



Idaho Museum of Natural History

Guidelines for Visiting Collections

The IMNH understands and respects the importance of making its collections available for access by researchers and the general public. As per our adherences to the ethical standards of the American Alliance of Museums we work diligently to strike a balance between our caring and preserving of collections with the goals of scientific research. In order to preserve our collections for future generations we ask that visitors abide by the following guidelines.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR WORKING IN COLLECTIONS

- No eating, drinking or chewing gum when working with objects or in the vicinity of objects.
- Do not handle or touch a specimen without permission from museum staff.
- Many objects require gloves for handling for scientific and/or health concerns. Some Life Sciences collections have been treated with harmful pesticides or insecticides in the past. Gloves, masks and lab coats will be provided for use, as needed.
- Wash and dry your hands thoroughly before and after handling objects.
- Remove all loose or dangling jewelry/accessories or clothing (e.g., bracelets, necklaces, large rings) that may brush up against, fall onto, or get tangled with objects.
- Only pencils are to be used in the immediate vicinity of objects; pens are not allowed.
- Be aware of your surroundings and move carefully and slowly through collections spaces.
- Use of large equipment may be limited depending on space in the collections or work areas.
- Always log in and out of the visitors log in each collections space accessed.
- Do not hesitate to ask for assistance, museum staff will be available to help!
- In case of fire alarm, leave all objects in the secured space(s) and exit as directed. Only re-enter the building when authorized to do so by museum staff.

GUIDELINES FOR HANDLING OF MUSEUM OBJECTS

- Only handle objects approved by museum staff.
- Do not handle or move an object unless it is necessary.
- Review an object for damage or weak points prior to handling.
- Always use both hands, supporting objects in a way that is most stable; never lift by handles, rims, or any other protrusion.
- Move one object at a time, and only move it after you have a designated spot to receive it.
- Use a cart to transport objects whenever possible, and take your time!
- Never stack or overcrowd objects.
- Always work on padded, solid surfaces, never over a floor. Do not put items close to the edge of tables or on the floor.
- Always ask for assistance if items are large, heavy, fragile, or otherwise awkward to handle, or if you are uncertain in any way of your ability to support them.
- Do not remove any documentation or labels associated with an object.
- Do not modify an object in any way (e.g., repair, removal of old adhesives).
- Objects will not be left out overnight, but shall be secured in a locked cabinet or access controlled locked room in appropriate storage containers.
- If any damage occurs, please notify museum staff immediately.

GUIDELINES FOR IMAGING

- You are authorized to only take images of the objects you are working with. Please refrain from taking images of other objects, collections spaces, or work areas, as this may compromise the security of our collections, or conflict with existing agreements with Indigenous groups.
- If posting on social media platforms is anticipated, please work with the museum staff to identify suitable locations to take the desired images.
- Always ask permission when photographing museum staff or other visitors.
- Keep track of the objects you image in the event approvals are required for use.

GUIDELINES FOR HANDLING DOCUMENTATION

- Always wash your hands prior to handling documentation. Gloves are required when handling photographs.
- Do not remove items from protective sleeves unless authorized to do so.
- Do not re-arrange items, leave them in the order they were received.
- Items should be viewed on a flat surface.
- Note the location items were removed from so they can be replaced appropriately.
- If encountered, private or confidential information such as medical records, social security numbers, or anything that may violate the privacy of individuals, may not be copied or used in any way. Please notify Museum staff if these are observed.