

Some Collections Management Tips

- Mandate for collecting: Decide upon, and adhere to theme when accepting donations.
- Collections to be used in programs or working collections must be duplicates.
- Decline offers where necessary: no conditions attached to acceptance.
- Accept Short-Term loans- only 3-6 months.
- Eliminate Long-Term loans.
- Have a signed and dated transfer of ownership form.
- File and maintain confidentiality of all transfer of ownership forms.
- Provide copy of signed transfer of ownership to act as receipt for donor.
- All donations are property of the museum, ensure and document that the donor understands that the Museum is free to do with the artefact what it deems fit.
- Ensure you have current and accurate donor contact information.
- Gather history and provenance of artefact at time of donation.
- Accession all artefacts as soon as possible once they enter the museum.
- Consistency: everyone accessioning should be using the same numbering schema, guidelines and procedures without exception.
- All artefacts are assigned an accession number (following museological standards)
- All accession numbers are recorded in ink or typed into an accession book (register)
- Retain a second copy of the accession register off site, and update regularly.
- Sets are marked using additional number(s)
- Component Pieces are marked with addition of letters corresponding to the component parts.
- All artefacts are marked with accession numbers following museological standards (consistent location, only approved applications/ reversible)
- Accession numbers should not be detachable
- No accession numbers are re-used (deaccessioned artefacts retain original number)
- Prepare a catalogue sheet for each artefact, file by accession number
 - Classify using Chenall Nomenclature each artefact, record on catalogue sheet and in Past Perfect.

- Describe artefact, include colour, shape, materials, and relative dimension.
- Record, in Metric, artefact over all measurements as well as any pertinent component piece measurements.
- Transcribe any maker's marks, or other marks found on artefact.
- Note condition, and measure any cracks etc- use standard terms.
- Note location of artefact (create and use standard location identifiers).
- Record all information relating to history and provenance obtained from transfer of ownership form.
- Use a cataloguer organizer sheet to track progress of cataloguing, initial and date all entries.
- Prepare a condition report upon donation/ purchase.
- Periodically review and update condition reports of artefacts.
- Research the collection over time, updating all documentation with new findings.
- Photograph all artefacts within collection from multiple angles.
- Maintain a record of all artefact images (named by accession number for easy retrieval) Best to keep both a hard copy and digital format like a cd or DVD, store one of these off site.
- The decision to deaccessioning artefacts from the collection must be agreed upon by the board of trustees/ site manager - include reason for deaccessioning. All information pertaining to these artefacts should be retained, and file separately- all sheets noted with "Deaccessioned" clearly visible.
- Enter data using Catalogue sheet and transfer of ownership documentation to Collections Management Software (e.g. Past Perfect)
- Enter records in "objects" and fill out all pertinent fields, including donor information.
- Update Collections Management Software when artefact moves location, new information is uncovered, condition changes, or any other activity occurs.
- Backup data every time you leave Past Perfect.
- Routinely make backup CD's of Past Perfect- mark and date it clearly, store one copy within museum and another off site.
- Tag digital images of each artefact to corresponding record in Past Perfect.