



CARE AND HANDLING POLICY

Approval Date: 26 March 1999
Approved By: Provincial Archivist
Effective Date: [Approval Date]

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1.0 POLICY STATEMENT

Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management (NSARM) recognizes that most damage to archival and library materials occurs during handling, through abuse, ignorance, mismanagement or vandalism. As part of its Preservation Management Program, NSARM commits itself to the appropriate care and handling of library and archival materials, as set out in this policy and related guidelines and procedures.

2.0 POLICY OBJECTIVES

The objective of this policy is to ensure the appropriate care and handling of archival and library materials by staff, volunteers, and researchers.

3.0 POLICY SCOPE

- 3.1 This policy applies to all archival and library holdings of NSARM regardless of their physical location.
- 3.2 This policy applies to all staff employed at the Public Archives of Nova Scotia (PANS) site as well as to researchers and volunteers working there.

4.0 POLICY DIRECTIVES

- 4.1 All staff, volunteers, and researchers working with archival or library materials shall be trained or given orientation in care and handling procedures.
- 4.2 All archival materials acquired after the coming into effect of this policy shall be stored in appropriate preservation-quality enclosures.
- 4.3 Archival and library materials in fragile condition shall not be made available for use.
- 4.4 If a legible copy is available, original material shall not be made available for public use, except with the permission of the appropriate Division Manager or designate.
- 4.5 All staff must use clean unbleached cotton gloves when using or handling the following classes of archival material: documents on parchment or vellum, works of art on paper, photographs, negatives, moving images, audio tapes, and audio or computer discs.
- 4.6 All staff shall refrain from eating in reference and research areas and in offices on floors where archival and library materials are stored; from storing food in offices; and from

drinking beverages in reference and research areas or while working with archival and library materials. All beverage containers shall be disposed of promptly.

5.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1 **All staff employed at the PANS site** are responsible for adhering to approved institutional care and handling procedures.
- 5.2 **Division Managers** and the **Director, Records Management**, are responsible for ensuring adherence by their staff to this policy.
- 5.3 **Public Service staff** are responsible for orienting researchers and volunteers in institutional care and handling procedures as required.
- 5.4 The **Archivist, Preservation Management Section**, is responsible for the purchase of preservation-quality housing materials; preparation and supervision of retroactive rehousing projects on the request of Division Managers; provision of care and handling workshops for archival staff as required; and provision of information on preservation-related matters to staff and the public, referring to a professional conservator as and when necessary.

6.0 REFERENCES

NSARM Preservation Management Policy

7.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually.

8.0 ENQUIRIES

Enquiries concerning this policy should be directed, in the first instance, to the Archivist, Preservation Management Section, and then to the Manager, Archival Holdings Management Division.

9.0 GLOSSARY

- Archival holdings** Non-library holdings in the custody or under the control of NSARM; does not include departmental semi-active records housed at the Provincial Records Centre, which are deemed to be in the custody or under the control of the departments.
- Conservation** The component of preservation that deals with the physical or chemical treatment of documents. *See also* **Preservation**.
- Holdings maintenance** A preservation activity that includes unfolding or unrolling documents, removing or replacing harmful fasteners, reproducing unstable documents, placing material in acid-free folders and boxes, and shelving them in environmentally controlled and secure storage.
- Preservation** The totality of processes and operations involved in the physical protection of records against damage or deterioration and in the restoration/ repair of damaged or deteriorated documents. *See also* **Conservation**.
- Preservation management** A tool used by archivists to manage the physical condition of holdings, ensuring present and future access. It is based on the principle of preventive conservation and integrates preservation into all other archival functions.
- Preservation quality** Material properties inherent in any medium permitting its preservation under controlled conditions. Formerly referred to as Archival quality.