



## **COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT POLICY**

The mandate and activities of the Elgin County Museum are governed by By-Law No. 05-44. The principle objective of the Museum is to acquire, preserve, display and interpret artifacts which relate to the history and development of the County of Elgin.

The Elgin County Museum exists to promote Elgin County's rich historical and agricultural heritage to the community by acquiring, documenting, preserving, exhibiting and interpreting artifacts pertaining to the history of the County of Elgin; and to provide leadership and support to County museums in the promotion of a heritage partnership.

The Elgin County Museum collection is held and managed on behalf of the County of Elgin in the public trust.

This policy outlines the following Collections procedures:

- A. Acquisitions
- B. Collections Management
- C. Loans
- D. De-accessioning

- A. Acquisitions

Elgin County Museum collects objects and material culture relating to the heritage of the community, as defined in the Statement of Purpose. The collections are made for the purpose of documentation, research, preservation, exhibition and interpretation for the community.

Elgin County Museum adheres to its collecting practice according to the following criteria:

1. objects which are specific to Elgin County;
2. objects produced in Elgin County;
3. objects used in Elgin County and/or owned by Elgin County residents.

Elgin County Museum strives to emphasize a collection of artifacts that are:

1. objects exemplary of an aspect of Elgin County's history currently not represented in the collection;

2. objects that are in danger of loss or destruction;
3. objects directly relevant to current research, exhibition or interpretation programs;
4. well documented objects;
5. objects in excellent condition.

Elgin County Museum is satisfied that any object to be acquired whether by donation, exchange, or purchase, is not stolen or otherwise illegally acquired or collected. The museum will not acquire any objects of undetermined or unethical history of ownership. Material will not be acquired if there is reason to believe the object had been recovered through unscientific handling and/or intentional damage or destruction of an archaeological/historical site or excavation. The museum will not accept objects that have contravened the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export, and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property as ratified in Canada on June 28, 1978.

Objects may be acquired by donation, purchase, or exchange.

Donations:

Donations are either solicited or unsolicited. Donations are subject to appropriate documentation and procedures which will be outlined in Section B.

Purchases:

If an object meets the Collections Management Policy criteria, the object may be purchased for the collection.

Exchange:

Elgin County Museum is committed to acquiring artifacts pertaining directly to the history of the County of Elgin and/or its citizens. All acquisitions must follow the guidelines for transfer of ownership and/or responsibility accompanied by a signed gift agreement or other proof of legal title to the object, such as a bill of sale.

## B. Collections Management

Elgin County Museum will allocate a budget for funding the continuing care and preservation of objects in its collections. Proper storage and exhibition facilities with adequate environmental-control systems must be in place.

Processing acquisitions will proceed with the following steps:

1. When an artifact is donated to Elgin County Museum, the potential donor signs a temporary gift receipt;
2. the artifact is housed in the Curatorial Workspace along with its accompanying documentation;
3. if the artifact is assessed as not pertinent to the collection, the object is returned to the owner along with a form signed as 'artifact returned' including the date;

4. if the artifact is assessed as pertinent to the collection, the artifact is assigned an accession number through the register and tagged. The accession number is noted on the gift form sent to the donor. The donor must sign the gift form for transfer of ownership and responsibility.
5. If the owner does not return the form in the allocated time (six months) from the accession date, the artifact must be returned to the owner. Without a signed gift form, a tax receipt cannot be issued, and the artifact will not be stored nor put on display.
6. When the gift form is returned signed, the artifact is marked with the accession number and catalogued;
7. Upon the artifact being catalogued, it is stored in a permanent storage area and its location is noted on the accession card; the information is also transferred to the collections management database which is backed up daily.
8. Artifacts acquired by purchase or exchange are processed following steps 4 through 7.

Management of artifacts will proceed with the following steps:

1. artifacts are to be stored and handled according to professional standards;
2. records are to be maintained and updated according to professional standards;
3. artifacts are researched, interpreted and exhibited according to professional standards;
4. comprehensive inventory is maintained.

Appraisals of artifacts:

All artifacts must have a signed gift form and be part of the collection before an appraisal is completed.

When completing appraisals, Elgin County Museum will select the appraiser most suitable for the type of artifacts being appraised.

C. Loans:

1. All incoming loans and out-going loans for exhibition purposes are listed on loan agreement forms, signed for by the Curator, date of arrival/departure and date of return are noted on the form.
2. All in-coming material is governed by the County's insurance coverage for the Museum.
3. Elgin County Museum is responsible for all in-coming material, which is handled and managed according to the Museum's professional procedures and standards.
4. All out-going material is insured by the borrowing institution.
5. The borrowing institution is responsible for the on-loan material, guaranteeing its handling, safety, exhibit and return according to professional standards.

D. De-Accessioning

In order to maintain a relevant and growing collection in accordance with the Mission Statement and professional standards, it may be necessary to de-accession artifacts.

In order to process an artifact for de-accessioning, these procedures must be followed:

1. the artifact is assessed on its physical condition;
2. its record and provenance are studied;
3. the collection is reviewed to determine whether or not the artifact is unique, original, a duplicate, or representative of Elgin County's history;
4. the recommendation is made to the Director of Cultural Services.

The following standards must be adhered to:

1. The artifact was not obtained with the intention of eventual de-accession.
2. Criteria for de-accessioning includes: poor condition, lack of provenance, duplication, lack of significance to Elgin County's history, the possibility/act of upgrading the collection by means of exchange or other transaction.
3. Elgin County Museum will de-accession an artifact/s for the purpose of repatriation, when it is legally proven that another body, organization, people, and/or government has the legal and ethical right to said artifact/s.

#### Method of Disposal

1. The catalogue number and any other related markings are removed from the de-accessioned object.
2. The catalogue record notes the change of status to 'de-accessioned', the date of de-accession, and where it went.
3. It is offered to another tax-exempt, non-profit educational/cultural institution, as a gift or for exchange purposes.
4. It may be sent to disposal through a legitimate public auction service in accordance with the County's Purchasing Policy. Any monies earned by the sale of the de-accessioned artifact/s at the auction will be used on behalf of the Museum.
5. Physical destruction. If the artifact is in such poor condition, does not have any documentation related to its authenticity, origin or history. Elgin County Museum may decide to physically destroy the artifact, as it is of not monetary value or historical significance, not important to another institution. The following steps must be taken:
  1. catalogue number and any other related markings must be removed.
  2. the artifact is smashed into small pieces.
  3. the museum record notes date of destruction.
  4. it is wrapped in the appropriate coloured garbage bag and deposited into a garbage bin.

#### Policy Review and Approval

The Collections Management Policy is reviewed on a yearly basis, or any time that changes are deemed necessary. The Curator and Director of Cultural Services will conduct the review, in conjunction with other professional staff. The reviewed version will be submitted to Elgin County Council for approval.