

PROTECTION OF CULTURAL PROPERTY AGAINST DISASTER

Precautions, Annex 1

Guidelines for the Preparation of a Disaster Plan

Hazard analysis

Preparing a comprehensive hazard analysis will make it possible for every owner of a historic item to prepare a disaster plan, with the aim of mitigating damage if an incident should occur. If serious security deficiencies are identified in the course of the hazard analysis, these should immediately be notified in writing to the responsible authorities.

The disaster plan should include the concrete precautionary measures set out in the following paper.

1. Lists of cultural property that must be evacuated

It will hardly ever be possible to remove all portable cultural property to safety if there should be an incident.

Selection of movable cultural property

It is for the owners - after consulting experts (e.g. curators of historic monuments) - to make a selection in good time of the cultural property that can be moved, assigning first or second priority to each piece.

Identification

The inventory should not be confined merely to a list of the items but should make it possible both to find them in the building, and to identify them (providing photos, inventory numbers, special features etc.).

Distribution of evacuation lists

These lists will serve their purpose only if they are known to staff as well as to the emergency services. The information should however be passed on in a targeted way, to avoid facilitating theft.

2. Safeguard documentation (inventories)

Documentation required for

- restoration
- identification
- return

Safeguard documentation comprises all information which can contribute to the restoration or reconstruction of an **immovable** historic item which has been damaged or destroyed. This also describes the extent of the responsibility of the heritage protection authorities; it is limited to making documentation available. Decisions on restoration or the manner

of reconstruction after damage is the business of the authorities and owner.

In the case of **movable** cultural property, an inventory or safeguard documentation makes it easier to identify items which must be removed if an incident occurs. And inventories also make it possible to identify the items removed after an emergency evacuation.

An officially-recognised historic item is much harder to sell on the market. For this reason, inventories and safeguard documentation are an effective protection against theft.

If there is a theft, an inventory makes it possible to prove the origin of the item.

A periodic check of the inventory is therefore important. Otherwise days or even months may pass before a theft is noticed.

3. Checking existing technical installations and putting in protective measures

Get in touch with security specialists

The condition of any building (its roof, windows, etc.) and technical installations (such as water pipes, sewers, drains, heating, air-conditioning, electrical wiring, etc.) should be checked regularly. Keeping attics and stores clean and tidy (not allowing rubbish to accumulate, and keeping exits clear), and the systematic use of non-flammable materials for exhibitions can substantially reduce the risk of fire.

When a building which is to house cultural property is under construction or being restored or altered, there is an opportunity to carry out improvements in the security field in collaboration with the emergency services and the historic monument authorities:

- in old buildings the **electrical installation** should be checked and overloading avoided
- **exits, particularly emergency exits**, should be marked
- provision should be made for **emergency lighting**
- a **lightning-conductor** should be installed
- **fire walls** and **fire doors** should be installed
- access to **hydrants** should be checked
- the condition of **water pipes** and **drains** should be checked
- if necessary, install **back-pressure valves** and **waterproof covers** and / or **slide valves**, to avoid flooding
- put **fire-points** into the building
- install **hand-operated fire-extinguishers**
- install **fire alarms, water detectors** and **burglar alarms**
- check **storeroom contents** (do not store easily flammable

materials)

- procure the **packing materials** which would be necessary if there were a disaster (crates, trolleys, gloves, etc.)
- and so on...

4. Shelters for cultural property

The possibility of constructing a shelter for important cultural property should be investigated in every building which houses collections. Built in accordance with the technical guidance of the Federal Office for Civil Protection, these make it possible to keep objects in the best possible way, with good “climatic” conditions, and also provide effective protection against theft or fire.

If it is not possible to construct a shelter specifically for cultural property, the possibility of using a personnel shelter either on a provisional or a permanent basis should be discussed with the municipal Civil Protection organisation.

5. Information and staff training

Staff training and drill

It is important that the staff should be informed of the risks and problems in the building, and of the steps to be taken. Members of staff who would be the first to be deployed in case of an incident must be drilled on site from time to time.

6. Further fundamentals for an emergency plan

Mark the locations of cultural property on the municipality emergency plans

The locations of the most important buildings, of valuable parts of the building and collections or objects should be shown on the **emergency services’ deployment plans**. The emergency plans should be clear. Information should be limited to the most important points. The sites in question should be regularly visited by senior members of the emergency services.

Detailed plans of buildings which house valuable historic items must provide the following information:

- access routes
- emergency exits
- water points (hydrants, fire-points, etc.)
- locations of manual fire extinguishers
- locations of electrical distribution and fuse boards
- location of the alarm panel (with information on how it can be turned off)
- location of the collections (inventory lists, storerooms)
- whereabouts of packing materials and moving equipment
- evacuation route

Addresses and telephone numbers	An up-to-date list should be kept with the addresses and telephone numbers of staff who are to be called in or informed if there should be an incident. It may be appropriate to organise a duty roster. There should also be an up-to-date list of specialists who can be contacted after an incident.
Location of keys	A key-box should be built into any building containing cultural property. The access key should be left in this key-box. The fire services hold a key to the key-box which can be drawn from the fire service vehicle only when it is in action. The place where keys to the show-cases are kept should be notified.
Access	Access to the collection and objects should be regulated.
Attachment	A simple and uniform system of attachment should be provided, allowing for rapid evacuation.
Information	The emergency services should be invited to make regular visits and practice deployments . One of the issues to be decided on such an occasion is the appropriate method of extinguishing any fire. Reduce likely causes of fire (by introducing a ban on smoking and open flames, checking electrical installations, etc.). And so on...

**Security measures,
comprehensive information and
rapid, careful action can
contribute to a great deal of cultural property
being saved if there is an emergency.**