

POLICY EXAMPLE: Policy for Handling Hazards in the Collection

1.0 POLICY STATEMENT

This policy is aimed at minimising or preventing the likelihood of an injury or illness occurring to staff and/or harm to collection material.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

A **Collection Item** is an Object or Specimen and associated data that has been formally acquired by the organisation/venue.

Corrosive is a substance which will destroy or damage another substance (including living tissue) by chemical reaction. The most common form is acids.

Deaccessioning is the formal process of removing an Item permanently from the Collection, for sale, repatriation or other form of Disposal. Deaccessioning requires the prior approval of the Board.

Disposal is the process of removing an Item from the care and custody of the organisation/venue.

Documentation is supporting evidence, recorded in a permanent manner using a variety of media (paper, photographic, electronic etc.) of the identification, condition, history, or significance of an Object, Specimen or collection. This encompasses information that is inherent to the individual Object / Specimen and its associations in its environment as well as that which reflects processes and transactions affecting the Object / Specimen (e.g. Accessioning, documenting, loaning, analysis, treatment etc.). Documentation is an integral aspect of use, management and preservation of an Object, Specimen or collection. All digital and paper-based documentation must be collected, maintained and stored in accordance with the organisation/venue's collection policy.

Hazardous material is a material which, alone or in combination with others, is or could become toxic, irritant, explosive, flammable, corrosive, or noxious, and for which special precautions are required.

An **Item** is an interchangeable term used for an Object, record, Specimen or Specimen lot.

Lot is the term used to define a group of Specimens or Objects recovered from the same location at the same time, which are Registered, Accessioned, stored and Documented together for efficiency reasons based on manageable quantities of objects.

An **Object** is a human-made Item, often manufactured or created from naturally-occurring materials and made for use in a cultural context. This term differentiates human-made collection Items from those acquired in nature (Specimens).

Staff includes paid staff, researchers, students, volunteers.

3.0 PRINCIPLES

It is important that all activities address issues of health and safety in relation to staff who work with the Collection, specifically in relation to Objects or Specimens containing

Hazardous materials. The organisation/venue is committed to complying with the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 and the Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011, relevant codes of practice and Australian Standards.

4.0 ELEMENTS

All employees and volunteers have a legal obligation to follow this policy and procedures to ensure their own safety and that of others. Therefore the Collection Management and Curatorial staff in conjunction with the Conservation Section, the WHS Risk Manager and the support of the WHS Committees must identify potential hazards and deal with them appropriately. It is the responsibility of the person (the immediate Team Leader, Supervisor or Manager) in charge of a work area (as defined in the Work Health and Safety Act 2011) to ensure that all staff or volunteers working in a specific collection are aware of the potential risks associated with that type of collection material and implement the designated handling methods in accordance with *Procedures for Handling Hazards in the Collection*. In addition, they must also ensure that specific control measures are identified and implemented in line with the approved Management Options detailed in the Procedures.

If through an appropriate review process, conducted by Conservation, Program staff and the WH&S Risk Manager, an item is deemed to pose too great a risk to the health of staff or other collection objects, the item must be deaccessioned in accordance with the organisation/venue's Procedure for Deaccessioning and disposed of in the prescribed manner.

5.0 MANAGEMENT PROCESS FOR OBJECTS / SPECIMENS THOUGHT TO CONTAIN A HAZARD

See *Procedures for Handling Hazards in the Collection* for more detailed information regarding what type of Objects or Specimens may contain hazards, how to identify the hazard, how to handle the material and how to manage the potential risk appropriately.

7.0 MORE INFORMATION

Policy owner/creator:	
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8.0 AUTHORISATION

Approved by:	
Title:	
Signature:	
Approval date:	

9.0 REVIEW PROCESS

This policy will be reviewed every two years and at other times, if any significant new information, legislative or organisational change warrants a change to this document.

Once printed this document is no longer a controlled document.