

Safeguarding Museums & Collections



How to implement a
basic safeguarding strategy

Notes and Explanations

1. In the following text, the words 'museum', gallery', or 'collection' are sometimes replaced by the term 'organisation'. This means you - as an organiser of security for any valuable property or heritage location.
2. The hyperlinks in this document are correct at the time of document release – March 2020. However, some or all of the links may be replaced or become ineffective as the provisioning organisations change their documentation. We have no control over hyperlinks that fail to work in the future.

Where the hyperlinks are seen in a printed copy of this guide rather than the electronic version, it may be best to search on the internet by the document title or subject rather than laboriously key in very long links.
3. Sharing. You have our permission to share this document to help other organisations wishing to prevent crime against valuable heritage collections.
4. You will need to carefully evaluate the purchase of the types of items and equipment set out in this guide, for price, cost effectiveness and operational value. Cross-check with more than one source to see if those who claim it, really are -experts-.

FOREWORD

Safeguarding museums and collections

As curators you are already playing a vital part in preventing crime against so many museums, galleries and collections and to further support you this guide has been published.

It is important to modernise and to use new technology, where affordable, to protect our historic heritage.

This guide sets out to raise awareness of the principles of threat, harm and risk and details resources that can be used to combat these aspects of crime.

Please continue to encourage an awareness in the community of the problems faced by your museum, gallery or collection in protecting its treasured locations and possessions.

Thank you for your good work.

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How to implement a basic crime prevention strategy

Safeguarding Museums & Collections



It is a sad fact that crimes take place at museums, with theft and criminal damage being the most common. Because your museum or gallery possesses desirable artefacts or artwork, it would be advisable to review your security, carry out necessary maintenance and upgrade where needs be.

Museum curators, staff and visitors alike can sadly all be affected by crime.

INTRODUCTION

This document offers advice and guidance on how to reduce crime in museums and galleries. It also seeks to signpost you to a range of available resources to help develop strategies that reduce risk of crime. It is invaluable to every person who has a responsibility for collections, historic buildings and sites. Its aim is to provide helpful advice to help deter crimes from happening.

In dealing with any risk of crime, it is important to consider the purpose of the building or site and its effectiveness in achieving that purpose. There is no doubt that a museum, collection or gallery which is used by the public and cared for by its staff and communities, imparts a strong message to any criminal.

Every indication of use throughout the week, as a place of interest or study, will serve to reinforce this message. A museum that is constantly used is far less likely to be the victim of casual vandalism, theft or burglary.

The purpose of this document is not to create a fortress. However, the use of locks and bolts in a positive sense and as part of an overall risk management strategy is essential to protect the heritage.

The role of risk management and security in protecting collections from theft is also enshrined in the **Arts Council England Museum Accreditation Strategy**, where museums are required to produce a risk assessment of security arrangements (see ACE Accreditation Standard, Section 3 (2019):

https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Accreditation_Guidance_Mar_2019_0.pdf



RESOURCES – FINDING THE INFORMATION YOU NEED

There is a wide range of resources available to support the advice covered in this guidance. Key resources include:

➤ **The Museum Security Toolkit:**

<https://collectionstrust.org.uk/resource/the-museum-security-toolkit/>

This toolkit helps you to consider the security activities in your organisation, to integrate buildings and collections security into your policies and procedures, and to ensure security is built into your operational practice.

➤ **The Security Audit:**

<https://collectionstrust.org.uk/resource/the-security-audit/>

This guide helps you to conduct a security audit of your measures to protect your collections and buildings from fire, theft, flood and damage.

Security in Museums, Archives and Libraries: A Practical Guide:

<http://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=5&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKewjWo42lz6vmAhVrVBUIHZd6BE8QFjAEgQIAxAE&url=http%3A%2F%2F326gtd123dbk1xdkdm489u1q.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2F2016%2F11%2FSecurity-in-Museums-Archives-and-Libraries-A-Practical-Guide.pdf&usg=AOvVaw3S45HTekdgo1TrEQIxxHAW>

This useful all-round guide covers all the basics of museum security to protect collections and buildings from criminal activities such as theft, damage, terrorism and wider risks such as flood and fire.

➤ **Security of Buildings and Perimeters:** <https://collectionstrust.org.uk/resource/buildings-and-perimeters/>

This is a short practical guide outlining the key procedures for securing buildings and perimeters to prevent theft and damage to collections.

➤ **Security in Museums and Galleries: Access to Collections:**

<https://collectionstrust.org.uk/resource/access-to-collections/>

This practical guide covers security in relation to public access and storage.

➤ **Security and Working with Contractors:** <https://collectionstrust.org.uk/resource/security-and-working-with-contractors/>

This practical guide helps you to plan for security measures during contractor works. As well as risk of theft it also covers other risks from activities such as hot works and poor working practices.

➤ **Reporting and Recording Security Incidents:** <https://collectionstrust.org.uk/resource/reporting-and-recording-security-incidents/>

This guide outlines how to train staff, record and report security incidents.

In addition you will find a wide range of additional resources available on the Collections Trust website (www.collectionstrust.org.uk) that provides more detail on specific security specifications for everything from windows and locks to CCTV and alarm systems.

CRIME PREVENTION STRATEGY

We need to support museums, galleries and collections with the development of an overall crime prevention strategy for their buildings and contents.

Risk analysis

The first task should be awareness of the risks your organisation may be subjected to.

You should work through this document to produce and implement a number of recommendations.

THE PROBLEMS FACING A MUSEUM, GALLERY OR COLLECTION

The most important first step in managing the crime risk is to become fully acquainted with the risks as they relate to your organisation. This includes developing an appreciation of the following factors:

1. **Crime trends and threats.** Learning about similar offences and crime trends in your locality. Make contact with your local and national museums groups, Police or Neighbourhood Watch.

2. **Prevalence and timing.** The fact that certain crimes are more prevalent at particular times of the year. For instance, criminal damage is more frequent during school holidays when children tend to have more time to themselves. Exhibitions can attract a higher volume of visitors, with an increased footfall, and during these times, sadly, crime can increase, whether that be theft from those visiting or criminal damage or theft affecting your museum or gallery and its contents.

3. **The market value of items under threat.** The marketable nature of property belonging to your museum or gallery; i.e. How much, in cash terms, the property may realise in open sale? For instance when items are of a precious metal or stone this may well be what the criminal is conscious of - what is its scrap value? – not necessarily the marketable resale value of the object. Are your collections particularly 'collectable' with economic and fashion drivers making theft more attractive (i.e. rhino horn, jade etc.)?

4. **Easy crime or hard crime?** The ease with which property may be stolen. For instance, freestanding art objects, pickpocketing, theft of charity or donation boxes, theft of bags, handbags, phones and tablets. Even heavy safes can be stolen, if criminals have plenty of time to steal them.

5. **Device reality.** The vulnerability of security devices. Many older safes are easily forced open in situ. Locks generally need to be substantial and even then, are only as effective as the doors and frames to which they are attached.

6. **Opportunity and temptation.** The types of activities undertaken by thieves. Most will be prepared to search all nooks and crannies. Many opportunists do this on the assumption that every locked door conceals something of value. Additionally, thieves will quickly and efficiently force locks to gain access or climb over internal partitions.

7. **Destructive potential.** The vulnerability of items to criminal damage and arson. The likelihood of children throwing stones at windows may depend on the availability of suitable 'ammunition'. Arson is more likely when combustible items are left lying about or when intruders find matches, cans of fuel for lawn mowers etc.

Summary.

The most common recorded offences committed against museums, galleries and collections are criminal damage and theft.



THE FIRST LINE OF DEFENCE - THE PERIMETER

Factors to be specifically considered are as follows:

- 1. The criminal's first impression.** The first impression afforded by hedges, gates, etc. is vitally important. A well-cared for appearance is not only daunting to the opportunist thief but also engenders a feeling of pride and wellbeing within your community. These factors contribute to crime prevention and encourage passers-by to be more vigilant.
- 2. Psychological barriers.** Although it is not feasible to totally secure a perimeter, people can be encouraged to use only designated entrances and footpaths by maintaining a substantial perimeter barrier. Not only does this make for a more orderly approach, but attention is more likely to be drawn to people in unpaved areas. Certainly, any person - up to no good- will feel more ill at ease.
- 3. Vehicle access.** Is it possible to prevent vehicles getting close to museum buildings? This helps to deter criminals planning to carry away heavy objects such as lead from roofs or large items.
- 4. Neighbourhood watchfulness.** Natural surveillance by passers-by and local residents serves to prevent crime and should be facilitated wherever possible by ensuring hedges, walls, etc. are no more than four feet above the level of adjoining roads and paths. Tell your community to help keep a look out. Encourage people to contact the police immediately if they see any suspicious activity.

Hedges: Hedges should be thick and difficult to penetrate. Choose something like blackthorn, hawthorn, hedging rose, holly or berberis as these have the added advantage of thorns. Privet, yew, laurel etc. can also be effective. They should be regularly trimmed and maintained at a height which will allow vision from adjoining properties and roads.

Walls: Stone or brick walls should be regularly inspected and maintained. Damage should be repaired, and any graffiti removed as soon as possible. Any damage that is left for long periods indicates that nobody cares and encourages more of the same.

Gates: Gates should be properly maintained at all times and, where possible, be self-closing. Double gates and those wide enough to allow access by vehicles should be locked when not in use and at night. Locking mechanisms should be well maintained and any padlocks close-shackled to prevent attack by bolt cutters. Similarly any chains should be substantial, and preferably of high tensile steel. It is equally important that gates cannot be removed from their hinges. Many are manufactured to prevent this but otherwise you should burr over the top of the hinge pin or weld on a piece of metal.

Trees: Trees can obstruct natural surveillance and can also be used as cover by criminals, as well as encouraging your organisation's open ground to be used as a play area by children. Where possible, branches should be cut from the main trunk to a height of at least five feet from the ground to maintain maximum vision and discourage climbing activities.

Sheds and outbuildings: Particular factors to be considered in respect of sheds are as follows:

- Wooden sheds should not be used to store items of value such as power tools, lawnmowers or heaters.
- Outbuildings should always be kept locked with an approved security class padlock and windows obscured to conceal contents.
- Other tools such as spades, ladders, wheelbarrows and wheelie bins can often be used by the criminal. A spade makes an effective lever with which to prize off doors or lids from chests, and ladders provide access to roofs and windows. These items should be locked away. Where this is not possible in the case of ladders, they should be stored on their side, locked to secure fixtures with close shackle padlocks and heavy-duty chains, or raw bolted to a solid brick-built wall. Wheelie bins can be used as a ladder or a means of conveyance, please ensure you either lock them away or lock them together or securely.
- Fuel for lawnmowers, etc. should not be kept on property. As previously described, offences of arson are far more likely when opportunist intruders actually find, in situ, the means to commit them.

Car parks: Consideration of barriers, gates, CCTV or ANPR cameras to combat below where possible:

- Vehicle break-ins for sat navs or personal / valuable items
- Theft from car park machines
- Meeting places for anti-social behaviour, fly tipping or dumping cars.

Outside shelters, seating areas: Some museums and galleries have outside areas for picnics, recreation or storytelling, sadly these areas can be used outside operating hours for anti-social behaviour, substance misuse or graffiti. Please consider designing out these crime types with the suggestions in this document.



THE MUSEUM BUILDING - EXTERIOR

Please be mindful of museum buildings, check if they are listed, scheduled or protected before you fix any items to historic buildings or structures - if you're unsure check with Historic England, Local Authority Planning Department or relevant advisory body.

Roof and fall pipes: Access to the roof is often relatively easy. Anti-climb paint can be applied to fall pipes starting not less than eight feet above ground level. This type of paint does not dry and is very slippery. Non-impale anti climb devices can also be fitted to fall pipes above this height. Ensure you advertise the fact that you have used anti-climb paint on your fall pipes, as it is required by law and will also be a good deterrent. Roof materials can also be painted or coated with a bituminous compound which will deter theft. Fixed ladders should have the first rung well above the height of an average person and a section of at least five feet should be protected by a padlocked, hinged metal cover.

One crime associated with heritage buildings is the theft of lead flashing from the roof. Unless regular checks are made, you may never know (until it rains) that it has been stolen. If replacement or repair is necessary, look to other materials that have no resale value and will do the job as efficiently, if not better, however consultation with Historic England and the local planning department conservation officers is essential in discussing changes to roofing materials in listed buildings? Low level roofs can also present problems. Non-impale roller devices can be fitted to deter the criminal or vandal and deny access. These must be fitted well out of reach to prevent accidental injury. The same applies to parapets - again anti-climb paint can be used. In respect of anti-climb paint, there are a few points to note:

- Prior to treatment, all surfaces should be thoroughly cleaned to remove all loose rust, scale and dirt.
- If it is used on an absorbent material, e.g. brick, stone or concrete, a sealer should first be applied.
- The paint should be applied at least an eighth of an inch thick.
- Periodic renewal may be required in an area where dust and leaves blow.

Cellars: Wherever, possible, access to cellars should only be via one entrance and this should be within the building. All other entrances should be permanently sealed - either bricked up or covered with metal plates fixed internally.

Where this is not possible, flaps and doors should be secured internally by bars and padlocks. Any retained entrance to a cellar should be given special attention with good quality frames and five-lever deadlocks.

External doors: Doors offer the preferred means of entry to a criminal. Every other means, (windows, through the roof, etc.) are alternatives when a door is not an option. Please note that, with other forced entries, the criminal is more likely to leave forensic evidence which can be used to effect a later arrest.

Large items stolen from museums are usually removed via a door. It is equally important to ensure that, when locked, doors cannot be opened from the inside. Mortice deadlocks are the most effective means of ensuring this.

All doors should be substantially made, ideally of solid hardwood or solid hardcore construction with strong hinges and effective frames. The strength of a door is only as good as its frame, hinges and locking system. Any slight movement in the door structure or in the hinge fittings renders the door insecure and should be rectified immediately. Again, good maintenance not only improves physical security but also acts as a deterrent.

Additional and alternative door security can include steel roller shutters and expanding steel gates.

Locks should be thief-resistant mortice deadlocks to the appropriate British Standards. Many old locks are inadequate, with relatively simple internal mechanisms. If you wish to retain use of ancient locks, additional secure mortice locks should be fitted.

Keys: Keys should never be left in locks, and neither should they be hidden to allow access by those -in the know-. This has never been effective, particularly with the modern criminal who is willing to put a good deal of work into planning and committing his or her next crime. The answer is to have as few keys as possible, an up to date register of key holders and to ensure that these are always kept in the possession of named, responsible people and where necessary signed in and out.

Windows: As well as doors, windows are also a point of entry for criminals who wish to break in. Windows are also regularly subject to damage, either accidental; (i.e. stones thrown up by grasscutters, etc.) or criminal.

Protection against burglary takes the form of welded mesh or expanded metal grilles on iron frames, fitted to the window and bolted securely or built into the masonry, additional steel roller shutters, collapsible gates or grilles and secondary glazing.

Another alternative is to use additional internal barriers of laminated or toughened glass set into similar well secured frames. These are more aesthetically pleasing than grilles but are more expensive and will probably not offer the same level of protection or deterrence. It may be possible to put transparent plastic panels over the outsides of valuable windows to stop stone-throwing from damaging them.

External lighting: External lighting of the museum not only improves the appearance of your building and community but also acts as an excellent deterrent to the criminal. No thief likes to be bathed in light and the more light available, the longer period it is switched on and the greater the likelihood of natural surveillance, then the more effective will be its deterrent value.

The cheapest form of lighting for these purposes is high pressure sodium units which take a little time to -warm up- when first switched on. It is possible to fit electronic timers, but these require adjustment throughout the year according to daylight changes and in the event of power failures. An alternative is the installation of photo-electric switches which operate automatically and ensure operation regardless of 'lighting up' times.

CCTV should not be used as a substitute for other crime prevention methods. Good physical security (locks and bolts) AND a professionally installed alarm system will almost always offer more protection to your museum or gallery than a CCTV system.

A correctly set up CCTV camera can provide valuable evidence to the police. However, evidential images must meet very strict standards.

Great care must be taken when choosing the camera, lens, recording capability and location. Always seek the advice of an expert before going ahead and consider professional installation instead of doing it yourself.

Since clocks are altered twice a year, please always check time date on CCTV etc., are correct, and with all the horrid weather of late autumn and falling leaves, regularly check to ensure that cameras and other electronic devices have not been obscured or compromised.

Automatic detectors: Another form of switching is the Passive Infrared (PIR) automatic sensor which detects the presence of any person approaching the building. These are very cheap to purchase and install.

The great advantage is that they only operate when approached by an individual, suddenly bathing the area in light and indicating the presence of anybody in the vicinity. Additionally, connections can be made to adjoining properties from the same sensor switch, thereby operating lights (or alarm buzzers) remotely.

The actual siting of sensors and lights is most important, deserving much consideration to protect as many vulnerable areas as possible at minimum cost.

Remember that lamps used for these purposes need to light up instantly, which renders sodium lamps inappropriate. However, switches may be set to allow lights to remain operative for predetermined, limited periods, thus reducing running costs. The use of lighting is an important issue in effective security of a building and considerable thought needs to be given. Permanent lighting and sensor switching can be used in conjunction with each other to afford different types of cost-effective protection.

Letterboxes: These can sadly sometimes be targeted by the criminal, so please also consider your security here. Letterboxes can sometimes be very close to inner door handles, and if this is the case please consider the location and if a mesh cage could be placed around the inner box flap.

External Displays: Please consider antique artefacts such as farming equipment and tools that are on display outside, these can sometimes be used as tools to commit crime.

Refreshment: Restaurants and cafés within museums and galleries should also consider the value of food and drink that is kept on site, ensuring that it is securely locked away, as these items are also highly desirable.

Tills: Please also consider leaving tills open with accompanying signage stating the fact that no money is held in the tills overnight.

Shop and Sale: Items for sale from local artists can be attractive to thieves due to their value. Please don't place price tags on these, but simply add a note saying enquire within or at till for price. In addition, please don't leave stone ornaments, sculptures, bronze, brass or lead figures, flowerpots, flowers or plants outside after closing.



THE MUSEUM BUILDING – INTERIOR

Overarching security considerations in this case are:

Total security within the building needs to be a very high standard to protect the property stored there. This would involve large safe areas and alarm systems.

Levels of security inside the building should be decided on realistically, having regard to the value of property to be protected. The effects of its being permanently lost, (regardless of any insurance cover) and the availability of alternative means of storing property.

Items of exceptional value: The term 'exceptional value' relates not only to the actual marketable value but also its value to the community and its rarity as a surviving artefact from our past.

Alternatives for storage include larger and national museums, records offices or bank vaults. Copies can be made if the wish is to retain a daily connection with the item or if it is needed for daily use. It is always possible to -borrow- the actual items back for special occasions, exhibitions, etc. This however may appear inconvenient and even -second best-.

Maintaining a good Collections Management System (CMS) will support you in understanding the objects in your collection, the materials they are made from, which objects may be of interest to thieves, or at risk from fire and flood. It is additionally essential in the event of crime as a record of objects stolen or damaged. You need to hold basic inventory level information about the objects in your collection, including objects which belong to your museum, objects on loan to you, and objects left by members of the public for identification. If you have this information to hand you can then prioritise which objects may be currently at risk and need for improved protection.

Inventories: It is also important to create an inventory of all items in your museum. Anything of value that can be moved should be included, even those things that you may think are of so little value that no one would steal them. Your knowledge may not be as good as the criminals. Measure and photograph items accurately and record all signs of damage such as scratches, dents, splits, tears and any other blemish and imperfection.

It is the meticulous noting of these details that can turn a common item into one that is unique and readily identifiable. These records should be kept in one book which should be stored in a safe place. Periodically the items should be positively checked by the responsible person. Any losses should be immediately reported to the Police. Any items purchased or presented to you should immediately be added to the contents of the inventory book.

Exhibitions: The layout of your museum, exhibitions, exhibits and routes of travel will be crucial in providing the best possible security. Such design should ideally consider footfall at capacity and allow for emergency situations.

If certain exhibits are of a security concern consideration should be given to:

- Lines of sight for invigilators, attendants and curators.
- Designing out nooks and crannies, and places to hide.
- The placement of strategic obstacles steering footfall by design.
- Paintings, drawings and similar objects should be secured to walls using mirror plates and security screws and given consideration with regards to alarms and focused CCTV.
- Ideally exhibits of concern should not be placed too close to exits.
- Strategically placed items on exhibits, seats for example to stop people sitting down for a picture.
- Fishing line between exhibits.
- Bells on exhibits.
- Case alarms.

Display Cases: Display cases are one of the last obstacles for criminals. Valuable artefacts are often presented inside them and allow many visitors and experts alike to get up close. Considerations should be made around the siting of these cases, ideally not too close to fire exits or exits, alarming, securing the cases and having the appropriate CCTV and line of sight coverage.

Ensure cases are not easily accessible, where possible glass fronts should not easily slide up allowing access, where they are screwed, try to have the screws out of sight.

Display cases should ideally comply with set standards for museum security. More information can be found here:

- **Security Specification for Attack Resistant Display Cases:**
<https://collectionstrust.org.uk/resource/security-specification-attack-resistant-display-cases/>
- **Security in Museums: A Specifiers' Guide to Display Cases:**
<https://collectionstrust.org.uk/resource/security-in-museums-a-specifiers-guide-to-display-cases/>

Invigilation, front of house: “The Power of Hello” (naturally where safe to do so): To someone up to no good a simple hello means they have been seen. Overt security and letting people know they have been seen is crucial, looking out for odd behaviour is something we can all do, if it doesn't look or feel right, either challenge or report it.

Substitute items: Plastic or wooden replicas of valuable items may be made very cheaply and are surprisingly realistic, but it is always advisable to indicate to visitors that these items are copies as it is important to warn off the would-be criminal at an early stage. Wooden replacements which are not intended as replicas are also as effective as their expensive counterpart, but far less vulnerable to theft. Both replicas and cheaper replacements enable the real article to be stored elsewhere and brought out only when needed for special occasions.

Safes: Safes vary in price and effectiveness and it is especially important to differentiate between those produced with the sole purpose of protecting documents against fire and those which are designed to protect property from theft. The former can generally be opened in situ and offers little protection for your valuables.

The most effective safe is one set into and firmly fixed in a brick wall or in the floor. This is because it cannot be attacked via the sides or back and additionally cannot be carried away. The lock should be either a combination lock, or a key and combination set. The combination number should be periodically altered to avoid compromise and should never be based upon well-known numbers such as postcodes, telephone numbers or dates of birth, as is frequently the case.

As few people as possible should have access to the safe keys and combination, and care should be taken when the safe is opened to ensure nobody can read the combination and also to ensure the contents cannot then be stolen by leaving it unlocked, even for a moment.

Where the property to be stored is too large for a wall or floor safe, the free-standing type is necessary. A common misconception is that these are too heavy to be carried away when, in fact thieves are prepared and have the ability to do this with relative ease. It is therefore important that these are bolted to the floor and also to the walls wherever possible. Remember, walls provide excellent protection to the rear and sides of a safe.

A safe over one ton in weight is probably incapable of being moved any substantial distance by criminals and it may, therefore be unnecessary to additionally bolt it to the floor or walls. However, this rarely involves little additional expense and greatly enhances security. It is important that it should not be within a public area of the church where it will attract attention. A vestry or similar area not open to the public is better and some churches have created a secure area which should be kept locked at all times when not in use.

Collection boxes: Theft from and of collection or donation boxes is a common crime but is also one of the easiest to prevent. The person who steals these boxes generally acts on impulse because the opportunity is presented. The following advice is given to protect your gifts:

- The box should be firmly bolted or fixed by heavy duty chain.
- Empty the boxes on a regular basis. Do not allow more than a few pounds to accumulate. Consider placing foam material in the box, this can cover up the noise of coinage.
- Fix a sign to the effect the box is emptied regularly.

Intruder alarms: Intruder alarms are often dismissed out of hand as being too expensive, too much trouble and inappropriate for use in a museum or gallery. It is strongly suggested that this option be considered

in detail, for the following reasons:

- The presence of an alarm system is often sufficient to deter the would-be criminal even before they begin to plan the crime.
- An alarm substantially reduces the time available to the criminal to commit the crime.
- There are circumstances in which it would prove difficult to adequately protect a building by physical security alone. In these cases an alarm can be the only effective deterrent.
- A good quality alarm system is surprisingly cheap and very cost effective. Often the cost is less than that of other security devices.
- Systems can be designed to the requirements of individual buildings or areas within to reduce the instances of false calls and minimise cost.

Alarm systems have various means of activation, from making/breaking electronic circuits on doors and windows, to sophisticated but surprisingly inexpensive movement detectors. Warning can be by relaying to central monitoring stations or by audible systems fixed on the premises or in adjacent properties. Alarm systems can sometimes entitle you to a reduction in insurance premiums. Please check with your insurance company before you go ahead as they may wish to make certain stipulations.

Additional guidance on fire and security alarm systems can be found here:

Museum Security: Fire and Intruder Alarm Systems:

<https://collectionstrust.org.uk/resource/fire-and-intruder-alarm-systems/>



Inner secure areas: Generally speaking, the public area of any museum should be limited to areas that can be viewed from any other part of the museum. This means that one ‘official’ (i.e. invigilator, guide, reception staff etc.) is able to view all visitors and also, parties of visitors are within sight of each other at all times.

All other areas should be kept locked and where necessary alarmed separately, it is important that security be sufficient to deny access to people who are prepared to force internal doors or climb over partitions, for example into stores.

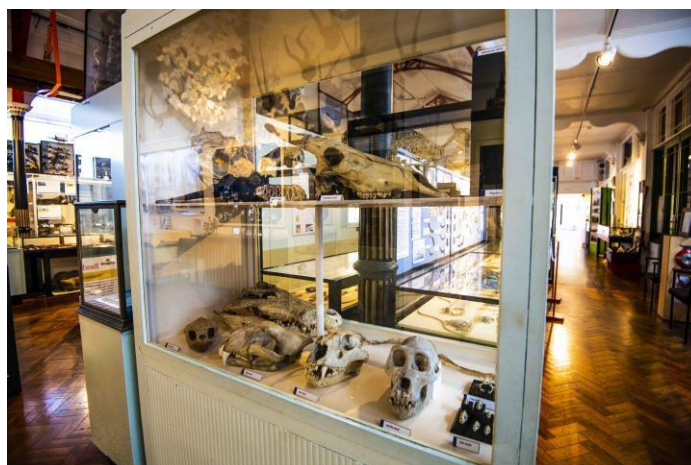
This creation of internal secure areas provides the opportunity to store items of medium value such as kettles, heaters and vacuum cleaners, additional security within these areas may be necessary to hold other valuables such as bags, handbags and personal staff valuables. It is also possible to alarm these inner areas at little cost.

There will always be a need for regular security assessments, to ensure procedures are still effective, and security measures are well maintained, understood and monitored. For Museum Accreditation, a security review must be reassessed every five years and museums are asked to provide an action plan of security improvements or measures as part of developmental improvements. So there is a good accreditation reason for security being on the list of priorities for museum operations.

Panic alarms: These can be installed in the building for the protection of staff within, or in the immediate vicinity of the museum or gallery. The alarm has to be manually operated by the potential victim by pressing a button. This will activate a silent alarm, which will be sent to a police station as a priority.

LED lighting, although this form of lighting has been around for a number of years the level of light quality has greatly improved. There are now a wide range of LEDs available – recessed, linear, track, mounted spotlights, individual spotlights, retrofit.

Large panoramic or convex mirrors for a better view, also a great deterrent as the would be criminal will likely see your reflection in them too.



OTHER SECURITY ASPECTS

The foregoing chapters of this document have emphasised the level of crime risk and how this may be managed by implementing, predominately, physical security precautions. This section will deal with other measures that may be taken to enhance security.

Property marking: Property marking is an internationally accepted means of rendering your property identifiable both to yourself and the police.

This option may not be available to you for artefacts or artwork. Object marking by its nature needs to be removable to as not to damage the integrity of the object itself and its historical value and significance.

In the United Kingdom, this is effected by using the postcode of the premises to which the property belongs, together with the name or part of the name. There will be many other objects, for example maintenance equipment and electronic devices that this form of security can be applied to.

The purpose of marking property in this manner is to ensure that it can be identified and returned to you after being stolen, photographs and descriptions are useful too.

The marking of property also has a strong deterrent effect and it is always advisable to ensure the property bears signs of having been marked. It is also useful to place small notices in your museum to the effect that all your property is marked. Casual visitors may not notice these, but the potential criminal will.

Property marking is a quick, do it yourself task, costing you very little. The following methods may be used:

Ultraviolet marker pens: This uses a cheap ultraviolet, fibre tip pen, obtainable from most large stationers. The mark is invisible to the naked eye until viewed under an ultraviolet lamp. The pen can be used on any porous material such as wooden furniture, vestments or books. It can also be used on certain plastics and on unglazed or semi-glazed pottery. It is advisable to mark on the most porous area where it is likely to be handled least and also where it is least likely to be exposed to direct sunlight.

Sunlight has the effect of causing such marks to fade after a period of about eighteen months. It is therefore advisable to re-mark property so exposed after this period.

The advantage of this type of marking is that the criminal is unable to see it and therefore will not take steps to remove it. It also does not affect any resale value and for this reason is suitable for electrical goods and other items you may wish to sell.

The main disadvantage is that it is not visible which limits the deterrent effect. The thief knows he will have no problems in selling it on to innocent purchasers.

Engraving: Marks can be engraved by use of a diamond-tipped pen, other sharp pointed tools or by the use of an electric engraver. A stencil is often used to ensure neatness when the mark can only be placed in an obvious position. Stencils also allow relatively small lettering which is not always the case when performing freehand. Any metal or plastic items can be marked, and the value is not affected if done properly. Glassware can also be engraved but you are advised to consult a professional in this case.

Ceramic markers: Ceramic or titanium pens can be obtained from specialist stores and are effective on ceramic surfaces. Marks have the appearance of faint pencil marks and are impossible to remove without damaging the ceramic surface.

Permanent ink marking: Where appropriate, the use of permanent ink markers is very effective. Ordinary marker pens which have a solvent based ink and are advertised as 'Permanent' are ideal for use in marking items where a fairly large visible mark is unimportant, and particularly on items that are porous.

Forensic marking: This is a fairly new concept which has shown excellent results in crime reduction. It is particularly suitable for marking heavy items such as garden tools, fuel bowsers, roof lead and lightning conductors. Many different types of product are available for a range of items including specialist grease and dyes.

Branding: Branding of wooden or plastic items is a possibility and is very effective. Soldering irons are very effective on plastics and some woods but you are advised to practice first on similar materials.

Photographs / Videos: In addition to marking property you are advised to retain a permanent photographic record of it. This will enable photographs as well as descriptions to be circulated in trade and police publications and also assist in later identification.

Photographing property may be undertaken by a keen amateur or by specialists in this service. Items should be photographed against a neutral background with a ruler alongside to indicate actual size. Each exposure should contain only one item and a backup of the SD card containing the entry should also be retained for safety. Wherever possible, hallmarks and other identification mark should be photographed.

Professional descriptions: Professional descriptions of furniture and ornaments are also very useful. Initial circulation of stolen property to other police forces rely heavily on accurate descriptions. This could come from your documentation records, making it essential that good documentation is maintained on each object in a collection.

Using the community: Reference has already been made to the fact that crime against museums hit at the heart of the community and that community pride can be engendered by ensuring a well-cared for appearance. These same factors have, in some areas, formed the basis of ensuring the museum is regularly watched over by persons living in the immediate vicinity.

Special risks: There may be special risks associated with your building at certain times of the year. For instance, exhibitions, when precious objects may be in the building and on display, there may as a result, be more money in your building. Your biggest asset is constant public surveillance.



PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED IN THE CASE OF BURGLARY OR THEFT

Confronting the Criminal

We suggest that you DO NOT confront criminals whom you disturb. The reasons for this are twofold:

1. You may put your safety and/or the safety of others at risk.
2. You may exceed your legal powers and unlawfully detain a person.

If you see criminal activity

It is common-sense to use the nearest available telephone, either landline or mobile - dial 999. If you are in a safe position to get a description of the offender, try to do so. We have talked to the police and they say:

‘Remember, brief simple details are the best. Male or female, approximate age, height, build, colours and style of clothing. Is there anything that stands out about this person? Are there any accomplices? Is there a vehicle being used or parked nearby? If so, get the registration number, if you are unable to get this information note the type of vehicle, colour, part of registration number. If it is a van, is there any logo on the side or back? Which direction did either persons or vehicles go?’

Actions on discovering a crime

If you arrive at your building and find there has been a break-in, the best thing to do is to contact your local police. The police have advised that you should do nothing else until the arrival of an officer. Try not to move or touch areas have been disturbed, for forensics.

Remember – do not touch or clean anything so the police can preserve the scene of the crime. Do not even try to establish what has been stolen until a Police Officer says it is fine to enter. After the police have done their work at the scene, everything can then be put right.

What the Police will want to know

The police will likely try to establish the exact time and date of the offence and then speak to the last person to leave the premises intact, and the person first discovering the theft or break in.

They would be interested in the method of entry and the manner in which property is removed. Additionally they would require full descriptions of all property stolen, photographs if possible and values. They would be interested in any form of property marking that you have implemented.

The Police would likely then try to find out if anybody saw or heard anything suspicious.

To help protect your property, please take the above steps to prevent your property from being stolen.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

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