

CORPORATE POLICY



Policy Title: **City of Waterloo Museum – Exhibition Policy**
Policy Category: **Administration**
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Department: Community Services
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Author: Karen VandenBrink, Museum and Collections Manager/Curator
Attachments: N/A
Related Documents/Legislation:
Ontario Building Code
Fire and Prevention Act
Canadian Firearms regulations
Occupational Health and Safety Act
Municipal Insurance Pool
Copyright Act of Canada
Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act
Key Word(s): Museum, exhibition

POLICY STATEMENT:

In accordance with its mission, the City of Waterloo Museum is committed to presenting exhibits that provide a link between the community and its heritage.

Exhibits are the most public expression of the Museum's purpose and role in the community. The Museum recognizes that the geographic size, as well as the ethnic and cultural diversity of the community requires that it exhibit not only within its Museum space, but also beyond its doors to provide exhibits that reflect and are inclusive of the community it serves.

PURPOSE:

This policy describes the approach that the Museum will take to ensure accuracy of information, relevance to the community, effective communication, opportunities for learning, and the safe display of artifacts when planning and presentation of exhibitions, in order to maintain a standard of excellence in the exhibition function.

Mandatory Policy, *Municipal Act*: No
Policy Administration Team, Review Date
Corporate Management Team, Review Date

DEFINITIONS:

City: The Corporation of the City of Waterloo

Exhibition: An organized, public presentation and display of a selection of objects of interest, typically organized around a topic or theme. It can be permanent or temporary in nature. It includes exhibitions within the Museum facility, within other community spaces that are curated by the Museum, and virtual exhibitions.

Museum: The City of Waterloo Museum, as an institution that collects, preserves and makes available to the public heritage resources, which it holds in trust for society.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to all exhibitions offered by the City of Waterloo Museum, whether on-site, off-site, or virtual, and whether involving the permanent collection, artifacts on loan, or travelling and/or temporary exhibits. This policy applies to Museum staff, volunteers, and Council.

POLICY COMMUNICATION:

This policy will be communicated by:

- posting on the City of Waterloo website
- posting on the City of Waterloo intranet available to staff
- sharing with relevant interested parties and collaborators
- providing training to staff

POLICY:

- 1.0** Exhibitions are one of the principle functions of the Museum. To fulfill this function the Museum will develop and display permanent exhibitions, host travelling and/or temporary exhibitions, and provide exhibition services. Exhibitions can be on-site, off-site or virtual.
- 2.0** The Museum is committed to ethical behaviour in its presentation of exhibits by ensuring that all exhibits are composed in a manner free of bias, discrimination and criticism, while dedicated to serving the community with accurate and objective information.
- 3.0** Exhibits will reflect the Museum's vision and mission, and the interests of the community. The Museum's exhibitions may include displays related to arts, crafts, science, technology, and human and natural history. Exhibits will be representative of Waterloo's diverse population and culturally inclusive.

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- 4.0** Human and financial resources allocated to plan, research, develop, update, and maintain exhibitions will be appropriate to support a high standard of quality.
- 5.0** Staff involved in exhibition planning, preparation and installation will have the necessary skills, and up-to-date training. Staff will also receive training to safely install and operate exhibits.
- 6.0** The Museum will have a three-year exhibition plan that includes a mix of permanent, temporary and travelling exhibitions.
- 7.0** As a community museum, the Museum must respect both curatorial standards and public interests in the selection and presentation of exhibitions. Protecting the permanent collection so that artifacts in the collection remain intact for future generations and remain a valuable resource for study must be balanced against exhibition display. To this end, the Museum will not display all the artifacts in the collection in any given year.
- 8.0** Artifacts on exhibit will receive proper handling, cleaning and care in order to preserve their integrity, in accordance with the Standards for Community Museums in Ontario. Conservation Resource notes will be consulted as to proper exhibition practices for artifacts on display. Exhibition and artifact preparation, where possible, will be contained to areas that are isolated from the collection. The Museum will assess types of activities required in the construction and installation phases and not engage in activities that would cause potential harm to the collection, or individual objects (e.g., use of solvents or aerosols, dust, and vibration). These activities will be consistent with the Museum's Conservation Policy. Artifacts shall be rotated for the purpose of conservation, as is deemed necessary by their composition.
- 9.0** The Museum may also exhibit privately held collections, including travelling exhibits from other institutions, but only with a full and complete agreement governing terms and conditions. These exhibitions must complement the statement of purpose of the Museum, and may not disrupt the normal activities. They may not threaten the financial sustainability of the Museum.
- 10.0** Exhibits will be made safe for visitors and staff by:
- placing hazardous materials in display cases
 - adequately supporting, securing or providing barriers against heavy objects or moving parts that could cause injury
 - training staff in the safe operation of exhibits
 - meeting legislated requirements in the handling and display of firearms, should they be included in an exhibition
 - meeting all municipal, provincial, and federal legislative requirements as they pertain to exhibit presentation (e.g. Ontario Building Code, *Fire and Prevention Act*, Canadian Firearms regulations, *Occupational Health and*

Safety Act, Municipal Insurance Pool, Copyright Act of Canada and Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act)

11.0 The Museum will ensure that each exhibit is relevant, accurate and effectively communicated by:

- Museum and Collections Manager/Curator establishing clearly defined objectives for each exhibit and evaluating exhibits against these objectives
- conducting ongoing research, as established in the Museum's Research Policy, in support of exhibits to give a true and accurate evaluation of the exhibit topic or theme and its role in the history of the community
- engaging staff, volunteers, community groups, consultants and other experts in exhibit research as needed

12.0 The Museum will ensure that exhibits effectively promote learning and enjoyment through:

- Use of a variety of exhibit formats (e.g. text, photographs, maps, music video, audio recordings, digital, live performance, etc.) to address a variety of learning styles.
- Labelling of artifacts on exhibit when they are not identifiable. Labels must have a professional appearance, and must be consistent with lettering styles and font sizes that are inclusive of populations with disabilities and chosen by the Museum. The donor's name is not guaranteed to appear on the identifying label.
- Striving to be accessible for visitors of all ages and abilities.

REVIEW:

The policy shall be reviewed by staff every four years and shall be updated as required.

COMPLIANCE:

In cases of policy violation, the City may investigate and determine appropriate corrective action.