

# Disaster Planning for Museums in Ontario: Planning for the Future

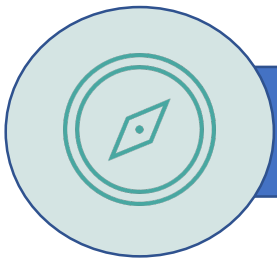
Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport

March 20, 2024

Ontario 

# Purpose

- **Provide additional context for the Ministry's request for an Emergency and Disaster Plan in 2024 and an overview of the requirements as set out in the Standards for Community Museums.**



## Context

- **Museums must comply with requirements set out in the Standards for Community Museums in Ontario.**
- **The Ministry requests specific policies and plans with reference to the Standards on an annual basis to demonstrate compliance with requirements.**
- **The 10 standards for community museums represent the minimum requirements for the operation of a good community museum**
- **The goal is to help museums meet the minimum Standards and to encourage continuous improvement and professionalism in the sector.**
- **For 2024, the Ministry is requesting an Emergency and Disaster Plan, due June 30, 2024, along with CMOG applications.**



## Policy vs Plan

### POLICY

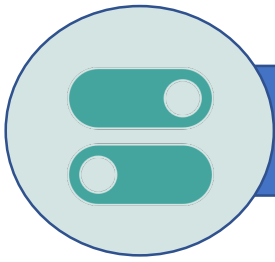
- A museum's **policy** should set out a statement of principles, values and intent and include references to the need for or creation of a plan.

### PLAN

- An Emergency and Disaster **Plan** should outline the **actions** that the museum will undertake to deal with an emergency.

# BC HERN Emergency Response Sequence Diagram



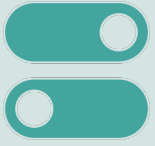


## Conservation and Physical Plant Standards

The **Conservation and Physical Plant Standards** outlined in the Standards for Community Museums in Ontario have **specific** requirements for Emergency and Disaster Planning.

**Other Standards** are also relevant and require community museums to:

- provide the appropriate care and management of collections
- meet municipal, provincial and federal guidelines and legislation



# Conservation Standard

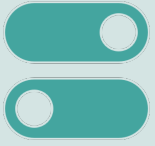
## **The Standard's overall intent:**

- As a community museum, you have a responsibility to protect and preserve the collection entrusted to your care, so that future generations have the opportunity to enjoy and learn from it.
- You will demonstrate the stewardship of your collection by following procedures that ensure its long-term preservation.

## **Requirements in the Standard include:**

### **5. ensure the security of the collection by:**

- a. protecting artifacts from water damage
- b. protecting artifacts from theft and vandalism, including restricting access to artifacts
- c. **establishing written standard procedures to deal with emergencies and disasters, and training of all staff in these procedures**



# Physical Plant Standard

## **The Standard's overall intent:**

As a community museum, your buildings and grounds must provide a safe and functional environment for visitors, staff, the collection and associated activities.

## **Requirements in the Standard include:**

**4. ensures the security of its users, staff, collections and information by developing and regularly updating an emergency preparedness plan or equivalent that:**

- a. identifies potential threats for example, personal threat, fire, water or vandalism
- b. takes steps to minimize the level of individual risks for example, by installing sufficient security lighting
- c. **includes written procedures to respond to threats, emergencies and disasters**
- d. **includes training staff and volunteers to implement emergency and disaster response procedures**
- e. **establishes a system of periodic testing and assessment of the effectiveness of emergency procedures**
- f. ensures that any preventive or security systems installed are assessed for their potential impact on collections and the museum's character and functions







# Other Relevant Standards

## Governance Standard

As a community museum, you must be governed according to standards and be open and accountable to the public for your decisions.

## Collections Standard

As a community museum, the artifacts you keep represent your community's heritage. To protect their value, you must maintain a well-organized, managed and documented collection.

## Human Resources Standard

As a community museum, you must hire professional staff and you must provide ongoing training opportunities. As an employer, you are concerned with the safety, security, wellbeing and continued motivation of the people who work with you.

### General requirements

- Hiring a professional Curator or Manager
- Ensuring that there is adequate funding for care of collections
- Meeting municipal, provincial and federal legislative requirements that have a bearing on operations and activities
- Creating short and long-term written plans that direct operations and activities

### General requirements

- Hiring a professional Collections Manager
- Ensuring that there is adequate funding for care of collections
- Meeting municipal, provincial and federal legislative requirements
- Creating short and long-term written plans that direct care of collections

### General requirements

- Ensuring that staff are provided with information on health and safety hazards in the workplace and are trained in their management or mitigation
- Ensuring that the museum meets municipal, provincial and federal, legislative requirements relating to people in the workplace

# Peterborough Archives July 2004

- Peterborough Museum and Archives had recently relocated the Balsillie Collection of Roy Studio Images (valued at over \$8 million) to a 400-square-foot climate-controlled storage facility on the lower level of the Peterborough Public Library.
- Flood water shattered plate glass windows on the ground floor of the library and a torrent of sewage-contaminated water and debris spilled into the lower level, immersing 10% of the Balsillie Collection under a foot of water for 24 hours.





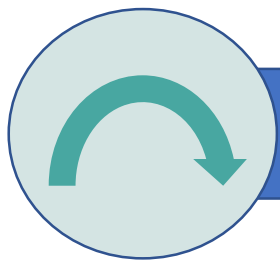
**Black Loyalist museum was prepared to save artifacts by 'any means' during wildfire**



## Planning for the Future

### Criteria for assessing your Emergency and Disaster Plan:

- Does my Museum have a useful Emergency and Disaster Plan that is separate from my municipal or governing body's plan and specifically addresses museum needs?
- If not, how can we improve the plan?
- What are the actions we need to take to improve the plan?
- What are the timelines for these improvements?
- Who is responsible for these improvements? Staff? Board?



## Checklist for Success

### **The museum's plan should:**

- 1. Demonstrate compliance with the Standards, specifically with the Conservation and Physical Plant Standards (a more complete plan will mention or reference other Standards such as the Collections, Human Resource and Governance Standards)**
- 2. Include an Action Plan for use when/if a disaster happens**
- 3. Include specific provisions for your museum(s)**
- 4. Include specific tasks for all staff and volunteers in an Emergency**



## Next Steps and Deadlines

- **Deadline for submission is June 30, 2024, with your CMOG grant submission.**
- **Reach out to Elka Weinstein at the Ministry with any questions**

[elka.weinstein@ontario.ca](mailto:elka.weinstein@ontario.ca)

**416-594-9398**



# Appendix A: Recommended Resources

## **Museum Standards resources:**

- [Standards for Community Museums in Ontario](#)
- [Alberta Museums Association. Standard Practices Handbook for Museums, 3rd edition. 2014.](#)

## **Articles about Recent Disasters and Recovery:**

- <https://www.heritage-matters.ca/articles/recovering-from-disaster>

## **Emergency Planning Resources:**

- [HELP! AN EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS MANUAL FOR MUSEUMS, 2ND EDITION](#)
- [ICCROM DISASTER PREPAREDNESS](#)
- ICOM International [Emergency Preparedness and Response](#)
- [Heritage Emergency and Response Training \(HEART\) at the Smithsonian](#)