



Emergency

In the event of an emergency or disaster it is best to contact professional help to minimise damage to your collections.

- If you discover mold or pest activity, isolate the affected objects from the rest of your collection immediately by placing them in air-tight containers or wrapping them with plastic (polyethylene), completely sealing the package with tape. Seek professional help. Do not brush off mold as this can transfer the spores to surrounding objects (further spreading the damage) and mold spores are very harmful to our respiratory system. Never store items this way for any length of time.
- If there is a water leak or flood in the store, first stop the source of the water and check that it is safe to human health [not contaminated/sewage]. If safe to do so, evacuate objects from the affected area. Where objects are waterlogged, ensure the item is well supported during any movement as wet items are much more vulnerable to damage. Remove excess water with blotting paper or cloth and leave the item in an area of good ventilation but not under direct sunlight. Consult with conservators for advice on necessary treatment and care.

Emergency contact for museum professions

Contact the National Museum of Qatar in case of emergency

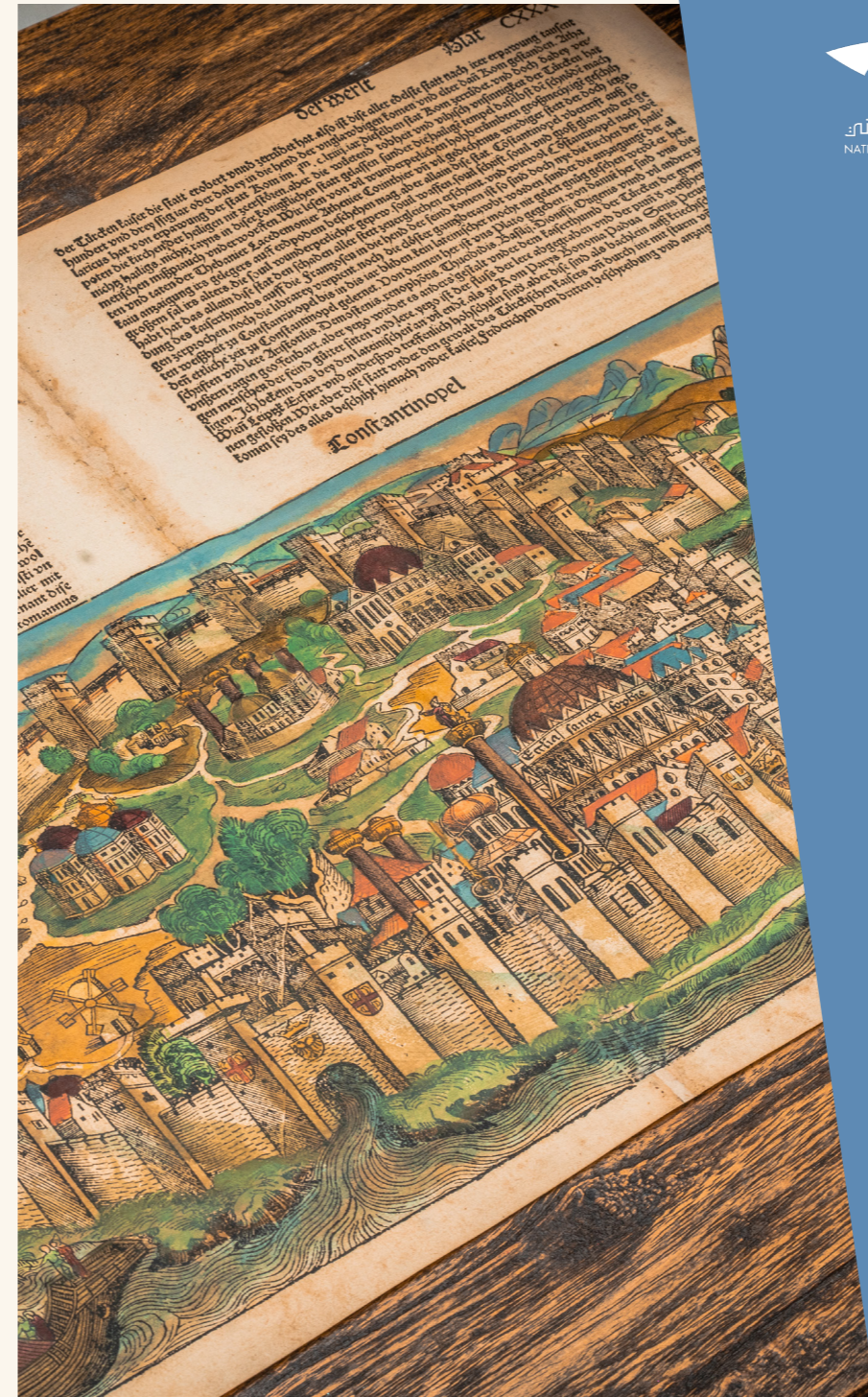
- informatio@qm.org.qa
- Tel: +974 4452 5555

Archival storage material suppliers

- **Preservation Equipment LTD (PEL)** preservationequipment.com
- **Gaylord Archival** gaylord.com
- **University Products** universityproducts.com
- **Talase** talasonline.com
- **Klug** klug-conservation.com
- **Conservation resources** conservationresources.com



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PRIVATE COLLECTION CARE





Private Collection Care

Good practice in storing and handling collections can prevent damage and extend their life span. These guidelines are commonly used in museums. They are modified to suit the local climate in Qatar and to be practical for home users.

Handling

Most serious damage to collections is caused by improper handling. This can result in loss of the in/tangible value of collections. Avoid unnecessary handling at all times and when handling is required, prepare in advance by eliminating potential hazards. Clean, careful and thoughtful handling is key to collection management. The guidelines below will help to prevent new damage from occurring and minimise future deterioration of your collections.

- Remove heavy/dangling jewellery or any belts that may scratch or snag at the surface of objects. Tie long hair back and avoid handling items in overly loose or long clothes.
- Always wash your hands or wear gloves when handling objects. It is particularly advisable to wear gloves when handling metal objects or photographs: nitrile/latex gloves are recommended. Make sure that the gloves are clean and turn them the right way out as soon as you take them off. Cotton gloves are discouraged as they reduce tactility and can catch on already damaged surfaces.
- Gloves are generally not worn when handling paper objects. Here, it is vital to ensure that hands are clean and avoid the use of lotions and/or perfumes. Oils from lotions and perfume can cause staining, local corrosion and lead to long term damage.

- Do not eat, drink or smoke around collections. Spillage, crumbs and smoke can cause serious and irreversible damage to objects.
- Write in pencil. Never use ink, ballpoint or marker pens near objects as accidents with these can stain the object and would be difficult to remove without further risk to it.
- Take a close look at collections before handling. Check the size, weight, construction and for the presence of loose/detached components, existing damage, repairs and vulnerable surfaces. Do not hold damaged or weakened areas. Identify all cracks, tears and broken areas before handling to avoid disturbing these any further.
- Always use both hands to support the weight of objects evenly. Flat and flexible objects such as paper and textiles need to be moved on a rigid support or tray slightly larger than the object itself.
- When an object is large and heavy, handle it with two or more people. Large paintings, furniture or framed works should be carried by at least 2 people, both using two hands; one beneath and one at the side. Make sure the areas you are holding are solid and stable. A padded trolley, tray or flat board can help reduce unnecessary strain on both you and the object.
- When moving objects within your house, plan your route. Remove any obstacles that are in the way and prepare the space where your object is to move to in advance. Do not place objects directly on the floor/ground. Place a clean cloth, tissue, plastic sheeting or foam blocks beneath them. This includes areas where you may need to put the item down temporarily [while opening doors].



Storage

A suitable environment [where humidity and temperature are managed] and the use of proper storage materials/methods can dramatically improve the longevity of collections.

1. Storage environment

- Constant humidity and temperature in a storage space throughout the year is important to maintain a collection in a stable condition. The ideal ranges are between 40-60% humidity and 17-24°C for most collections. The local climate, particularly high humidity, can lead to corrosion of metals and invite both mold and insect activity. Placing domestic dehumidifiers in a storage area during the Summer months can help reduce risks, but these must be emptied regularly.
- Do not place objects near windows and avoid direct sunlight on collections. Light damage is cumulative and irreversible. Exposure to light [both visible and ultraviolet], causes degradation of materials, in particular organics such as leather, textiles, paper and photographs. Light can cause bleaching, fading, yellowing and embrittlement. Curtains, blinds and UV filtering film (applied directly to windows) will minimise light exposure at source.
- Do not place objects under air-conditioning units. Condensation and water leaks from these units could lead to water staining and mold growth on collections. Regular cleaning and maintenance of the unit is important.
- Avoid storing objects directly on the floor, or against walls to minimise the risk of exposure to leaks and pest activity. Blocks can be placed under objects and bottom shelves should be avoided if they are in direct contact with the floor.

2. Storage materials and methods

- 'Acid free' materials [boxes and papers] are safest for storing historical objects. Acid free or archival means that lignin and other impurities have been removed. Clean, undyed and un-bleached cotton fabric can also be used to wrap/cover objects to protect them from both dust and light.
- Store collections in lidded boxes padded with archival materials such as acid free tissue to provide a buffer, block light and prevent unnecessary movement within the box.
- Clearly label storage boxes and units to minimise rummaging/handling of objects.
- Do not store objects in wooden closets or directly on wooden shelves/hangers. Acid off-gassing from the wood can permanently harm objects.
- Do not leave collections in commercial/office/plastic bags as these are not suitable and could lead to long-term damage including discolouration and mold growth.
- Allow your collection the space to 'breathe'. Overcrowding can cause deformation, compound creases and damage or crush vulnerable items at the bottom. Space also allows airflow which will minimise the risk of mold growth.
- Textiles and large paper items are most safely stored flat between acid free tissue in

storage units or archival boxes. This protects them from dust, light exposure, pest damage, transfer of stains and compounded creases.

- If an object is oversized [textiles in particular], it can be folded or rolled on a tube. Interleave layers/folds with acid free tissue to prevent sharp creases from forming, dye transfer and surface abrasion.
- Hanging artifacts is the least favourable storage method as it introduces a great deal of stress on very localised areas. Do not use staples, nails or screws and never clip or peg an item directly as this also introduces localized tension/stress to the object.

House keeping

Maintaining cleanliness and order in your storage space is key to collection care.

- Regular dusting will reduce the risk of surface damage. Allowed to settle long-term, dust can become acidic and permanently discolour the surface, leading to local staining and weakening of that area. Use only soft brushes and minimum vacuum suction. You can reduce the suction of your vacuum by covering the nozzle with several layers of net or sheer fabric so that only surface dirt is picked up.
- Never eat or drink in your storage space and keep these areas clean and debris-free. Dust and debris will attract pests which can destroy collections.
- Seasonal checks on objects and storage boxes is good practice for the prevention or early awareness of insect activity/infestation.

