National Galleries Scotland
Damage and Loss

Principles
National Galleries Scotland is responsible for all the objects and groups of objects in its Collection 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:

- Criminal Damage Act 1971
- National Heritage (Scotland) Act 1985
- National Heritage Act 1980 Section 16 (as amended by the Museums and Galleries Act 1992)
- UK H&S Executive: Control of substances hazardous for Health (COSHH) 2002
- British Standards Institute: PAS 197, Code of Practice for Collections Management, 2009
- Collections Trust: Loss and Damages procedure 2009
- British Standards Institute: PAS 198, Specification for managing environmental conditions for cultural collections 2012
- Arts Council: Accreditation Guidelines 2012
- Museums Association: Code of Ethics for Museums 2015
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.

BS EN16893 Conservation of Cultural Heritage 2018.

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 always adhere to the GIS requirements for display, care and safety of collections and have security measures in place.

We carry out regular audits to ensure that any damage, deterioration or environmental problems are quickly detected and acted on. Progress reports are submitted regularly to Leadership Team: Collection meetings.

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

We have an NGS Disaster Contingency 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. Risk assessments are prepared and documented for all emergency collection moves.

The digitisation programme (on-going) captures images of each object for identification, documentation and research.

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:

01 Object Entry
02 Acquisition and Accessioning
03 Location and Movement Control
04 Inventory
05 Cataloguing
06 Object exit
07 Loans in (borrowing objects)
08 Loans out (lending objects)
09 Documentation Planning
10 Condition Checking and Technical Assessment
11 Collections Care and Conservation
12 Valuation
13 Insurance and indemnity
Also the following NGS documents

NGS Business Continuity Plan
NGS Carbon Management Programme 2018-2022
NGS Collection Care Framework
NGS Collections Development Framework
NGS Disaster Contingency Plan
NGS Estates Management Strategy
NGS Environmental Management Programme 2018-2022
NGS Public Programme Framework
NGS Risk Management Policy
NGS Research Policy and Framework

For NGS Rights and Reproduction Policies: SEE NGS Trading Company Policies