



# National Galleries Scotland

## Damage and Loss Policy

### Version/Date

Senior Management Team: Collections approved this policy: 12<sup>th</sup> February 2014

### Principles

National Galleries Scotland is responsible for all the objects and groups of objects in its collections or in its care, and secures and protects them from damage or loss. To minimise the risk of damage or loss we carry out regular monitoring, and we have emergency plans and incident reporting procedures in place.

### Definitions

**Damage:** The deterioration of an object's condition, whether by environmental factors, accident, or deliberate action.

**Loss:** The effective end of an object's existence whether due to severe damage, theft, or other disaster/incident.

**Absolute loss:** The permanent end of an object's existence due to complete destruction, or where it is formally judged as impossible to salvage.

**Damage and loss management:** The response to the discovery of damage to or loss of any artwork for which NGS has a duty of care; taking steps to prevent damage and loss; and the recording of all related decisions and actions. These may inform the Risk Management policy.

### Legislation and ethics

The management of damage and loss is an essential component of evidence required for audit and accountability.

Relevant statutory requirements and codes of ethics include:

- National Heritage Act 1980 Section 16 (as amended by the Museums and Galleries Act 1992)
- National Heritage (Scotland) Act 1985
- British Standards Institute: PAS 197, Code of Practice for Collections Management, 2009
- British Standards Institute: PAS 198, Specification for managing environmental conditions for cultural collections 2012
- British Standards Institute: PD:5454: 2012: Guide for the storage and exhibition or archival materials (2012)
- Collections Trust: Loss and Damages procedure (2009)
- Arts Council: Accreditation Guidelines (2012)
- Art Loss Register
- Museums Association: Code of Ethics for Museums 2008



- ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums 2013
- ICOM: Red List of Cultural Objects at Risk
- UK H&S Executive: Control of substances hazardous for Health (COSHH)

## **Standards**

This policy is part of the Collections Management set of policies that form a requirement of PAS197 and Spectrum as part of the UK Museum Accreditation Scheme.

## **Control measures**

NGS employs professionally qualified staff, and we have accredited training programmes to ensure the objects in our care are handled, stored and displayed safely and in ways that will reduce and eliminate risks of damage, theft or loss. We adhere to the GIS requirements for care and safety of collections and have security measures in place at all times.

We carry out regular audits to ensure that any damage, deterioration or environmental problems are quickly detected and acted on.

If an incident occurs we produce a standardised report to document it and to prompt action.

We have a Disaster Plan, which is regularly updated, with related training to ensure all staff are familiar with their roles and responsibilities in the event of an emergency, and we have a list of objects that are prioritised for evacuation if necessary.

We record any changes to the condition, status or location of an object that results from damage, disaster or loss, and we hold all our records centrally and securely on an industry-standard database (MIMSY), which has an offsite backup in case of emergency. Only authorised persons can maintain object records.

## **Related policies**

The following are related NGS policies:

- Object Entry and Pre-Entry Policy
- Location and Movement Control Policy
- Art Handling and Technical Assessment Policy
- Conservation and Care Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Insurance and Indemnity Management Policy
- Physical Audit Policy
- Record Audit Policy
- Storage Management Policy
- Object Exit and Despatch Policy