



**SHARE Museums East**  
a network of know how

## **Emergency Planning Template Guidance Notes**

### **Introduction**

This revised emergency planning template is an updated version of the original toolkit produced by Sarah Norcross-Robinson, Regional Conservation Officer at Norfolk Museums Service in 2008. Many museums have used the original toolkit to create an Emergency Plan and this revised edition is designed to ensure the template remains relevant and useful in 2023.

As with all templates, this is designed as a guide to creating your own Emergency Plan and you should insert the relevant information ensuring that **your** plan works for **your** museum. Equally, you should remove anything that does not apply to your institution but do so with caution! To help you create your own Emergency Plan, you will find guidance notes throughout the template to help complete each section. You will also find there are a series of useful appendices.

If you have any queries or comments on this emergency planning template, or would like to know more about emergency planning and collections training in the East of England, please contact:

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## How to use this template

- The first task is to undertake a risk assessment or to review and update existing assessments. **Appendix A** provides a template for this. Remember to look beyond your own boundaries, especially if you share buildings and/or access with others.
- Reduce as many risks as possible and plan to reduce others. Bear this in mind when preparing your Emergency Plan. Invite your local Fire and Rescue Service and Police to visit so they are familiar with your site.
- Most museum emergencies are due to a failure in building maintenance. Using a checklist, like the one provided in **Appendix B**, will help to reduce those risks.
- Think about establishing a telephone tree system amongst other local museums so that you can support one another in the event of a major emergency.
- Once you have completed your own plan, remember to adjust section and page numbers accordingly!
- You need to have more than one copy of the plan, including one stored securely off-site. Think carefully about where to keep copies; they should be readily accessible when needed, but they contain a lot of sensitive information so be aware of security and data protection issues.
- **REMEMBER:** Emergency planning and response is the responsibility of **all** museum staff and volunteers, and contributions to the Emergency Plan should be welcomed from all members of the team.
- **Test your plan.** This can be as simple as imagining a situation and talking through the process, or could be a full-blown exercise involving the emergency services. Not only will you identify gaps and ways to improve your plan, but it will also train colleagues in readiness of an incident.
- Use the plan for minor emergencies. Familiarisation with the plan, building and collections is vital. If everyone knows their role and is confident about what will be required of them, you will save valuable time and reduce stress if an emergency occurs.
- The Emergency Plan must be reviewed annually, or sooner if implemented due to an on-site emergency or incident. The start of an open season is a good time to check priority object locations. Remember to keep important information, such as telephone numbers, up to date. Also remember to review your risk assessments and adjust the plan accordingly. Museum staff and volunteers should be informed of any changes.
- Regular emergency planning training is also recommended.

## Requirements for Accreditation

The [Museum Accreditation Scheme](#) requires museums to have 'a clear, workable emergency plan' that covers all buildings and sites that house the museum collection.

The Accreditation Standard requires that the Emergency Plan should cover:

- arrangements for staff and volunteers, visitors, collections and collections information
- a risk assessment of threats
- how you authorise, maintain, communicate, and test your emergency plan, and how you share it with your staff and volunteers, and the emergency services
- how your museum works with the emergency services, and any other relevant emergency plans
- a priority salvage list - a record of any priority collections you would save first in an emergency
- when you'll review your Emergency Plan

## Further Resources

- Arts Council England, Security Advice, contact [securityadvice@artscouncil.org.uk](mailto:securityadvice@artscouncil.org.uk)
- Collections Trust, [Emergency Planning for Collections](#)
- Flood Warnings for England, [Check for Flooding](#)
- Historic England, [Emergency Planning and Fire Advice](#)
- London Fire Brigade, [Fire Safety in Heritage and Historical Buildings](#)
- London Museum Development, [Emergency Planning e-learning tool](#)
- London Museum Development, [Pocket Salvage Guide](#)
- National Conservation Service, [Benchmarks 3.0 Conservation Planning Tool](#) (see section 9, Emergency Preparedness)
- UK Counter Terrorism and Security Advice, [Protect UK](#)
- UK Power Networks, [Live Power Cuts Map](#)