

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF MUSEUMS
Protecting the Future – Risk Management for Small Museums
Fire Safety Presentation
Saturday, May 8, 2004 – 3:30 p.m. to 4:45 p.m.

Deborah Freeland

Fire Risk Analysis Questionnaire for Small Museums

In order to identify the real risk from a possible fire to a building, one must look at the general features of the building construction, to understand whether/how rapidly the building itself will burn or resist a fire, the external exposures, and the occupancy and internal protection features. The following questionnaire is designed to assist a facility with limited expertise, in assessing the extent of their risk — the first step in determining what additional protection would have the greatest impact.

Exposures

Is the building in a brush area or flood zone Yes No

Are combustibles, such as wood piles, trash bins, sheds, and other materials kept well away from the building? Yes No

Are gasoline, fertilizer, and other landscaping materials or equipment stored outside the main building? Yes No

■ In a locked area? Yes No

Are there neighbors close by that would notice a fire or suspicious activity?
Does the museum maintain good relationships with them? Yes No

Is there a public water supply? Yes No

■ Are there public fire hydrants close to the property? Yes No

How far is the nearest fire department, and what is their response time?
Are they fully paid, or volunteer? Yes No

Fire Risk Analysis Questionnaire for Small Museums (Cont'd)

Exposures

Are there any railroad tracks or bridges that, if damaged, would slow their response? Yes No

Is there good access for emergency vehicles to the site? Yes No

■ Is it kept clear? Yes No

Building/Construction

Are walls combustibile or noncombustibile?
(Note: wood frame is considered combustibile, regardless of covering) Yes No

Is roof combustibile or noncombustibile? Yes No

Are floors/foundations combustibile or noncombustibile? Yes No

Is the building well-divided by interior walls that would slow the spread of fire? Yes No

Are doors to rooms kept closed when the building or area is unoccupied? Yes No

■ Is this part of the lock-up procedure? Yes No

Are furnace rooms, cooking areas, curatorial areas separated from the display areas by fire walls? Yes No

■ Are wall penetrations fire stopped? Yes No

■ Doors kept closed? Yes No

Are there ample fire exits? Yes No

■ Are locked exits equipped with panic hardware? Yes No

■ Are these exits well-marked? Yes No

■ Kept clear? Yes No

Fire Risk Analysis Questionnaire for Small Museums (Cont'd)

Programs & Procedures

Are self-inspections being conducted — and problems found corrected? Yes No

Are opening/closing procedures in place and followed? Yes No

Is there a program for electrical and heating system maintenance? Yes No

Have evacuation/fire department notification procedures been established? Yes No

Have salvage operations been considered? Yes No

■ Are there lists of places/people to call for assistance, both on and off site? Yes No

Detection/Suppression Systems

What periods are the building unoccupied? Yes No

During these unoccupied periods, how would a fire or smoke be detected and the fire department notified? Yes No

Portable extinguishers every 50' travel distance? Yes No

Is smoking allowed anywhere on the property? Yes No

■ Where? _____

■ Precautions? _____

Is there a fire sprinkler system? Yes No

■ What areas are covered? _____

Standpipes, hoses or private fire hydrants? Yes No

Fire Risk Analysis Questionnaire for Small Museums (Cont'd)

Detection/Suppression Systems

Special extinguishing systems: gaseous, water mist, kitchen system, protection of special hazards? Yes No

Flammable liquids storage cabinets? Yes No

Detection/alarm systems: smoke or heat detectors? Yes No

■ Manual pull stations? Yes No

■ Intrusion alarms or motion sensors? Yes No

Are the alarms monitored? By whom? Yes No

Other special protection features? _____

Critical Areas

Are there areas with especially high concentration of values (perhaps storage areas), or are there pieces within the collection that are especially valuable or important? Yes No

Are there areas with a higher quantity of combustibles, such as storage areas, record storage/files and maintenance or curatorial areas? Yes No

■ Would a fire in these expose the collections? Yes No

Are any flammable liquids stored in locked areas or cabinets? Yes No

Are there special hazards, such as open flame or fire, areas where flammable or combustible liquids are used/dispensed? Yes No

For additional information, please contact:

Deborah Freeland
Area Senior Vice President
Arthur J. Gallagher & Co.
(818) 539-1290