THE ROYAL AIR FORCE MUSEUM’S POLICY FOR THE EXIT OF OBJECTS FROM THE MUSEUM’S COLLECTIONS

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THE ROYAL AIR FORCE MUSEUM'S POLICY FOR THE EXIT OF OBJECTS FROM THE MUSEUM

Name of museum: Royal Air Force Museum

Name of governing body: Trustees of the Royal Air Force Museum

Delegated authority given to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) by the Board of trustees for Collections related Policies and Procedures

Date on which this policy was approved via SLT delegation: 25 September 2019

Date at which this policy is due for review: 2 years after approval

INTRODUCTION

1. This document sets out the Royal Air Force Museum’s overall policy concerning the exit from the Museum of objects from the Core Collection and Loans In. It describes the circumstances when this policy will and will not apply; rules for care of material in transit; and responsibilities for bearing risks during transportation. The final sections describe policy on authorising and documenting exit transactions.

APPLICABILITY OF THE EXIT POLICY

2. Objects may leave Museum premises for many reasons, such as conservation, copying, valuation, outward loan, return of loan and disposal. In all these cases, the provisions of this policy will apply.

3. The policy will not apply to the movement of objects between Museum sites (for which intra-Museum movement transactions will be used), or in the event of disaster or another emergency.

PREPARATION FOR EXIT

4. No accessioned object may leave the Museum premises until it has been entered onto the Museum’s Collections Management System (CMS) to at least inventory level, see appendix to Accessioning Policy (RAFM/DCM/2/6/3/9).

5. A condition check will be undertaken on every object prior to exit and the condition record updated both in departmental files and on the object’s CMS record. See Condition Checking Policy (RAFM/DCM/2/6/21/1) and Procedure (RAFM/DCM/2/6/21/2).

THE CARE OF MATERIAL IN TRANSIT

6. The following will be observed in relation to transport arrangements (unless the object/s concerned are not owned by the Museum and are being transported by arrangement of the owner):

   a) If the Museum is not using its own transport or the recipient is not collecting the object(s) the company chosen must be drawn from an
official Museum list of approved contractors maintained by the Museum Registrar

b) Any foreign company chosen must be one of international repute and have considerable and appropriate experience in handling consignments of valuable and fragile material

c) Great care must be taken when allowing a recipient to collect objects to ensure material will be subject to satisfactory environment, security and insurance in transit

d) All vehicles used are to be closed and to GIS transport specifications except for the transport of very large objects when this may be impractical

e) The Exit of objects will adhere to the relevant section the Museum’s Policy for object movement and transport to and from the collection (RAFM/DCM/2/6/5/1)

7. Where objects are of exceptional value, advice on transportation should be taken from the National Museums’ Security Adviser.

8. In certain circumstances, Museum staff will be required to accompany an object as courier to ensure it reaches its destination safely. Some of the factors to be taken into account when assessing the need for a courier are:

   a) the financial value of the object;
   b) the historical importance or scarcity value of the object;
   c) the fragility or vulnerability of the object;
   d) the proposed route, destination and transport arrangements.

9. Where circumstances such as these require the presence of a courier to accompany an object, consideration must be given as to whether the courier’s presence affects the relevant insurance arrangements or loan agreement. Appropriate action must be taken to protect both the courier’s and the Museum’s interests.

10. The Museum Registrar will assign the task of courier to an appropriate member of staff, on a case-by-case basis.

11. Departments may develop their own supplementary transport guidelines as required. These guidelines must be approved by the Collections Development Committee.

RISK IN TRANSIT

12. The Exit form (see Documentation section below) acts *inter alia* as the official signed receipt which transfers responsibility from the Museum to the recipient. It must be completed and signed in such a way as to support the risk management policies described in the following paragraphs.
Insurance Cover

13. When objects are to leave Museum premises for any reason, whether they are accompanied by a member of Museum staff as courier or not, steps must be taken to ensure that insurance cover both in transit and at the destination is adequate. See Indemnity and Insurance Policy (RAFM/DCM/2/6/10/1).

Loans

14. For Loans-Out, the burden of risk while objects are in transit falls upon the Borrower. For the return of Loans-In, the burden of risk while objects are in transit falls upon the Museum. The relevant loan agreement will reflect these principles and specify any exceptions to it.

Disposals

15. When an object’s disposal is being affected by means of transfer to another institution, the risk becomes that of the receiving institution as soon as its agent signs the Exit form.

16. When disposal is being affected by means of destruction by an external contractor, the risk becomes that of the contractor as soon as its agent signs the relevant Exit form. Material which is dangerous to staff or the public will be disposed of only through approved contractors. For disposal of classified material, contractors must prove their suitability by means of written certification.

AUTHORISATION

17. In deciding whether an exit is to be allowed or not, factors to be considered include:

a) any conditions that may have been attached to the object at the time of acquisition

b) any security classification that may have been assigned to the object under the Official Secrets Act

c) the sensitivity and confidentiality of the object (for example, personal effects)

d) the ownership of the object

e) whether the object is too fragile or damaged to travel

f) whether a copy of the object could fill the same needs as the original

g) whether the object in question has been deposited with the Museum under the Public Records Act

18. Only specifically authorised members of the Collections or Collections Services teams are entitled to make exit arrangements and complete and sign exit documentation.
19. Authorisation for exit transactions will be given as follows:
   
a) for objects leaving the Museum on loan, see Loan-Out Policy (RAFM/DCM/2/6/8/1)
   
b) for objects leaving the Museum permanently, see Collections Development Policy (RAFM/DCM/2/6/3/1)

20. Every exit transaction must be supported by an authorised Museum business transaction appropriate to the case. For example, an object leaving the Museum on loan must have completed Loan-Out documentation.

21. Where any doubt exists as to whether a courier is required, the Museum Registrar must be consulted to help inform the decision.

DOCUMENTATION

22. All Exit transactions covered by this policy (including Loans-Out transactions) will be recorded on one of the Museum’s official Exit forms. These forms will be prepared in multi-part sets, so that one copy can be retained in a Departmental Exit ledger, one copy sent to the Museum Registrar and one sent to the recipient.

23. Exit forms will be signed at the place of hand-over of objects to the recipient, which may be at the Museum’s premises or at the point of delivery. The Exit form can thus act as the Museum’s official signed receipt, showing that objects are now the responsibility of the recipient.

24. Customs clearances and export licences will be obtained for export to overseas locations.

25. The Exit procedure (RAFM/DCM/2/6/12/2) and associated documentation will ensure that the intellectual property rights surrounding the object are considered and appropriately protected.

26. All Exit records will be kept in perpetuity, although it may not be necessary to retain them as paper records. Consideration will be given at a future date to transferring the records to microfilm or digital form.