

Integrated Pest Management in Museums and Galleries

A Quick Guide for Pest Management Professionals

Introduction to Museums

- A museum is a public or private non-profit agency or institution organized on a permanent basis for essentially **educational** or esthetic purposes, which, utilizing a professional staff, owns or **utilizes tangible objects, cares for them**, and exhibits them to the public on a regular basis.
- Damage or complete destruction of irreplaceable objects through pest attack is a very significant risk.



- You are an essential part of our museum's IPM program

- Museums are complicated buildings with a range of spaces both public and private servicing a variety of functions such as:

- Performance
- Exhibits/display
- Children's activities
- Tours
- Receptions
- Mechanical and operational
- Gift shops
- Carpentry Shops
- Artifact storage,
- Personal offices etc.



Courtesy of: The Natural History museum

Health and Safety

- The safety of the public must always be considered. This means, for example, isolating work areas with barriers where possible, and not leaving equipment unattended.
- Historic objects may contain hazardous materials such as arsenic, mercury or asbestos. Thus, pest management professionals should not touch museum collections unless otherwise instructed.
- Accidents or illnesses should be reported to the appropriate manager.
- Museums may ask you to read and sign their pest management professionals' Health and Safety Site Rules book.

Security

- You will invariably be working “behind the scenes” and sometimes be accompanied by a member of the museum staff.
- Always give prior notification before any visit, including details of arrival, departure, and task duration.
- Be identifiable. You must wear a visible photo ID as part of your uniform and dress in a manner that identifies you as a Pest Management Professional.

Accidental Damage

- In most museums the handling of collections is limited as much as possible, and is only ever carried out by appropriately trained staff such as a collections manager, curator or conservator.
- IPM treatments on museum collections can only be administered by such staff.
- To limit the risk of accidental damage to museum collections:
 - Never touch museum collections unless otherwise instructed.
 - Maintain a safe distance between museum collections and yourself and when working in their vicinity.
 - Use only pencils or digital note-taking aids.
 - Avoid leaning on, marking or disassembling any display or storage furniture
 - If damage occurs, report it immediately.

Environmental Considerations



Courtesy of: The Natural History museum

Museum collections will be housed in enclosed or open furniture, whether they be on display in galleries or within storage rooms.

Environmental Considerations

- Collections on open display are vulnerable.
 - They do not have the physical protection afforded by a display case and they are also likely to become dusty and be exposed to varying environmental conditions, some of which may be favorable to pests.



Courtesy of: The Natural History museum

Environmental Considerations

- Collections in “leaky” enclosures are also at risk.
 - Large, poorly constructed, complex-shaped enclosures are likely to be “ventilated” due to the impracticality of sealing them.
 - In terms of IPM, if gaps in these enclosures are large enough for pests to penetrate, it is necessary to treat them as open displays.



Courtesy of: The Natural History museum

Environmental Considerations

Sealed enclosures not only provide a physical barrier against pests but also buffer ambient environmental fluctuations. For these reasons it is sensible to avoid any monitoring or control methods that involve opening such enclosures.



Courtesy of: The Natural History museum

Environmental Considerations

- Dark, undisturbed spaces are the optimum habitats for pests to thrive.
- Such spaces include voids under furniture, storage cupboards, service ducts and other neglected areas- especially those that are warm, damp and dirty.



Images by NHM IPMG, London

Record Keeping

Concise documentation is essential and must serve the use of the institution. It is the outcome of regular and systematic inspections, for collecting as much information as possible. It should include:

- all aspects of the work to be undertaken
- trap placement positions, i.e. a plot plan for each floor
- type of trap
- details of findings (log of pests found, life stage of pests found, fresh droppings)
- treatments administered and other action taken
- observations (condition of areas, objects, space usage)
- recommendations

Ensure the institution provides you with all the information you need to efficiently carry out your work. This may include employer expectations, staff contacts and a history of past pest management practices carried within the institutions.

With appreciation

By providing quality IPM services you are essential in preserving these museum collections for present and future generations