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INDIANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLECTIONS ADVISOR

A RESOURCE FROM IHS LOCAL HISTORY SERVICES

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Issue 9 | May 20, 2020

SPECIAL EDITION COLLECTIONS MINIVISOR: CREATE A WALK-THROUGH CHECKLIST

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This is a short-term weekly mini version of Collections Advisor to give you some ideas of things to do from home to propel our work with museum collections. If you would prefer not to receive the weekly editions but would like to continue to receive the monthly Collections Advisor, please email collectionsadvisor@indianahistory.org to let us know.

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We often think about our collections as needing our care, preservation, and maintenance, but it can be easy to forget that the building surrounding those things also needs care. No amount of acid-free boxes will keep

out the water from a leaky roof. It is highly likely that you do maintenance walk-throughs and checks of your museum and collections areas frequently without even thinking about it. You look at that south wall in the basement that sometimes gets wet when it rains, you take a quick glance around the attic to see if mice have left any evidence, or you note when the storage space feels particularly humid. However, have you ever thought about who would know what to look for if you could not be the one checking in?

With many of us in situations where we have not been in our museum buildings for weeks or even months, or where there has been only a small number of people allowed in the building and we are not one of them, it is easy to worry about the things that might be getting missed. Does the person going in the building know to check the south wall? Do they know the water pipe to the bathroom runs right over archive storage? Did they remember to empty the dehumidifier?

All of these questions and worries can easily be put to rest with a clearly written building walk-through checklist. Start by thinking through the building (or walking through it if you are able) and listing out everything you check on in each room of the museum...whether it is public spaces, storage spaces, or even offices. Now, all you need to do is write it up in the form of a checklist in a logical order of going through the museum. With this checklist you can now be confident that not only you will remember to check in on every vulnerable aspect of the museum once a week, once a month, or on whatever schedule makes the most sense, but also that anyone from the museum could pick up the checklist and do the exact same thing at any moment.

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