



Security in museums and galleries: working with contractors

The presence of contractors on a museum's site raises a number of security issues, including:

- the threat of fire from Hot Works
- the threat of loss from either the contractors, or from other people who are assumed to be contractors
- the threat of damage to the building or to the collections from poor working practices

Selection of contractors needs to be undertaken with care, not only for their skills and experience, but also to ensure that they are from established organisations working to approved standards. Before a contractor is allowed onto the premises, a contract or other written agreement must be issued to cover all aspects of the work to be undertaken. This should include an induction briefing, regular reminders on other routine functions.

The areas of access should also be clearly defined and enforced. Contractors should be identifiable as should all staff in the venue

The opportunity and agreement to carry out random checks on all contract personnel, together with their vehicles, will help prevent collections or other material being illegally removed. A contractual right of search will support this procedure. Contractors should not be allowed the same freedom of movement as regular museum staff, no matter how well known. Prior notification is required to minimise disruption to routine and operations. Details of facilities, such as car parking on site, toilet and welfare spaces, arrival, departure and task duration are essential and must be disseminated to all departments concerned or affected.

When employing contractors:

- appoint and know who is managing your contract in your venue
- ensure the contractor are well managed and know who their manager is
- ensure there are no unacceptable risks to collections whether in store, being handled or in transit
- be prepared to halt the work should there be a breach of procedures

Isolation of Fire Detection/Suppression Equipment

Where it is necessary for a contractor or member of staff to isolate fire detection/ suppression equipment, a procedure is required that ensures that the risk is reduced.

A permit should be required for all isolations of fire detection or suppression equipment which may become necessary. This may be occasioned by work on the equipment itself, such as the re-siting detectors, or building work which may be going on in the vicinity and is liable to produce false alarms as a result, for example, of dust.

Example permit for isolation of fire detection equipment/suppression equipment

PERMIT NO.

Part A

Name of Manager requesting isolation
Office telephone number
Department/Site address
Room or area of work.....
Precise nature of the work.....
Date of proposed work.....
Equipment to be isolated.....

Please allow working days for the return of the authorised permit. A permit cannot be valid for more than one week.

Start date and time Finish date and time

If the permit is to run for more than one working day, have arrangements been made for isolation to be discontinued at the end of each shift? YES/NO

Name of Contractor/Operative carrying out the isolation
The Operative must be able to demonstrate competence in the type of work to be undertaken.

What patrol routine will be in place whilst the isolation is in force?

I have read the Fire Equipment Isolations Guidance Note, and certify that isolation is necessary for the operation detailed above. I also certify that all the fire precautions listed in the guidance note, and any special precautions listed below, will be adhered to.

Signature of Requesting Manager

I authorise the isolation detailed above, following the Requesting Manager's signed assurance of the precautions to be taken and subject to any special conditions detailed below.

Authorised Signature (Fire Safety Adviser)

Special Conditions

PART B

To be completed by the Requesting Manager when the fire equipment has been re-instated. I certify that all previously isolated equipment has now been reinstated, or replaced by new equipment as necessary.

Signature of Manager

The signed and completed original permit is to be returned to the Fire Safety Adviser as soon as the isolated equipment has been reinstated.

Hot Work

When a contractor is required to use flame or heat producing apparatus i.e. cutting, welding, burning, brazing, grinding, hot-air gun, blow lamps, portable heaters, this is referred to as 'hot work'.

- if hot work is expected to be carried out, the building Works Manager or supervising surveyor should inform the Security Office of the details
- a Hot Work Permit must be completed and issued to the person responsible for fire security.
- fire extinguishers must be made available for the contractors
- if required the Fire Alarm must be deactivated and smoke detectors masked to prevent the ingress of dust. This is known as 'isolation' and must be properly recorded
- on completion of the work all alarms must be fully reactivated and recorded again

On the completion of the work, at least one hour before the contractors depart, the area must be inspected for damage and to ensure nothing is left smouldering and the site is safe. Inspections may continue on an hourly basis for as long as necessary.

Example hot work permit

PERMIT NUMBER

PART A

Manager, requesting the work

Site address

Room/Area of work

Precise nature of work

Date of proposed work

Start time

Please allow working days for the return of the authorised permit. A permit cannot be valid for more than one day.

Finish time (planned) (actual)

Signature

Hot Work must cease two hours prior to the Fire Watcher leaving the site.

Name of Contractor/Operative carrying out the work

Name of trained Fire Watcher to be present

The Fire Watcher must carry a copy of their training certificates and syllabus, a photo-identity card and an authorised copy of the Hot Work Permit, and wear a reflective jerkin suitably marked.

I have read the Hot Work Guidance Notes, and certify that no alternative method of working is practicable for the operation described above. I also certify that all the fire precautions listed in the guidance note, and any special precautions listed below, will be adhered to.

Requesting Manager (Signature)

I authorise the work detailed above, following the Requesting Managers signed assurances of the precautions to be taken, and special conditions detailed below.

Fire, Health and Safety Officer (Signature)

Special Conditions:

PART B

To be completed by the Fire Watcher before commencement of Hot Work.

I certify that:

- I have examined the area where the work is to be carried out and I am satisfied that it is safe to commence the Hot Work.
- All hose reels, fire mains, detection systems and other fire equipment provided are working in a satisfactory condition.
- I have in my possession a permit for all isolations of the fire equipment which is required to complete the operation.
- I have inspected and placed portable fire fighting equipment adjacent to the work site.
- The Hot Work operative confirms that his heat-producing equipment is in good order and has been regularly serviced.

and that the following precautions have been taken within 15 metres of the work site:

- Floors have been swept clean of dust and combustible material.
- Combustible walls, floors and ceilings have been protected by sheets of non-combustible material.
- All gaps in walls/floors through which sparks could pass have been adequately fire-stopped with non-combustible material. Where work is above floor level, non-combustible containment has been erected to collect sparks and hot debris.
- Combustibles have been moved away from any metal work likely to conduct heat from the work site (where beams are being worked on which extend through walls or partitions, precautions must be taken on both sides of the wall).
- Where Hot Work is being undertaken on enclosed equipment (tanks, containers, ducts, dust collectors etc) the equipment has been properly cleaned and is free of flammable vapours.

Signature of Fire Watcher

PART C

To be completed two hours after completion of all Hot Work.

I certify that I have made a thorough inspection of the work site and the surrounding area, including adjacent rooms and spaces and that all appears cool. I have ensured that all isolated fire equipment has been returned to full working order.

Signature of Fire Watcher

Time

The fully completed original certificate must now be returned to the Fire Adviser. Advice is available from the Fire Adviser.

Tel No: