definition in 36 CFR Part 79.

Authorized parties: Persons representing one or more entities, either within or outside of the Federal Government, who have authority to act on behalf of their institutions or themselves.

Automated Checklist Program: A tool in ICMS that generates the Facility Condition Checklist for Spaces Housing DOI Museum Property, which is used by a bureau/office unit to evaluate how well a facility meets DOI preservation and protection standards.

Automated Inventory Program: A module in ICMS that generates the data and reports necessary to complete the required annual inventory of controlled museum property, randomly selected cataloged museum collections, and randomly selected accessioned museum collections.

Backup: A copy of electronic data, usually located on a server, external computer drive, or other storage medium, which must be housed at an offsite facility with appropriate environmental controls, security, and emergency management procedures to prevent data loss.

Board of Survey: A standing or ad hoc committee appointed by the APO that is responsible for reviewing reports of lost or stolen property and investigating the circumstances surrounding the incident to determine if there is any evidence of negligence, willful misconduct, or deliberate unauthorized use or disposition of the property.

Buffer: Any material that results in or minimizes a change in RH of the air surrounding it. For example, cotton dust covers can buffer against changes in RH and temperature.

Bulk: A unit of measure used to quantify materials that cannot be separated into individual objects (e.g., a bag of environmental samples or soil; a container of unsorted microbiological specimens or microfossils.)

Cataloging: The action of assigning a unique identifying catalog number to an object or group of objects and completing descriptive documentation, including physical description, condition, provenience and other pertinent information to facilitate physical and intellectual access to object(s) and the collections.

Catalog record: Written or electronic documentation that captures the unique identifying number assigned to a museum object or group of objects, along with a physical description, condition, provenience, and other pertinent information that facilitates physical and intellectual access.

Class C estimate: An approximation of the construction or repair cost based on the cost per square foot of a similarly constructed building.

Collection date: The full date on which the object/specimen was collected in the field using a standardized date format.

Collector's number (Field number): The number the collector designated for the object/specimen.

Completeness: The state of being entirely whole. Determining the completeness of museum objects is an item-level assessment based on the percentage of the object that is present and whole. It is recorded as Complete, Incomplete, or Fragment whereby Complete means that 100 percent of the object is present; Incomplete means that greater than 50 percent but less than 100 percent of the object is present; and Fragment means that 50 percent or less of the object is present.

Conservation: The actions taken by a conservator for the long-term preservation of museum property. Conservation activities include examination, documentation, treatment, and preventative care, supported by research and education.

Conservator: As defined by the American Institute for Conservation, is “a professional whose primary occupation is the practice of conservation and who, through specialized education, knowledge, training, and experience, formulates and implements all the activities of conservation in accordance with an ethical code such as the American Institute for Conservation’s Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Practice.” Conservators often specialize in a particular class of objects or materials.

Consumptive use: The act or process of using a museum object, or a portion thereof, in a way that causes damage or deterioration to it. Destructive analysis is a legitimate use of a museum object, or a portion thereof, for approved scientific research purposes.

Controlled property: For museum collections, the term includes an object or group of objects that is especially sensitive; has high intrinsic or scientific value; is especially vulnerable to theft, loss, or damage; is valued at or above a threshold value established by each bureau/office; is a museum firearm; or is a short-term, incoming loan (for inventory purposes only). The catalog record must indicate whether an object has been designated controlled property. Examples of objects that have been designated controlled property are objects on public exhibit, type specimens, and artwork with a high appraisal value.

Curatorial staff: A DOI employee who has the appropriate knowledge, training, experience, and direct responsibility to manage the nature, scope, and content of bureau/office or unit museum collection/museum property. This may include museum curators, museum specialists, and museum technicians, as well as staff possessing expertise in an academic discipline along with requisite museum training and experience. (See also Museum property management staff.)

Custodial Property Officer (CPO): A DOI employee who is responsible for the daily control and supervision of personal property assigned to him or her. Formerly known as “Custodial Officer.”

Data conversion: The translation of data from one format to another. Often when data is moved from one system to another, some form of data conversion is required to convert the data to a format the receiving system can interpret.

Data migration: The process of transporting data between computers, storage devices, or formats. Data migration is a key consideration for any system implementation, upgrade or consolidation. During data migration, software programs or scripts are used to map system data for automated migration.

Deaccessioning: The formal, documented process by which an accessioned object or group of objects are permanently removed from a museum collection.

Deferred maintenance: Maintenance work that was not performed when it should have been or was scheduled to be performed and subsequently put off or delayed to a future time. This applies to facilities and to museum collections.

Desiccant: A soluble or insoluble chemical drying agent that withdraws water from other materials. An example of a soluble desiccant is glycerol and an example of an insoluble desiccant is silica gel.

Designated authority: A person identified by a bureau/office who is assigned specific roles and responsibilities involved in managing museum collections.

Digitize: The process of creating an electronic copy of a physical letter, photograph, negative, record, or other type of textual or visual object.

Discipline: A field of academic study by which museum property is classified. Disciplines used to classify and report DOI museum property are archeology, archives, art, biology, ethnography, geology, history, and paleontology.

Discipline specialist: A person with specialized knowledge of one or more academic fields of study. Examples include but are not limited to: archeologist, archivist, art historian, biologist, botanist, conservator, ethnographer, geologist, historian, paleontologist, and zoologist.

DOI Museum Property Directives: A series of policy documents that provide a set of standards and procedures to manage DOI museum property as required in 411 DM 1. Each Directive reflects current professional museum and archival standards and practices, and includes selected relevant information from the former DOI Museum Property Handbooks.

Element: A statement of preservation and protection criteria used to evaluate core plans, exhibit spaces, storage spaces, or administrative office spaces in the *Facility Checklist for Spaces Housing DOI Museum Property*.

Environmentally sensitive: Impacted by aspects of an environment, such as temperature, RH, light, or air pollution.

Executive Program Committee (EPC): The Museum Property EPC is a chartered committee established to provide executive oversight of DOI museum collections and programs and the Interior Museum Property Committee. The primary purpose of the EPC is to oversee, evaluate, and direct Department-wide efforts to manage museum collections within the context of the Department's goals and objectives for personal property and resource management.

Exhibit space: An area dedicated to public display of museum objects for interpretive and educational purposes, and where appropriate security and environmental conditions are maintained.

Evaluator: The individual conducting the evaluation of a facility where museum collections are stored, exhibited, or displayed using the Checklist.

Facility: A building, administrative unit, or partner facility that has space(s) dedicated to the display, exhibit, study, and/or storage of museum collections/museum property.

File unit (For Archives Only): The basic means by which individual archival documents are physically consolidated and arranged; or a grouping of related documents. There is no limit to the size of a file unit, which may consist of more than one file folder.

Footcandle: A measure of the intensity of light on a surface equal to one lumen per square foot.

Glazing: For picture framing, the act of covering an object with a protective glass or other appropriate material.

Illuminance level: Measurement, in lux, of visible radiation.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) principles: The standards for preventing and resolving pest problems in an efficient and ecologically sound manner without compromising the safety of collections, visitors, and staff. IPM principles encompass monitoring for pests, identifying and documenting pests, discouraging/mitigating pests through housekeeping, response/treatment of pest problems, and training staff in IPM principles.

Integrated Taxonomic Information System (ITIS): A web-based system of authoritative taxonomic information on plants, animals, fungi, and microbes of North America and the world. ITIS is a partnership of United States, Canadian, and Mexican government agencies, other organizations, and taxonomic specialists. Available on the web at: <http://www.itis.gov>.

Interior Collection Management System (ICMS): The mandatory Department-wide information management system used to provide Department-wide consistency in accounting for, documenting, reporting on, and providing physical and intellectual access to bureau/office museum property.

Interior Museum Property Committee (IMPC): The IMPC is a chartered committee created to support responsible stewardship and use of DOI's museum collections. IMPC members represent the bureaus and offices which manage museum collections to ensure that the unique interests and situations of each bureau/office are fully represented at the Department level.

Inventory: An itemized listing of objects; and/or the act of physically locating all or a random sample of the objects for which a unit is responsible.

Inventory Data Collector (IDC): An individual who conducts a scheduled inventory by locating and identifying the objects on the inventory list, recording and updating the required information about the objects, and, as needed, assisting in reconciling the inventory. Whenever possible, an IDC is a disinterested person who does not have direct responsibility for the museum collections being inventoried. Also known as an "inventory counter" (see IPMD 114-60.3).

Latitude/Longitude: The lines which form a grid that covers the entire Earth and that allows the description of any location on its surface as a unique set of angular coordinates. Latitude values indicate the angular distance between the Equator and points north or south of it. Lines of longitude, called meridians, run perpendicular to lines of latitude, and all pass through both poles. Longitude values indicate the angular distance between the Prime Meridian (which runs through Greenwich, England) and points east or west of it.

Linear feet (For Archives Only): A measurement for descriptive and control purposes of shelf space occupied by archives. For vertical files (archives filed on edge), the total length of drawers, shelves, or other equipment occupied. For archives filed horizontally (flat or piled up), the total vertical thickness.

Loan: The temporary transfer of custody of museum property on either a short-term (three years or less) or long-term basis. A loan must be for official purposes and may be incoming or outgoing. The terms of a loan are documented in a loan agreement or similar instrument. (See also agreement defined in paragraph 1.5B).

Lot: Two or more objects of a similar type that are collected at the same location, at a single point in time, and are cataloged as a group under a single catalog number. A lot is established according to appropriate discipline-specific rules.

Lux: The international unit of measurement of the intensity of light or luminous flux incident, which is one lumen per square meter (10.76 lux = 1 footcandle).

Mandatory data: Information about museum collections that must be documented in the appropriate museum record according to Departmental policy.

Materials: The substance(s) of which a museum object is composed, such as stone, ceramic, cotton, silk, metal, and/or organic tissue.

Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS): A document that provides staff and emergency personnel with procedures for handling or working with a particular hazardous substance in a safe manner, and includes information such as physical data (e.g., melting point, boiling point, and flash point), toxicity, health effects, first aid, reactivity, storage, disposal, protective equipment, and spill-handling procedures. Based on new Hazard Communication Standard requirements, the name of this document is being changed to Safety Data Sheet (SDS).

Mechanical controls: Systems of heating, cooling, and humidity control that are used to regulate the internal environment of a building.

Microclimate: The environmental conditions within a small area such as a storage cabinet or exhibit case.

Mitigation: The act of reducing the severity of a situation or condition.

Munsell Color Chart: An industry-standard color order system based on a three-dimensional model depicted in the Munsell color tree. Each color has three qualities or attributes: 1) Hue: color, such as red, orange, or yellow; 2) Value: the lightness or darkness of a color; and 3) Chroma: the saturation or brilliance of a color. Hue, value, and chroma are also referred to as (HVC). The Munsell Color system is a numerical scale with visually uniform steps for each of the three color attributes such that each color has a logical and visual relationship to all other colors. Additional information on the Munsell Color system is available on the web at: <http://munsell.com/about-munsell-color/how-color-notation-works>.

Museum collection / Museum property: A subset of personal property, including objects, works of art, and/or archives, that is retained for long-term preservation, study, and interpretation consistent with statutory requirements, its relationship to the mission of the respective bureau/office, or other appropriate factors. A museum collection / museum property is acquired

according to a rational plan, such as a Scope of Collection Statement. It consists of all accessioned, unaccessioned, cataloged, and/or uncataloged objects; and all museum objects under the control of a facility, unit, or bureau/office. Museum property is synonymous with and referred to as “museum collection(s)” in the DOI Museum Property Directives, as a standardized term that is used by museum professionals.

Museum firearm: A rifle, pistol, or any other weapon designed to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive, which is of historic value, is acquired for exhibit, research, or interpretation, and is accessioned into a museum collection. Inoperable firearm components, such as those recovered from an archeological project or any other historic firearm parts that are incapable of being used to expel a projectile on their own, are not museum firearms.

Museum property committee: A small, diverse group of curatorial staff, museum property management staff, and relevant discipline specialists that advises on the management of museum collections. The committee provides recommendations on and contributes to collection management decisions such as Scope of Collection Statements, accessions, deaccessions, loans, and mandatory data appropriate to specific disciplines represented in the museum collections.

Museum Property Management Plan: All bureaus/offices responsible for managing museum property must have a Museum Property Management Plan. This plan must include bureau/office-specific strategies, goals, and priorities for meeting the requirements in 411 DM for managing museum collections/museum property in bureau/office facilities and non-bureau facilities and repositories.

Museum property management staff: A DOI employee with delegated responsibilities to manage museum collections/museum property on a regular basis who does not have specialized training in professional museum work. This may include archeologists, archivists, historians, interpreters, property management specialists, rangers, resource management specialists, or others who manage museum property as a collateral duty. (See also Curatorial staff.)

Museum records: Records created to manage museum collections/museum property, such as accession, catalog, loan, deaccession, and inventory records. These records must be appraised through agency record schedule procedures. Museum records are not a museum collection/museum property.

Nomenclature: A system of terms used to name objects in a particular discipline.

Non-bureau facility: Any facility, which a specific bureau/office does not own and/or operate and maintain, that houses the bureau/office’s museum property. This includes facilities of other bureaus and offices within DOI, other Federal agencies, and entities outside of the Federal government, such as a museum or university.

Non-DOI users: Users of ICMS who are not employed by DOI bureaus/offices.

Object: A physical item of museum property. It includes art and history objects, archeological artifacts, ethnographic objects, archival items, and natural history specimens.

Offsite: A location entirely separated and distant from the building of interest.

Overloading: Exceeding the recommended weight capacity, such as by grouping too many objects together on a shelf, cabinet, drawer, or other housing structure.

Particulates: Of or relating to minute, separate particles.

Personal property: Property of any kind or an interest therein, except real property and records of the Federal government. Personal property includes all equipment, materials and supplies, and museum objects. It does not include property which is incorporated in, or permanently affixed to, real property (see Interior Property Management Directives [114-60.1](#)).

Preservative: A chemical added to material to prevent oxidation, fermentation, or other deterioration, especially deterioration caused by bacteria. Ethanol is a common preservative for many biological specimens.

Property Management Officer: A DOI employee responsible for the overall administration, coordination, and control of the personal property management program of a bureau/office.

Provenance: The history of ownership and/or custody of an object prior to its acquisition by a museum.

Provenience: For archeology, it is the specific geographic or spatial location, either two-dimensional or three-dimensional, where an object was found. Within-site provenience is the specific geographic or spatial location where an object was found within a specific archeological site. For history and ethnography, provenience is the specific location from where an object was collected or acquired, such as the Truman Home.

Reconciliation: The process of comparing two or more sets of records to make sure they are in agreement and of identifying errors, irregularities, and needed adjustments.

Records: As defined by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) in 44 U.S.C. 3301, "...all books, papers, maps, photographs, machine readable materials, or other documentary materials, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received by any agency of the United States Government under Federal law or in connection with the transaction of public business and preserved or appropriate for preservation by that agency or its legitimate successor as evidence of the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations or other activities of the Government or because of the informational value of data in them. Library and museum material made or acquired and preserved solely for reference or exhibition purposes, extra copies of documents preserved only for convenience of reference, and stocks of publications and of processed documents are not included." Records as defined in 44 U.S.C. 3301 are not museum property unless indicated as such in an approved bureau/office records disposition schedule. Associated records are not included in this definition.

Record group (For Archives Only): A collection of documents that share the same provenance (i.e., have the same records creator).

Relative humidity or RH: The ratio, expressed as a percentage, of the actual vapor pressure of air to its saturation vapor pressure at that temperature. RH is temperature dependent. If no additional moisture is added to the air, the RH decreases as the temperature increases.

Report of Survey (Form DI-103): Acted upon and finalized by a Board of Survey, this form describes the circumstances concerning the loss, damage, theft, or destruction of Government property; notes a charge of financial liability assessed against an individual or entity or provides for relief from financial liability; and is used to approve corrective actions, including financial recovery efforts and adjustments to property accountability records.

Repository: A type of facility that is dedicated to managing, preserving, processing, studying, and storing museum property according to professional museum and archival practices.

Scope of Collection Statement (SOCS): The SOCS is the basic museum collections planning document required for all DOI units that are, or expect to be, responsible for managing museum collections. The SOCS defines the purpose of the museum collections, identifies the parameters of collecting activities, sets limits on collecting, and describes the uses and restrictions of the museum collections. The SOCS guides the unit's acquisition of museum collections that contributes directly to the understanding and interpretation of its mission, history, and resources, and/or compliance with applicable Federal laws.

Significant fluctuations: Variations in temperature, relative humidity, light, pests, and air pollution that are considerable enough to potentially cause deterioration of objects. The range of variation will depend upon the material composition of the object.

Stanchion: An upright bar or post (sometimes portable; often used in conjunction with retractable belts or ropes) acting as a barrier between museum objects and the surrounding environment.

Standards: The authoritative principles or rules for managing museum property. DOI standards for managing museum property are based on professional museum and archival standards referenced in sections 1.9 and 1.10 of this chapter and detailed in the DOI Museum Property Directives.

Storage space: An area dedicated to the storage of museum objects in which appropriate security and environmental conditions are maintained.

Township/Range/Section: The Public Land Survey System uses a rectangular system of surveys to subdivide lands in the United States. The three major elements of the system include:

- **Township:** 1) An approximately 6-mile square area of land, containing 36 sections. 2) A horizontal row of townships in the Public Land Survey System. Township designations indicate the location north or south of the survey's baseline.

- **Range:** 1) A vertical column of townships in the Public Land Survey System. 2) A north-to-south row of townships identified as east or west from the survey's principle meridian.
- **Section:** A one-square-mile block of land, containing 640 acres, or approximately one thirty-sixth of a township.

Transaction-based inventory: An inventory method that uses electronic- or paper-based records of actions taken during a scheduled inventory cycle to verify the presence and condition of an object on the inventory list in lieu of physical inspection at the time of the inventory.

Type specimen: The specimen or object designated as the name bearer for a taxonomic species for natural history specimens or object class for archeological objects.

Ultraviolet radiation or UV: Energy in wavelengths shorter than 400 nanometers (nm). UV radiation from the sun, sky, and most artificial light sources is in the range of 300-400 nm. It is invisible and may cause significant damage to many museum objects over time.

Unit: A bureau/office organizational entity, such as an accountability area, administrative unit, center, laboratory, museum, office, park, school, sites, refuge, or repository, that manages museum collections/museum property.

Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM): A coordinate system that indicates locations on the Earth's surface, based upon ground distances. Locations are designed in terms of distances in meters east of the center of a UTM zone and north (or south) of the equator.

Visible light: The portion of the electromagnetic spectrum that is perceptible to the human eye, approximately in the range of 400-700 nm.

Visitors: Includes all persons who access DOI museum collections for the purposes of researching and interpreting scientific or historical objects, viewing public exhibits, and participating in interpretive programs and educational activities.

Vitrine: A glass or plastic transparent cover that encloses and protects objects on exhibit or display.

Voucher specimen: A specimen that physically and permanently documents data in published literature by verifying the identity of the organism(s) used in the study and by doing so ensures that a study which otherwise could not be repeated can be accurately reviewed or reassessed. For example, rock and mineral specimens may serve as vouchers to document the geology of an area.

Web-based media: Internet-based technologies that allow for the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Such media include digital images, text, video, audio, animation, and interactive features. They also include social media, which enables people to interact online.

Working collections: The organic or inorganic specimens and items maintained by bureau/office programs that are not intended for long-term preservation and care as museum property due to their expendable nature. Working collections are intended for use during education or ongoing research and may be consumed or discarded during the analysis process according to bureau policy. Some specimens and items may subsequently be designated museum property. Working collections will be discarded when it is determined there is no longer a need for the collection for future research or education or upon completion of the ongoing research according to standards set in bureau policy.