



Basic Condition Reporting: A Handbook

Southeastern Registrars Association

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A good condition report is an accurate and informative account of an object's state of preservation at a particular moment in time. Condition reports can have multiple functions such as recording the state of an object prior to an exhibition or loan, after exhibition or loan, to assist in collections planning, or as a tool for the treatment of an object. Most of these functions can be conducted by a registrar, curator, collections manager, or volunteer.

A good condition report fills many critical needs including:

- Knowing the exact condition of an object before or after a loan
- Helping staff determine the stability of an object for exhibit or loan
- Limiting how often an object is handled
- Informing object handlers of unseen problems
- Showing the condition of an object over time to determine the rate of deterioration
- Setting priorities for conservation
- Assisting the staff in identifying similar objects
- Aiding in the valuation of an object for insurance purposes

The fourth edition of *Basic Condition Reporting: A Handbook* proffers a standard vocabulary for all of the individuals in a museum that may be conducting condition reports. In an ideal world, everyone who does a condition report for an item would be trained in the exact same standards, use the same terminology, and use the exact same form, etc. However, the reality is that even if every registrar, collections manager, and curator in your institution does condition reports, each report will be slightly different. Then you throw in every intern, volunteer, or student that may assist and you will find a variety of methods and terminologies that appear. This volume provide a baseline that all of these people can work from so that any person who opens the condition report can understand what the problems on a particular piece include.

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