

SECURITY AND DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Request:

- Foster cooperation between museums, first responders and emergency managers.
- Continue to support agencies and programs that help museums and other cultural institutions better prepare for emergencies and obtain needed resources when a disaster occurs.
- Ensure that implementation of the cargo screening requirements of the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007 do not make the sharing of museum exhibits cost prohibitive.

Introduction:

Museum security and risk management are part of daily museum operations and encompass issues such as protection from fires, floods and other natural disasters, precautions against theft and vandalism, and ensuring the safety of all museum visitors and staff. Museums and other cultural agencies often rely on agencies, task forces and other coalitions that focus on preparedness. The Heritage Emergency National Task Force, for example – which is sponsored by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and Heritage Preservation – works to help museums, historic sites, archives and libraries safeguard their collections.

In a post-9/11 world, museums also face challenges from international terrorism. The Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007 (Public Law 110-53), signed into law in August 2007, provides for the implementation of security-related recommendations of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (9/11 Commission). The law mandates that, by August 2010, there will be 100% screening of cargo originating in the U.S. and transported on passenger aircraft. As of February 2009, 50% of all cargo security is required to be screened. The Transportation Security Administration's answer to that challenge is to create secure shipping locations outside of the airports – some in museums – to help facilitate the safe transfer of air cargo.

Talking Points:

- Museums must be prepared to prevent the loss of cultural heritage from disasters.
- Fostering cooperation between museums, first responders and emergency managers will help improve local planning efforts and enhance the protection of cultural heritage.
- Museums that routinely share exhibits and other works could face an enormous burden of now having to use a third-party shipper, significantly increasing their operating costs.