

**Collections Management Policy**  
**Vancouver Police Centennial Museum**  
**July 2003**



## **PREAMBLE**

The Vancouver Police Centennial Museum was opened to the public in 1986 by the Vancouver Police Historical Society. At its incorporation in 1983 the mission statement of the museum and its governing registered charity and not for profit society was set out to be, "To foster interest among the general public in the history of the Vancouver Police Department".

This policy is designed to outline the procedures to be applied to the collection of the Vancouver Police Centennial Museum as operated by the Vancouver Police Historical Society Executive Board of Directors. The intent of this policy is to define the scope and nature of the collection. Through definition the museum can ensure the best possible educational, research and interpretive opportunities are available to visitors of the museum and participants in the museums programs.

Where applicable information from museum association guidelines and collection management policies were consulted to compile this document.

### **1. Collections Mandate**

The Primary focus of the collection will be towards materials that portray the heritage of the Vancouver Police Department. This will include objects of all types and varieties. The Museum will also actively collect items of Vancouver Police Department heritage that can be used in crime prevention education programs.

Secondary focuses of the collection will be towards materials that portray the heritage of policing in a broader manner. This will include materials from other areas of BC, Canada and the world.

### **2. SCOPE OF THE COLLECTION**

#### **Collection Objectives and Standards**

Objectives of the collection are:

- To preserve and portray the rich history of the Vancouver Police Department
- To recognize the heritage of other policing organizations in BC, Canada and globally.
- To provide crime prevention education programs.

All museum collection activities will be done in accordance with the British Columbia Museums Association and Canadian Museums Association Code of Ethics for Collections.

### **3. ACCESSIONS**

#### **3.1 Definition**

Accessions involve materials transferred to the museum by legal transfer of ownership. This will include all items donated, purchased and transferred from other organizations.

### **3.2 Collection Activity Areas**

The museum will actively collect manage and preserve collections of the following:

- Examples of Vancouver Police Department history, related activities and practices
- Material documenting the formation and history of the Vancouver Police Department
- Technological advances in equipment, uniforms, firearms and communications.
- A historical survey of Vancouver Police uniforms, medals and regalia
- Material relating to the Vancouver Police Department
- Material of the heritage of the building and its original uses as it fits the mandate of the Society
- Examples of global policing heritage
- Objects specifically required for the educational programs
- Objects that are audio-visual, mixed media, electronic and digital files

### **3.3 Authority to Acquire**

The Director has the authority to accept any donations providing they meet the criteria expressed in the collection management policy. The Curator can recommend that an item not be accessioned in the collection if it does not meet the criteria but must have final approval from the Director and/or the Executive Board.

The Director, upon recommendation of the Curator can give approval to purchase any item deemed appropriate. The Executive Board of Directors must approve any purchase with a \$500.00 appraised value.

### **3.4 Accession Criteria**

All objects accessioned into the collection must meet the following criteria:

- Objects must be in good condition with no conservation needs that can not be met by the museum
- Objects must not pose any hazard to the facility, other objects, staff or volunteers.
- Objects must not be duplicates of items already in the museum collection unless they are better in quality or are to be used in display, or educational programs.
- All objects must meet the parameters set out in section 3.2 of this collection management policy.
- There must adequate space available to properly store and care for the object.
- The owner must have legal title to the artifact and be willing to transfer legal title to the museum. This legal title must be confirmed by documentation. For exceptions see Loans section.
- Usefulness in display, for research or as part of an educational program
- Documentation of all available provenance

### **3.5 Accession Procedure**

After an object has been evaluated by the Director and Curator and accepted for accession the following procedure shall be followed in order to maintain precise records of the collection.

- a) Temporary Deposit Form – Used to keep track of items while they are being considered for accession.
- b) Deed of Gift/Donation Form – Used to secure legal title to all objects donated. This form will be signed by the Director or their designate and the donor. A receipt of purchase or tax receipt will be attached if applicable.
- c) The donated object is assigned a unique accession number and is recorded in the accession record.
  - Accession Numbers will be comprised of three parts and are unique to each object. The first number will be representative to the year the item was accessioned. The second number will represent the donor or group that the item is associated with.
- d) Accession form – This form will be used to keep track of all items donated and accepted into the collection. In this record is included all relevant information on the object and its history along with a digital photograph of the object.
- e) Objects are cleaned as required and the accession number is permanently marked on the item.
- f) The object is entered into the computer database and a paper copy is printed for the records. Back-up copies of the database and paper copy will be kept off-site.
- g) The object is stored or displayed and the location is marked on appropriate forms.

### **3.6 Compliance with laws**

The Director or their designate will take all reasonable steps to ensure that no items are accessioned into the collection that were acquired in a manner that is contrary to the laws of Canada or the country of origin.

Items received from or through the Vancouver Police department will be treated and handled in the same manner as any other donation made by the general public.

All museum collecting will be conducted in a manner that complies with the BCMA, CMA and ICOM Standards of Collection Ethics.

### **3.7 Cooperation with other institutions**

The Director and the Executive board will consult with other museums where applicable to ensure that collecting activities are not conducted in a manner that would be detrimental to their collections.

### **3.8 Appraisals / Tax Receipts**

Museum staff, volunteers, or board members may not make any valuations or appraisals on any donated objects. In order for the Executive Board to issue a tax receipt the donor must have the item/s professionally appraised or provide the original receipt of purchase. This does not mean that the original purchase price is equivalent with the current market value it is to be used as a guideline.

Under no circumstances will any member of the museum staff, volunteers or board of directors offer appraisals on any object pending accession to or already in the collection.

The Executive Board of Directors must approve any tax receipts for objects that will require a tax receipt. A member of the Executive Board of Directors will sign all tax receipts.

### **3.9 Authentication**

The museum will not collect any artifact that is known to be a fake or a forgery unless it is specifically marked as such for display or educational program use. Documentation that confirms fakes/forgeries will be provided with the acquisition.

### **3.10 Conflict of Interest**

No member of the museum staff or board of directors can be directly involved in acquiring collections that are in competition with the collection of the museum. Where a conflict of interest between the collection of the museum and the collection of an individual related to the museum the museum's interests will take precedence. Staff, Volunteers and Board Members must declare their collections / collecting interests at the time they assume their positions.

### **3.11 Access to Collections**

Access to the museum collection will be limited and at the discretion of the Executive Board, Director or Curator of the museum. Researchers or other interested parties may make written applications to access the collection or archives.

## **4. LOANS**

### **4.1 Formal Agreement**

A formal written agreement will be placed on all loans leaving or entering the museum.

### **4.2 Long-term loans**

The museum will only accept and make loans for a time period not to exceed one year. Loans can be renewed annually.

### **4.3 Short-term loans**

The museum will make and accept loans on a short-term basis of one week to 6 months to satisfy the needs of temporary displays, research, program use or archival copying.

### **4.4 Authority to make loans**

The Director or their designate can authorize incoming or outgoing loans providing they meet the criteria for loans.

Loans for commercial, promotional, rental or for profit purposes must have approval by the Director and/or the Executive Board.

#### **4.5 Personal Use**

No items can be loaned to individuals or can be used for private exhibitions.

#### **4.6 Requirements of Borrowers**

Loans to other institutions will only be considered if the custodial institution can meet the standards of security and conservation provided by the Vancouver Police Centennial Museum. Objects that have use restrictions on them will not be loaned out without the express written permission of the Executive Board. All objects loaned must be given credit in the display as loans from the Vancouver Police Historical Society & Centennial Museum. Material on loan must be insured by the borrower.

### **5. DEACCESSIONS**

#### **5.1 Definitions**

Deaccessioning involves the documented and approved removal of materials from the museum collections. The museum will look with disfavour on the deaccessioning of items in the collection however some exceptions apply they include:

- Changing perspectives, goals and priorities of the museum place materials outside the collection mandate
- The acquisition of superior examples of items already in the collection
- The object is a duplicate or of poorer quality than another in the collection and can not be transferred to an educational program
- Materials that are VPD historic evidence and may be required for further process
- Items require care and conservation that the museum can not provide
- The item is live ammunition
- The item is considered hazardous

#### **5.2 Procedure**

Where possible the museum will establish provenance and ownership for each object prior to the item's disposal to ensure that its presence in/removal from the collection is properly understood. However many of the items in the collection arrived without proper documentation, provenance or the donor surrendered title in writing including the date and legal signatures.

The Curator will make recommendations to the director about materials to be deaccessioned after careful consideration of the following questions:

- Is the object an example of the museum's own history and worthy of preservation as such?
- Is the item suitable for educational or interpretive programs?
- What is the best and most ethical method of disposing the object based on the known information and condition?

The Director will then recommend the object for deaccession to the Executive Board following established procedure:

- FIRST - Transfer, trade or exchange to another public organization or institution,
- SECOND - Sale by public auction,
- THIRD – Private sale by professionally accredited agents,
- FOURTH - Destruction

### **5.2.1 Disposal of Firearms and Prohibited/Restricted Weapons**

In the case of firearms, restricted or prohibited weapons all deaccessions will strictly adhere to current Canadian laws and regulations. The Executive Board of Directors will provide final approval for all weapons disposed of by the Museum prior to their removal.

Options for the disposal of firearms and prohibited weapons are:

- FIRST - Return to the original owner or lender providing they can obtain the proper permits
- SECOND - Transfer to another public institution or organization providing they can obtain the proper permits,
- THIRD - Sale through a registered Firearms representative on the recommendation of the Executive Board of Directors,
- FOURTH Destruction by a police firearms officer,

### **5.3 Limitations to Receipt of Deaccessioned items**

No member of the staff of the museum, volunteer, or member of the board of directors may purchase or profit from any items disposed of from the museum.

### **5.4 Compliance with Laws**

The deaccession process will adhere to the applicable laws of British Columbia and Canada, and to any international agreement and treaties.

All museum deaccessions will be conducted in a manner that complies with the CMA and BCMA Standards of Collection Ethics.

### **5.5 Use of Revenue**

All revenues from the sale of museum collections will be used exclusively for the purpose of:

- Maintenance of the collection
- Purchase of new items for the museums collection
- Care and conservation of the existing museum collection

### **5.6 Accidental loss or destruction**

In the case of accidental loss, theft or destruction the loss will be marked on the accession record and the Director will make a report to the board of directors stating the circumstances of the incident.

## **6.0 Documentation**

The Curator is responsible for ensuring that proper documentation is created and kept for all materials accessioned, accepted as a potential accession and all deaccessions.

For each new source a donor file will be created and it will contain all deed letters, receipts of purchase/donation, and contact information. These files will be arranged alphabetically.

Paper records will be kept of each step of the accession process. These files are not available to the public and will be maintained in perpetuity even after items are deaccessioned. They will be arranged by year then by category and then by number.

The information in this file will include:

- Temporary receipt information
- Any purchase or tax receipts
- Donation form
- Accession Form
- Location tracking information
- Loan records
- Record of deaccession or disposal
- Paper copy of the database sheet and a digital photograph if possible.

For objects donated prior to July 2003 all available documentation will be compiled into the accession files. These items may not have provenance, as there was no established accession procedure prior to this time.

## **7.0 Revisions to Policy**

The Collections Management policy can be revised by the board of directors at any Vancouver Police Historical Society & Centennial Museum AGM. The Board will review the Collections Policy no less than once every three (3) years to ensure that it is meeting the needs of the museum.