

Promoting Exhibit Access and Safety (PEAS) Working Group

—advocating for an interdisciplinary approach to protecting collections

MISSION: The Promoting Exhibit Access & Safety (PEAS) working group advocates for an interdisciplinary approach and iterative process to designing, building, and managing exhibitions; one that balances public access, preventive conservation, and security; to provide a safe environment for visitors and promote collections preservation.

VISION/ACTION: The working group strives to provide a platform for engagement in challenging conversations and collaborative solutions to detrimental interactions between visitors and collections through:

- Collecting and compiling data on visitor interactions with exhibits to gain insights into visitor behavior.
- Researching and reviewing new methodologies to protect collections on exhibit, enhance public access, and cultivate behaviors that promote collections care.
- Offering interdisciplinary expertise, advice, and resources to those seeking to improve visitor safety and protect collections on exhibit.
- Promoting and advocating for the implementation of proven strategies within the field.

PEAS working group goals include:

- recognition and promotion of safe environments for museum visitors and collection objects
- promotion of cultural heritage preservation

PEAS working group benefits:

- developing working relationships across specializations
- accessing diverse sources of information
- fostering better understanding of visitor behaviors
- promoting visitor support for collections care
- reducing risk to collections

PEAS working group members represent a broad spectrum of museum experience and expertise including:

- collection management
- conservation
- exhibit design
- visitor services
- risk management
- facilities management
- architecture
- security

Interested in learning more or participating in PEAS?

- Contact us at SI-PEAS@si.edu
- Or visit: <https://ncp.si.edu/PRICE-PEAS>



Promoting Exhibit Access and Safety resource library

https://www.zotero.org/groups/4754124/promoting_exhibit_access_and_safety_peas/items/4XXB5BGF/library

The screenshot shows a Zotero library interface with the following details:

- Group Libraries:** Promoting Exhibit Access and Safety...
- Items:**
 - Waller Chapter 4 Collection Risk Assessment (Creator: Waller, Date: 2019-01-01)
 - Pursuing Learning through Intentional Practice (Creator: Grant et al., Date: 2018-12-10)
 - Engaging Conservation, Collaboration Across Disciplines (Creator: Wain, Date: 2017-11)
 - The Importance of Movement and Operation as Preventive Conservation Strateg... (Creator: Mele, Date: 2017-04-03)
 - A Guide to Risk Management of Cultural Heritage (Creator: Mele, Date: 2017-03-22)
 - Whoops! When Visitors Get Touchy-Feely with Exhibits and Unleash Mayhem (Creator: Mele, Date: 2016-08-08)
 - "Object Project" Explores Everyday Things That Changed Everything (Creator: Mele, Date: 2015)
- Info Tab:** Shows item details for the first item: Waller Chapter 4 Collection Risk Assessment. It includes fields for Item Type (Book Section), Title, Author (Waller, Robert), Book Title (Preventative Conservation: Collections Storage), Date (2019-01-01), Pages (59-90), and URL (<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/33...>). It also shows the Abstract: "Preservation is one of the three major subsystems within a collection management system. It is a forward looking subsystem. It needs to anticipate what might go wrong resulting in failure to preserve. Because preservation requires identification and control of specific causes of harm arising in the future it must be managed in as omniscient and exacting a manner as possible. The theories and practices to achieve this challenging task are most developed within the fields of risk and safety assessment, management and analysis. It is...".



COLLECTIONS

A Journal for Museum and Archives Professionals

Focus Issue: Promoting Exhibit Access and Safety

Guest Editors: Jeffrey Hirsch, Cali Martin, Melissa Miller, and Samantha Snell

Promoting Exhibit Access and Safety

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ACCESS AND SAFETY FRAMEWORK EXERCISE



2025

Overview

This exercise will serve as a tool for Collections and Conservation staff to talk with leadership/curators/other stakeholders or decision makers about access and safety for collection items and the individuals that interact with them. This exercise is intended to prompt and frame conversations with colleagues around the risk decisions we are making for collections to provide access and provide points to consider when discussing access and safety with organization leadership.

Directions

- You can also do this exercise independently or collaboratively with colleagues.
- To start, pick a collection item. Then, answer the following questions through the lens of yourself or your organization, or both. Your individual perspective may align or may contrast with that of your organization.
- Using your answers from the guiding questions, list out your top three priorities for access and safety in the chart below.
- Your museum's unique mission and collection type will have bearing on the answers so try to be as detailed as possible.
- Please note: life safety issues are not the focus here and always take priority. For the purpose of this exercise, assume that life safety issues have been addressed already

Contact Us:

For questions about PEAS (Promoting Exhibit Access and Safety):

SI-PEAS@si.edu

For comments, suggestions, or questions about the framework:

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Guiding Questions

1. What is the collection item?
2. Provide additional context of the collection item and its relationship to the mission of the museum?
3. Who are the stakeholders? What is their relationship to the collection item?
4. How did the item get into the collection?
5. How do you/your institution define access?
6. Who accesses the item?
7. Why is the item accessed?
8. How do you define safety?
9. What are the environmental condition requirements of the collection item? What impacts may that have on other items it is displayed with?
10. Who may have interests in interacting inappropriately with the item? How are you (or your institution) defining 'inappropriate'?
11. What exhibit conditions might inadvertently increase risks of damage to the collection item by museum staff or visitors? Inadequate barriers and signage?
12. Which of the agents of deterioration is the item most susceptible to? How can you mitigate those risks?

Considering your responses to the questions above, draft a statement summarizing your access and safety priorities, and then write balance proposition (i.e. a big picture statement that takes into account our access and safety goals, and will guide decision making moving forward)



Access Priority



Safety Priority



Balance Proposition