



NMAH Outgoing Loans Policy

April 2023

The National Museum of American History (NMAH) is committed to providing access to its collections through the loan of objects to non-profit, educational institutions for educational and scholarly purposes. NMAH's collections total nearly two million objects and represent material evidence of the nation's heritage in the areas of science, technology, and culture. Loans of collection objects to qualified institutions for exhibition, research, and study are an integral part of the NMAH's mission to make its collections accessible to the widest possible audience.

To ensure sufficient time to review, process, and handle requests, NMAH has a minimum required 12-month lead time for outgoing loan requests. Borrowers may request no more than 10 objects. The formal loan request letter with a completed loan application form, required exhibition information, and a completed AAM facility report must be submitted to the NMAH Loan Program no fewer than twelve (12) months before the borrower wishes to receive the objects. A request will not be considered until the application and all required information are provided to the NMAH. Preliminary inquiries should be made well in advance so borrowers may work with curatorial divisions to determine the availability of objects in advance of submitting the formal loan request. Loans will only be considered if the request and all accompanying documents are complete and submitted at least 12 months before the date of the proposed loan.

Outgoing Loan Policy

The NMAH will lend collections only to qualified borrowers for specified time periods for a specified purpose. Objects may be borrowed for up to 6 years with no renewal options beyond 6 years. Borrowers requesting loans for longer than 2 years must submit documentation to verify the condition and status of the objects every two years during the loan period.

All loans will be documented using a completed, signed standard loan agreement or legally binding contract stipulating the rights and responsibilities of each party.

Borrowing organizations must comply with all terms and conditions of the loan agreement, including, but not limited to, specified environmental, safety and security, shipping, handling, and display requirements.

The borrower will credit NMAH as the lender of the objects with the following credit line:
Smithsonian's National Museum of American History

A borrower may not use NMAH collections or the names of the Smithsonian Institution (SI) or NMAH for commercial gain, self-promotion, marketing, or fundraising activities. NMAH collections may not be used for exhibition promotional materials without express written permission from NMAH.

All direct costs of the loan are the responsibility of the borrower. These costs may include (but are not limited to) conservation surveys, conservation treatment, exhibit preparation, framing, bracketing, mounting, handling, rigging, crating, packing, shipping, courier travel, and insurance coverage. All vendors chosen by the borrowing institution to conduct these tasks must be approved by the NMAH. The NMAH will specify the scope of work required and will provide its best estimates for the costs of these services based on past performance. It is the responsibility of the borrower to contact, engage, and fully settle agreements with vendors for all required services. The NMAH reserves the right to supervise the handling and care of its collections at all times.

All loans will be insured during the entire period of the loan, including transit, under an "all risk," wall-to-wall fine arts insurance policy with only standard exclusions.

NMAH reserves the right to recall an object on loan and to cancel a loan for good cause at any time.

NMAH objects may not be removed from exhibit, taken to any offsite location, or placed in storage without written permission from the NMAH Loan Program. Borrowing institutions should notify the NMAH of any plans to open any exhibit case containing loaned collections or when there is any planned action that may present appreciable risk to the materials on loan from the NMAH.

Loaned objects are the sole responsibility of the borrower of record and may not be lent to third parties. Unapproved movement of or access to NMAH collections or any substantial change to the approved environmental conditions in which NMAH collections are exhibited constitute an abrogation of the loan agreement and will result in immediate withdrawal of the loan. Any incident having any sort of physical impact on the loaned collections must be reported to the NMAH Loan Program within 24 hours.

Basic Borrower Requirements

In order to borrow NMAH collections, a borrower must meet these basic requirements and must be able to meet all the additional specific requirements deemed necessary for the specific objects being requested.

- The borrowing institution must submit a complete loan application package to the NMAH Loan Program at least 12 months before the desired shipment of the objects.
- Borrowing institution may request no more than 10 NMAH objects with a one year lead time. Requests for more than 10 objects require a longer lead time.
- Borrowing institution must be a qualified borrower under the NMAH Collections Management Policy (See *Supporting Documents*.)
- Loan must be for a non-commercial educational or scholarly purpose.
- The exhibition must be accessible to the general public at regular, scheduled intervals.
- Objects must be displayed in limited access exhibit galleries dedicated solely to museum or gallery exhibition. Objects may not be displayed in lobbies, hallways, commercial spaces, or multiple use spaces.
- Facility must provide 24/7 physical and/or electronic security.
- Facility must provide 24/7 monitored fire protection.
- Facility must maintain stable environmental conditions (temperature and relative

humidity) within acceptable ranges and these conditions must be monitored on a regular basis. NMAH objects are generally acclimated to these environmental conditions: temperature: 65° - 75° F with no more than 4°F variation in a 24 hour period - relative humidity: 40% - 60% with no more than 5% variation in a 24 hour period. Per the advice of NMAH conservation staff, some collections may require more specific and tightly controlled environmental conditions; others may be stable within broader parameters.

- Light levels must be measured and controlled. No direct natural light can be allowed in the exhibition space. Light levels can be no higher than 20 footcandles. Some objects such as textiles and some paper and photographic materials require light levels of fewer than 3 footcandles.
- Exhibit cases must be constructed with NMAH-approved materials, a schedule of which must accompany the loan application.
- Objects (including costumes) must be displayed inside exhibit cases that lock or are secured with security hardware. Some objects require alarmed exhibit cases.
- Objects that are too large to be displayed inside exhibit cases must be displayed in such a way that visitors cannot reach or touch them and within an environment that does not cause undue degradation.
- Newly constructed exhibit cases, newly painted case or gallery wall surfaces, carpets, and other exhibition materials must off-gas for at least 28 days prior to installation of NMAH objects.
- Food and/or drink are not allowed in exhibition galleries where NMAH objects are on display or in areas where NMAH objects are staged, processed, packed, unpacked or stored.
- Objects may be unpacked, handled, installed, and deinstalled only by experienced professional museum object handlers. Trained and vetted conservators may be required for the handling of some collections as a condition of the Loan Agreement.
- Objects on exhibit must be monitored daily by museum staff experienced in the care of museum collections.
- Borrowers may be required to submit periodic reports on exhibition environmental conditions.

Additional Requirements for Newly Constructed/Renovated Exhibition Spaces/Facilities

Objects requested for display in new exhibition spaces will not be shipped until the following requirements are met:

- Construction has been completed and the borrower has taken possession of the space.
- Permit of occupancy has been issued.
- Newly constructed exhibit cases, newly painted case or gallery wall surfaces, carpets, and other exhibition materials have off-gassed for at least 28 days prior to installation of NMAH objects.
- The borrower can demonstrate stable, object-appropriate environmental conditions over a specified period of time.

Borrower Checklist

Loan requests should be submitted directly to the NMAH Loan Program at least 12 months before the objects are needed. A complete loan request package includes the following information:

- Formal written letter of request stating specific object(s) needed, dates needed, and intended use of the objects requested. The letter must be submitted by an individual authorized to request loans for the borrowing organization.
- Completed NMAH Loan Request Form with Object information sheets for requested collections. Object Information Sheets are completed by NMAH curatorial staff and sent to the potential borrower.
- Completed AAM General Facility Report (form available from the AAM.)
- Copy of the borrower's insurance policy including policy exclusions and deductibles for SI review and approval (unless the borrower wishes to purchase Smithsonian insurance.)
- Environmental readings (temperature and relative humidity readings for at least 3 months) from the proposed exhibit galleries.
- Light level readings from the specific exhibition location.
- Gallery, display, and mounting plans for the objects. Designs should be provided as available.
- List of materials used in exhibit case construction and interior exhibitry.
- Facility map and exhibit gallery map showing proposed display locations of NMAH objects.
- Exhibit gallery specific security information.

After the loan request has been reviewed and approved, the borrower will be asked to:

- Review the NMAH Outgoing Loan Agreement conditions, sign and return the loan agreement.
- Provide a certificate of insurance listing the Smithsonian Institution as "additional insured" or agree to purchase Smithsonian Institution insurance. If the Smithsonian provides coverage, the Smithsonian Office of Risk Management will invoice the borrower directly.
- Incur the costs of preparing, insuring, conserving, packing, and shipping the objects. The estimated costs of the loan will be provided to and accepted by the borrower as a condition of the Loan Agreement. Contracting and payment will be made directly to third party vendors approved by the NMAH.

When the objects have been received by the borrower, the borrower must:

- Verify condition of the objects.
- Sign, date, and return NMAH Outgoing Receipt.
- Update insurance certificate as needed.
- Notify NMAH immediately if any damage or loss has occurred. NMAH objects may not be altered, cleaned or repaired without written permission from NMAH.
- Photograph the objects only for purposes of recording condition--no reproductions or photography for other purposes is allowed. Photographs for use in exhibit catalogs may be obtained from NMAH.
- Give credit to the *Smithsonian's National Museum of American History* in all descriptive references.
- Contact the NMAH Office of Communication and Marketing for prior review and approval before featuring NMAH objects and/or mentioning the NMAH/SI names in any medium (print, web, film, radio, television, or any other media.)

To request a renewal of a loan that was granted for less than 6 years, the borrower must, at least three (3) months before the expiration of the Loan Agreement:

- Request the loan renewal in writing prior to expiration of initial loan.
- Send a condition report, photographs, environmental readings, and current light levels for each object to be renewed.
- Provide proof of continued insurance coverage (if applicable.)
- Sign a renewal letter provided by NMAH extending the loan.

Loans will not be extended beyond a total lending period of 6 years in most instances.

For a 6 year loan, the borrower must every 2 years:

- Send a condition report, photographs, environmental readings, and current light levels for each object.
- Provide proof of continued insurance coverage (if applicable.)

Insurance Requirements

NMAH requires all borrowed objects be insured under an all risk, wall-to-wall, fine arts insurance policy with only standard exclusions. There are two options for providing this insurance.

Borrower's Insurance

- Borrowers who wish to insure objects under their own fine arts insurance coverage should submit a copy of the insurance policy listing deductibles and exclusions for review and approval by the Smithsonian Office of Risk Management. The policy should be submitted to the NMAH Loan Program with the formal loan request.
- Upon approval of the loan, borrowers will be asked to provide a certificate of insurance which lists the objects to be insured with the values and names the Smithsonian Institution as additional insured or loss payee. This certificate must be received prior to the shipment of the objects.

Smithsonian Insurance

- The borrower may purchase Smithsonian insurance for the objects and pay the cost of the insurance premium. The cost of the premium is based on the total value of the objects and the length of the loan. The NMAH Loan Program will arrange for the insurance coverage and the Smithsonian Office of Risk Management will invoice the borrower for the costs.

Contact Information

Please contact the NMAH Loan Program with questions or for additional information about NMAH loan policies and procedures. Loan requests should be submitted directly to the NMAH Loan Program at NMAHLoanProgram@si.edu.