



Timely Tips: Short, Mid, and Long-Term Storage

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People who work in museums think a lot about how we can best care for objects in our collections, not only when the objects are on exhibit, but also when they're in storage. It's important to determine the length of time objects will spend in storage and to choose appropriate materials for storing them. Here are some tips for short, mid, and long-term storage.



[Timely Tips: Short, Mid, and Long-Term Storage](#) (Indiana Historical Society)

Short-term storage (less than one year):

- Clean, sturdy cardboard boxes and bubble wrap can be used for very short-term storage. For example, they're good options if you are moving things from place to place in the museum.
- Drawers and shelves in furniture can also be used for short-term storage. It's important to remember that this is a short-term solution because contact with wood over time can

cause irreparable damage to other objects. However, you can line drawers and shelves with aluminum foil to create a barrier layer.

- And, if the furniture itself is a collections object, care should be taken not to damage or overload it by using it for storage.

Mid-term storage (one to ten years):

- Clear Sterilite® brand tubs and Ziploc® brand bags can be used to store objects. Both brands use relatively inert materials and don't tend to break down the way other plastics can over time. Using clear materials means that the containers can be checked for moisture and pests.
- White pool noodles are fairly stable and can be used along with other mid-term storage solutions to pad boxes and act as buffers.
- Wrapping objects in 100% cotton and unbleached muslin fabric creates a buffer between the object and the storage container.

Long-term storage (more than ten years):

- Use museum quality acid- and lignin-free boxes. The boxes are made from stable, inert materials that won't harm the objects.
- If it's necessary to wrap or pad objects, use Ethafoam®, acid-free, unbuffered tissue paper, and 100% cotton and unbleached muslin fabric.

Further Resources

- [Collections Advisors](#) (Indiana Historical Society)
- [Timely Tips](#) (Indiana Historical Society)
- [Conserv O Grams](#) (National Park Service)

Collection Trainings

[How to Manage Volunteers in Collections](#)

August 9 (Connecting to Collections Care)

[Practical Preservation: Applied Approaches to Collections Care](#)

August 22 (Texas Historical Commission)

[Writing a Collection Management Policy: Step-by-Step](#)

August 31 - (NEDCC)

[Webinars](#)

Recorded – (Indiana Historical Society)

[Local History Services](#)

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