



MINISTERIO
DE CULTURA
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DIRECCIÓN GENERAL
DE BELLAS ARTES

SUBDIRECCIÓN GENERAL
DE MUSEOS ESTATALES

Planning measures for the reopening of state-owned and state-managed museums reporting to the Directorate-General for Fine Arts

**Ministry of Culture and Sport
Office of State Museums
Madrid, 2020**

Museums of the Directorate-General for Fine Arts.

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Museo Arqueológico Nacional

Museo Nacional de Artes Decorativas

Museo Cerralbo

Museo de América

Museo Nacional del Romanticismo

Museo Sorolla

Museo del Traje. Centro de Investigación del Patrimonio Etnológico

Museo Nacional de Antropología

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Museo Nacional y Centro de Investigación de Altamira

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Museo Nacional de Arte Romano

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Office of State Museums. Directorate-General for Fine Arts
Madrid

Title:

Planning measures for the reopening of state-owned and state-managed museums reporting to the Directorate-General for Fine Arts

Author/s:

Document drawn up by the museum technicians from MCS central services and 16 national museums

Date:

9 May 2020



Planning measures for the reopening of state-owned and state-managed museums reporting to the Directorate-General for Fine Arts

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INTRODUCTION

1. Nature and purpose of the document

This planning document has been drawn up to address in advance the basic measures to be considered in the reopening of museums managed by the Office of State Museums (Directorate-General for Fine Arts of the Ministry of Culture and Sport): Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Museo Cerralbo, Museo de América, Museo del Traje. Centro de Investigación del Patrimonio Etnológico, Museo Nacional de Antropología, Museo Nacional de Artes Decorativas, Museo del Romanticismo, Museo Sorolla (all in Madrid); Museo Nacional de Arqueología Subacuática. ARQUA (Cartagena, Murcia); Museo Nacional de Arte Romano (Mérida, Badajoz); Museo Nacional y Centro de Investigación de Altamira (Santillana del Mar, Cantabria); Museo del Greco, Museo Sefardí (Toledo); Museo Nacional de Cerámica y Artes Suntuarias “González Martí” (Valencia); Casa Cervantes, and Museo Nacional de Escultura (Valladolid).

Similar plans with the same aim are being undertaken by the public bodies Museo del Prado and Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía.

Logically, this is a provisional plan that will necessarily be updated according to the general measures adopted by the health authorities for the management of the COVID-19 crisis. It prioritizes prudence and takes into account the fact that, as circumstances change, the application of some measures could produce results that require readjustments.

In order for activity to restart gradually, the plan presented by the Government will include three fundamental control measures for guaranteeing health security: social distancing, capacity monitoring, and hygiene measures.

Although some determining factors will change as the pandemic develops, the special characteristics of museums as places where workers, cultural assets and visitors all converge make it advisable to assess in advance the measures that will need to be taken in each of these three areas.

In addition to outlining these measures – the application of which will be subject to variations and specific provisions that will depend on the particular characteristics of each museum – this document also includes a series of reflections on what the challenges and action lines are likely to be for museums in the new social context resulting from the pandemic.

2. Temporary scenarios. Territorial variables

Bearing in mind that any schedules necessarily depend on the evolution of the pandemic and the measures that are adopted by the competent authorities in response, we may propose a series of temporary scenarios that will govern the “de-escalation”, based on the four phases announced by the Government on 28 April.

The aim here is to note what foreseeable level of restrictions would be observed in each of these scenarios, to guide their planning.

The state of alarm has now been extended until 24 May, and after this, four successive phases are planned for the de-escalation, in accordance with the “Plan for the transition to the new normality” approved by the Council of Ministers on 28 April 2020.

For museums and for phase 1, *Order SND/399/2020, of 9 May, for the relaxation of certain restrictions of national scope, established after the declaration of the state of alarm in application of phase 1 of the Plan for the transition to a new normality* was published in the Official State Gazette on 9 May. Articles 26 to 28 of the Order specify the conditions for opening museums to the public.



According to the above-mentioned “Plan for the transition to the new normality”, each of the four phases will last at least two weeks. The move to the next phase in each province will be subject to compliance with certain markers, including “compliance with collective protection measures in the workplace”.

Although the phases of the Plan adopted by the Government do have tentative dates (4 May, 11 May, 25 May and 8 June), since their duration is only estimated (because it depends on the changes in each province, in terms of meeting the markers for the change of phase) and, above all, taking into account the need to plan and put into practice all the guarantees of protection needed for national museums to return to work and reopen, this planning document chooses not to offer specific dates.

The phases of the Plan enable, but do not oblige, museums to follow these dates, given that in any case it will be compliance with the safety measures that makes it possible to decide when to move on to the next phase at each museum, under the coordination and with the authorisation of the Directorate-General for Fine Arts.

When the time comes, taking into account the specific nature of each centre and with the appropriate advance warning and publicity, the move to the next phase will be authorised and communicated to the museums that report to the Office of State Museums.

In each of these phases, the measures that are expected to be taken for museums are as follows:

PHASE 0: preparing for de-escalation

Pre-reopening scenario

- Museums closed to the public and, in general, to their workers.
- The on-site provision of the services that were not subject to suspension (security, maintenance, cleaning and gardening) continues.
- Management tasks, museum technicians and administration staff continue teleworking (except for on-site visits of inspection).
- In the phase prior to reopening, the following preparation tasks will be carried out:
 - In the public areas: inspection, cleaning and preparation for welcoming the public.
 - In public areas and workplaces of returning staff: special disinfection campaign.
 - Maintenance inspection of the entire building and, if necessary, repair of any damage not dealt with during closure.
 - Gradual start-up of installations and devices turned off during closure, monitoring their operation.
 - Inspection of the museum’s facilities and repair of possible damage.
 - Special inspection of the state of conservation of the collections on exhibition (will necessitate lifting the suspension of the contract in museums that have outsourced this service).
 - Design and production of specific signage for the reopening
 - Administrative management of contracts for the staff needed for reopening.
 - Preparation of health and prevention measures for the safety of the workers.



- Supply and provision of protective materials for workers (masks, gloves, hydroalcoholic solution).
- Organization of attendants who need to return to work.
- Establishment of possible rotating gallery openings, to avoid crowding in staff changing rooms, toilets and rest areas.
- Administrative management to lift the suspensions and deferrals of the execution of contracts that were affected by Royal Decree Law 8/2020.
- With regard to the resumption of the online ticket office and sales contract, the service will be adapted to meet the measures adopted by the Directorate-General for Fine Arts regarding temporary free entry and, where appropriate, sales using time slots.
- Lifting of the suspension of the contract for cultural activities, shop or bookshop, café or restaurant, etc. (start date to be determined)
- Lifting of the deferral of the execution of contracts relating to temporary exhibitions (assembly, dismantling, etc.)

PHASE 1 or Initial

Opening to the public scenario (visits only, no cultural or educational activities)

- The museums' galleries (permanent collection and temporary exhibitions) will open, with the restriction and capacity control measures indicated in section III (reducing capacity to one-third for each of the public areas and galleries, as provided for in the Self-Protection Plan of each museum).

When, due to the characteristics of the museum, restricting capacity to 1/3 means it is not possible to comply with the basic criterion of a 2-metre interpersonal distance (to be understood as the distance between family or household units), the application of the safety distance will take precedence (i.e., 1 person per 16 square metres). Each museum will therefore make the calculations and adaptations appropriate to its spaces. And it will resort, if necessary, to subdividing the buildings, especially those of a historical nature, or designing selective itineraries for visits.

- Only visits are allowed, not cultural or educational activities.
- Visits will be individual (to be understood not as a single person but as a family or household unit). No group bookings will be allowed until all the stages of de-escalation have been completed.
- There will be no visits by school or adult groups, so the group booking system will be disabled on the website.
- In order to permit this opening, it will be necessary to organise in advance the gradual return of the necessary visitor service staff (ticket office clerks, gallery attendants, senior doormen and plant managers) to organise the services in the galleries and for visitors and be able to pass on precise instructions to them. In addition, the workers who must direct and coordinate these services in person will also need to return, along with the employees who must supervise and control the conservation of the cultural assets. In all cases, their return will require compliance with worker protection measures.
- The outsourced services that were being provided in person (security, cleaning, maintenance and gardening) will continue.



PHASE 2 or Intermediate

Opening to the public scenario (visits only, no cultural or educational activities)

- The museums' galleries (permanent collection and temporary exhibitions) will continue to open, with the restriction and capacity control measures indicated in section III (a reduction to one-third capacity for each of the public spaces and galleries, as provided for in the Self-Protection Plan of each museum).
- When, due to the characteristics of the museum, restricting capacity to 1/3 means it is not possible to comply with the basic criterion of a 2-metre interpersonal distance (to be understood as the distance between family or household units), the application of the safety distance will take precedence (i.e., 1 person per 16 square metres). Each museum will therefore make the calculations and adaptations appropriate to its spaces. And it will resort, if necessary, to subdividing the buildings, especially those of a historical nature, or designing selective itineraries for visits.
- Only visits are allowed, not cultural or educational activities.
- Visits will be individual (to be understood not as a single person but as a family or household unit). No group bookings will be allowed until all the stages of de-escalation have been completed.
- There will be no visits by school or adult groups, so the group booking system will be disabled on the website.
- The work of the personnel needed on-site to permit visits to the museum (ticket-office clerks, room service personnel, etc.) and the coordination of these services will be maintained.
- The outsourced services that were being provided in person (security, cleaning, maintenance and gardening) will continue.

PHASE 3 or Advanced

Opening to the public scenario (visits and cultural and educational activities)

- In addition to visits to the galleries, the cultural activities scheduled by the museums (workshops, seminars, meetings, etc.) may take place, with the restriction and capacity monitoring measures indicated in section III (50% reduction in capacity).

When, due to the characteristics of the museum, restricting capacity to 50% means it is not possible to comply with the basic criterion of a 2-metre interpersonal distance (to be understood as the distance between family or household units), the application of the safety distance will take precedence (i.e., 1 person per 16 square metres). Each museum will therefore make the calculations and adaptations appropriate to its spaces.

- It is expected that it will have been possible to resume all contracts (services, supplies, works) that were suspended or postponed.
- A staggered return of the rest of the workers will be organised, always favouring teleworking, and with the possibility of organising shifts for face-to-face work if this is necessary to respect the required distance between people. In all cases, their return will require compliance with worker protection measures.



- Although the museums could become fully operational, it is possible that some protection measures implemented during the return to work will be strengthened.
- A territoriality variable must be added to the time variable because, as announced in the official statements, de-escalation may occur unevenly depending on the evolution of the pandemic in each province, in accordance with certain markers that will determine their access to the next phase.

Given that the museums managed by the Office of State Museums are located in different provinces of several autonomous regions (Community of Madrid, Cantabria, Castilla La Mancha, Castilla y León, Extremadura, Region of Murcia and Community of Valencia), the specific calendar shown for the phases may be subject to variations depending on the location of each museum.



I. MEASURES REGARDING WORKPLACE RISK PREVENTION

1. General questions regarding the return of employees to state museums

A) Return to work of public employees (with or without the opening of museums to the public)

Instructions will be given on when and how public employees will return to work, in the first instance, by the Ministry of Territorial Policy and Civil Service and, in the case of national museums, possibly subject to special measures from the Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Culture and Sport.

When returning to work, measures will be adopted to stagger the return, set up shifts, encourage teleworking and guarantee the work-life balance.

When implementing these measures, attention will be paid to the provisions of the *Resolution of 4 May 2020 of the Secretary of State for Territorial Policy and Civil Service on measures to be adopted in workplaces reporting to the Spanish Central Administration on the occasion of the approval of the Plan for the transition to a new normality*. Measures to be adapted by the Under-Secretary for Culture and Sport.

In all cases, the provisions of *Order SND/399/2020, of 9 May, for the relaxation of certain national restrictions, established after the declaration of the state of alarm in application of phase 1 of the Plan for the transition to a new normality* must be observed as regards hygiene and prevention measures.

B) Reincorporación al trabajo de los empleados de empresas contratadas:

The execution of public administration contracts has been affected by the provisions of *Royal Decree Law 8/2020, of 17 March, on urgent extraordinary measures to deal with the economic and social impact of COVID-19* (Official State Gazette of 18 March 2020).

In the case of service and supply contracts which, pursuant to the aforementioned Royal Decree Law 8/2020 of 17 March, were subject to total or partial suspension or the postponement of their execution, the workers will be reinstated when each particular contract is subject to the resumption of its execution.

In the case of works, the provisions of *Order SND/340/2020, of 12 April, suspending certain activities related to intervention works in existing buildings where there is a risk of contagion by COVID-19 for persons not related to that activity*, must also be considered (Official State Gazette of 12 April 2020).

All companies will be responsible for providing suitable and sufficient personal protective equipment for their personnel as needed. The obligation to coordinate business activities in accordance with occupational risk prevention protocols is maintained.

2. Common preventive guidelines (hygiene and health) in museums as workplaces¹

A number of measures based on the Ministry of Health document are listed here: "Good practices in the workplace. Measures for the prevention of COVID-19 infections".

- 1) In accordance with the occupational risk regulations, it will be necessary to inform personnel in a reliable, up-to-date and regular manner of the health recommendations that they must follow individually and collectively.

¹ On 22 April 2020, the Directorate-General for the Civil Service issued an Instruction on measures and action lines in the area of occupational risk prevention in relation to COVID-19, with a view to the physical return of personnel. Work is currently under way for its adaptation by the Under-Secretary for Culture and Sport for application to this department, in consultation with and with the participation of the prevention delegates.



2) Work tasks and processes must be planned so that workers can maintain an interpersonal distance of approximately 2 metres, both when entering and leaving the workplace and while on the premises. Tasks that cannot be carried out in accordance with the above safety regulations must be postponed.

3) It must be ensured that the interpersonal distance is guaranteed in the common working areas and, in all cases, large numbers of personnel must be avoided at these points. If necessary, partitions are to be installed between workstations.

4) The use of lifts is to be limited to the cases that are strictly necessary and the stairs should preferably be used. Lifts are to be for individual use, and attempts must be made, as far as possible, to establish routes on which the lifts are exclusively used for making either upward or downward journeys.

5) It is recommended that meetings be held by telephone or by video-conferencing, and that non-essential business trips be avoided if they can be resolved by phone or video-conferencing.

6) Personnel shall be provided with the necessary hygiene products that enable them to follow the individual recommendations and are suitable for each specific activity. In general, it is necessary to maintain an adequate supply of soap, hydroalcoholic solution and tissues. It is also necessary to have a sufficient supply of protective material, especially gloves and masks, for the personnel.

7) Pedal-operated bins with a tilting lid are to be provided for depositing disposable protective material. The collection of waste and the disinfection of the bins shall be carried out frequently by cleaning company staff.

8) With regard to the cleanliness of the spaces, the specific recommendations drawn up by the Spanish Cultural Heritage Institute are to be taken into account when they are implemented in historical buildings or in the vicinity of assets of cultural interest (see section II). The cleaning company shall be expressly informed of the specific instructions for such spaces. In addition, in spaces with no cultural assets or no historical value, the Ministry of Health's general recommendations on cleanliness must be followed: *Technical documents. Hygiene measures for the prevention of COVID-19 infections* and *List of virucides authorised in Spain for environmental use (PT2), the food industry (PT4) and human hygiene (PT1)*.

9) Staff changing rooms: given the space limitations in many museums, it will be necessary to further stagger the schedules of the staff to avoid overlapping at entering and leaving times. This applies to common areas and rest rooms. Extreme care must be taken to clean up these spaces.

10). Where the small size of movement areas (in workspaces) makes it impossible to maintain the interpersonal distance, consideration should be given to establishing internal routes that permit the use of one-way horizontal communications. In this case, markers shall be affixed showing the direction of movement.

11) The protocols adopted by the Subdirectorate General of Human Resources and Inspection of Services of the Ministry of Culture and Sports (Occupational Risk Prevention Area) must be followed should a worker show symptoms at work, to protect him/her and other workers (protocols in accordance with the Ministry of Health Procedure for occupational risk prevention services in relation to exposure to SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19). 8 April 2020).



II. MEASURES REGARDING THE CONSERVATION OF ASSETS OF CULTURAL VALUE

In the area of the conservation of assets of cultural value, in the context of the health crisis caused by COVID-19, a series of technical documents has been produced to date containing recommendations that can be referred to for implementation in national museums:

1. Alert note from the Directorate-General for Fine Arts and Recommendations on procedures for disinfecting cultural assets due to the COVID-19 crisis (Spanish Cultural Heritage Institute)

Information available on the SCHI website:

- <https://ipce.culturaydeporte.gob.es/dam/jcr:06023f3c-dc90-403d-b04d-111bd2c381dd/nota-de-aler-ta-sobre-el-patrimonio-cultural-dgbbaa-13-abril-2020--1-.pdf>
- <https://ipce.culturaydeporte.gob.es/dam/jcr:3cf1e6b5-1925-440d-a514-3c60f1edadc9/anexo--reco-mendaciones-ipce-patrimonio-covid-19--1-.pdf>

In the near future, the Spanish Cultural Heritage Institute will publish a document with recommendations for the de-escalation plan for institutions responsible for the conservation of cultural heritage.

2. Museums Working Group of the Plan for Safeguarding Cultural Assets in Emergencies

Action protocol. Conditions for the cleaning and treatment of cultural assets in state-owned and state-managed museums reporting to the Office of State Museums during the state of alarm caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the period of de-escalation in museum institutions.

See Annex I.



III. MEASURES REGARDING VISITOR SERVICES

In accordance with the scenarios set out by the Government – the 4 phases of the de-escalation announced on 28 April – once the museums reopen to the public (partially, for visits and with no cultural activities), a series of measures will be implemented to ensure the safety of both the visitors and the workers who interact with the public.

All activities must be carried out in conditions of safety, self-protection and social distancing.

1. Measures to restrict capacity and conditions for the provision of services

- General visits (collection and exhibitions)
 - 1) After reopening, the capacity of the museums will be limited to one-third in each specific space. This limit will be checked both at the ticket office and in online ticket sales. If necessary, therefore, each museum will make available to the public a maximum number of tickets per time slot.
 - 2) A visit may be made jointly by a family or by individuals who live together.
 - 3) In the movement of visitors, a distance of 2 metres between people will be obeyed or, where appropriate, between family or household units.
 - 4) In each room the security staff will have instructions on the maximum number of visitors that can gather, in order to prevent crowding. In all cases, occupation must comply with the interpersonal distance requirement (approximately 2 metres).
 - 5) All members of the public, including those waiting to enter the museum, must keep the interpersonal distance. Stickers may be placed on the floor to mark this distance in entrance and waiting areas (ticket offices, counters, etc.).
 - 6) Until all the phases of de-escalation have been completed, the cloakroom service will not be available. This measure will be appropriately announced both on the website and at the entrance to each museum.
 - 7) Visitor services staff will remind the public of the need to comply with these guidelines.
 - 8) Online ticket sales are recommended and, if sold at the ticket office, contactless electronic payment methods are also recommended.
 - 9) If, as a result of the measures to make the arrival times of visitor service staff more flexible, the opening hours of the museums are modified, this circumstance must be expressly stated in the Resolution of the Director-General for Fine Arts, who will agree to their reopening at the appropriate time, and the new hours will be announced on the website of each museum.
- Cultural Activities
 - 1) For events that involve people gathering in the same space (educational activities, lectures, workshops, concerts and public programmes in general), attendance will be limited to a maximum of one-third of the capacity, and in all cases an interpersonal distance of approximately 2 metres must be maintained. Also, the limit on the number of participants must appear in the announcement of the activity.
 - 2) The formats of activities that take place in the museum's exhibition galleries and involve groups of attendees (guided tours, talks about pieces, etc.) must be suspended until the health authorities authorise the reduction of the recommended social distance. In the meantime, alternative formats must be sought



that avoid physical proximity between the participants, giving priority to activities that are carried out autonomously.

3) When the format of the activity allows it, channels shall be enabled for remote participation (streaming, later online broadcasting, etc.)

4) The design of educational, scientific and informational resources of a digital nature must be reinforced, to allow the museum to fulfil its function as an educational institution and a transmitter of knowledge, using alternative means to those involving attendance in person.

5) In all cases, it will be up to each museum to assess, depending on its spaces and the possibility of maintaining the recommended social distancing, whether it is feasible to carry out cultural and educational activities before de-escalation ends and, if so, with what specific number of participants.

- Libraries, archives and research rooms

This service will not be made available to the public in person until all phases of de-escalation have completely ended. However, whenever possible, queries will be dealt with online or by telephone (e.g., requests for digitised documentation, etc.).

- Other services:

1) Measures to control capacity and interpersonal distance must also be observed in areas such as the café-restaurant, bookshop, etc., if the museum has them. The opening of these services could take place at a later stage (after the opening of the galleries), depending on the decision of the competent authorities.

2) The same limitations in terms of reduced capacity (one-third) and interpersonal distance shall be observed in the use of spaces by third parties.

2. Preventive health and hygiene measures for the visiting public

1) The use of self-protection elements, such as masks, is to be recommended for visiting the museum.

2) Hydroalcoholic solution dispensers must be located at the entrances and at the points of contact with the public (ticket offices, information, etc.), for use by visitors.

3) Prior to reopening, screens or similar protective elements must be installed in places that involve direct contact between workers and the public (e.g., ticket offices, counters, cash points in shops, etc.).

4) Pedal-operated waste bins with a lid and a removable plastic bag must be provided in order to deposit disposable protective material. The removal of waste and the disinfection of the bins shall be carried out frequently by the cleaning company.

5) The use of lifts is limited to those cases in which it is strictly necessary.

6) Other protective elements, such as carpets with disinfectant liquid, may be installed depending on the characteristics of the space. .

7) Until all the stages of de-escalation have ended, the use of museum items designed for "tactile use" by visitors will not be permitted. Audio guides, brochures and other similar material will also not be available.



3. Measures to encourage visits

Since it is foreseeable that, at least in the initial phase, society will be reluctant to take part in activities in crowded areas and this fear may result in a considerable decrease in visitors (despite the fact that guarantees for safe visits are already in place), a promotional campaign is being considered based on offering free entry to the museums under the authority of the Office of State Museums, for a limited period of time (two months are proposed from the time they reopen to the public).

The measure is envisaged as a promotional campaign and is also justified by the fact that, in this initial phase, the reopening of spaces may be partial and not all the services provided for in the museums' Citizen Charters will be offered to visitors.

As this is a public price, regulated by *Order ECD/868/2015, of 5 May, regulating public visits to state-owned museums attached to and managed by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport and by the National Institute of Performing Arts and Music*, this measure will require a Resolution from the Director-General for Fine Arts authorising free visits and specifying the application (Article 8(a) of the aforementioned Order).

4. Communication and information campaign

- Prior to reopening: the museums' websites and social media will provide information on the opening date and essential recommendations for planning a visit. This will be accompanied by a possible promotional campaign by the Ministry of Culture and Sport in the media and news coverage at state, regional and local levels.
- Once the museum has reopened: from the entrance area and along the route, in the spaces that can be visited, posters and/or information leaflets on the general sanitary measures recommended (interpersonal distance, frequent hand washing, etc.) will be made available to the public. The text and instructions will be provided by the central services of the Office of State Museums in order to offer standardised information.



IV. IN THE LONG TERM: THE ROLE OF MUSEUMS IN THE NEW SOCIAL CONTEXT

1. Scheduling after reopening

Temporary exhibitions, public activities and museum programmes in general have been affected by the closure and have been subject, depending on the case, to cancellations, postponements and/or changes in the format or content of their activity.

At this time, exhibitions that were about to end when the state of alarm was declared had to be extended, since the works could not be dismantled or the works shipped out. Some of the exhibitions that were scheduled to open on these dates or in the coming months have been postponed to future dates for the same reasons.

In this scenario, the exhibitions that were already in place before the closure of the museums would be reopened first, and gradually, the organisation of the new exhibitions would be finalised. However, the new calendar for these is hypothetical at this time, since it will depend in all cases on the decisions taken by the competent authorities at the national and international levels.

It is proposed, based on the common guidelines provided by the Central Services of the Office of State Museums, that the museums should carry out specific campaigns on their promotional channels to inform the public of the new dates and the conditions for visits, in a tone that generates confidence and encourages a return to the museums, with all the necessary precautions and the maximum rigour in the application of the protection measures.

2. The role of museums in the post-COVID-19 scenario

The democratisation and opening up of museums to society has been inextricably linked, in recent years, to an increase in the number of people visiting them, and the constant growth of mass tourism has been a fundamental factor in this process. Another key factor in consolidating the social role of museums has been the effort made to encourage access by traditionally indifferent sectors of the public, through special initiatives aimed at people with difficulties or specific audiences such as schoolchildren, young people, and the elderly.

In the new scenario, there is no room, at least in the short term, for the large number of people attracted by tourism and high-impact exhibitions, or for group-based socio-educational activities. We do not know how long it will be before museum activity returns to the normality we knew before. It is therefore necessary to reflect calmly on the priorities of post-pandemic museums, and on the possible new forms of social interaction that may come out of the new situation.

It is true that personal visits can gain in quality as the number of people decreases. The museums that emerge from the pandemic will offer more intimate contact with heritage, which had become difficult in some museums today. This circumstance cannot, however, return us to the elitist museums of the past, to which very few had access. Faced with the evidence that their audience will be less numerous, museums will have to make an effort to ensure that it is diverse, and, at the same time, seek forms of participation that involve different sectors and social agents.

It is time to proceed with the digital processing of collections and offer the contents of the museum in an imaginative way, using a variety of forms of virtual communication. It is also time to rethink the educational dynamics and cultural activities of museums, which will have to adapt creatively to more restricted formats. And it is time to strengthen heritage research and preservation, and prepare it for dissemination when normality is fully restored. This is also an opportunity to start measuring the relevance of an institution using new parameters, such as sustainability and socially responsible management.

As ICOM has pointed out, this crisis “leaves us with a long and complex process of recovery ahead of us. As unparalleled places of exchange and learning for all, museums will have an important role to play in repairing and strengthening the social fabric of affected communities.”

Annex I.

Action protocol

Cleaning and disinfection of spaces with and without collections and for handling cultural goods in state-owned and state-managed museums reporting to the Directorate-General for Fine Arts during the state of alarm caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the period of de-escalation in museum institutions

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Office of State Museums. Directorate-General for Fine Arts
Madrid

Title:

Action protocol Cleaning and disinfection of spaces with and without collections and for handling cultural goods in state-owned and state-managed museums reporting to the Directorate-General for Fine Arts during the state of alarm caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the period of de-escalation in museum institutions

Author/s:

Prepared by the Working Group of the Plan for Safeguarding Cultural Assets in Emergencies of the Office of State Museums.

Date:

9 May 2020



Action Protocol

CLEANING AND DISINFECTION OF SPACES WITH AND WITHOUT COLLECTIONS AND FOR HANDLING CULTURAL ASSETS IN STATE-OWNED AND STATE-MANAGED MUSEUMS UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE OFFICE OF STATE MUSEUMS DURING THE STATE OF ALARM CAUSED BY THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND THE PERIOD OF DE-ESCALATION IN MUSEUM INSTITUTIONS

This document outlines what COVID-19 is, how long it can survive on the surfaces of objects and when and under what conditions objects or spaces, on and in which the virus may persist or re-infection may occur, need to be cleaned, disinfected or isolated in museums.

BACKGROUND: CHARACTERISTICS AND BEHAVIOUR OF COVID-19

Health authorities have confirmed that we are facing an outbreak of pneumonia caused by a new coronavirus that has been named SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19). Although¹h nothing precise is known yet about the virus, by analogy with other viral infections it appears that transmission occurs through two routes, either by contact with the infected person or by contact with surfaces on which the virus can survive. It is known that the virus can be transmitted through close contact with respiratory secretions generated by a sick person's cough or sneeze. These secretions can infect another person if they come in contact with the mucous membranes of their nose, eyes, or mouth.

Droplets containing the virus can be deposited on the surfaces of household items and living spaces. According to some authors, it is possible for the coronavirus to be transmitted from these contaminated surfaces because the virus can survive on them².

An analysis of several studies reveals how long the coronavirus can survive on different surfaces. An article published in The Journal of Hospital Infection, "Persistence of coronaviruses on inanimate surfaces and their inactivation with biocidal agents³" reviews the persistence of coronavirus on different materials; it is the article that is being used as a reference by cultural heritage professionals when making precise recommendations on the treatment of cultural assets:

Metal	5 days
Wood	4 days
Paper	4-5 days
Glass	4-5 days
Plastic	6-9 days
Pottery	5 days
Stone	2-12 days

1 Source: World Health Organization: <https://www.who.int/es/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/q-a-coronaviruses> [28 April 2020]

2 "Guidelines for the disinfection of surfaces and living spaces for cases of COVID-19 under investigation, in quarantine, or probable or confirmed. Homes, residences, public spaces (shopping centres, supermarkets, etc.) and passenger transport", Directorate General of Public Health of the Ministry of Health (Community of Madrid, 29 March 2020). This technical document supplements those prepared by the Ministry of Health on the prevention and control of COVID-19. https://www.comunidad.madrid/sites/default/files/doc/sanidad/samb/protocolo_desinfeccion_de_superficies_y_espacios_habitados_v3_26_03_2020_con_anexo_1.pdf [27 April 2020]

3 Kampf et al.: "Persistence of coronaviruses on inanimate surfaces and their inactivation with biocidal agents", The Journal of Hospital Infection, No.104 (2020); pp: 246-251 <https://www.journalofhospitalinfection.com/action/showPdf?pii=S0195-6701%2820%2930046-3> [24 April 2020]



In regard to the bibliographical and documentary heritage kept in the libraries and archives of our museums, the recommendations of both the Ministry of Culture and Sport (IPCE) and international conservation and preservation bodies (such as the NDCC and NCPTT⁴) advise that documents should be kept in quarantine for a period of 3 to 9 days. In libraries⁵, it is recommended to extend this period to up to 14 days to increase the security of not transmitting the virus.

These virus survival figures can be altered by climatic conditions: temperature, humidity, and light.

At a high temperature of 30°C-40°C, its duration is reduced. However, at 4°C, persistence can increase to more than 28 days. In the case of relative humidity, there is still little proven scientific evidence of the behaviour of the virus. Some studies indicate that, at room temperature, the virus persists better at 50% relative humidity than at 30%⁶; others, that high temperatures and high humidity significantly reduce the transmission and spread of the virus⁷.

It is also known that ultraviolet radiation reduces the permanence of the virus on surfaces. Ultraviolet radiation has already been used in hospitals to disinfect equipment used regularly by patients and some medical materials. Because of this background, UV is being used to inactivate the SARS-CoV-2 virus, but its use requires special machinery and qualified personnel since incorrect use can damage people's skin or the material to which it is applied.

The World Health Organization has warned that UV lamps should not be used to sterilize hands or other skin areas, as UV radiation can cause irritation. The NCPPT⁸ advises against it because of the difficulties that its use entails for the treatment of cultural assets and how harmful it can be for some objects, such as books, photographs, documents, etc.

COVID-19 AND MUSEUMS UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE OFFICE OF STATE MUSEUMS

As a result of the health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and as a preventive measure consistent with public health criteria, the Directorate-General of Fine Arts resolved on 12 March 2020 to temporarily suspend the opening to the public of the institutions under the auspices of this unit all over Spain, as it considers that the centres that it manages are spaces where the number of visitors makes it advisable to adopt extraordinary measures within the framework of containment required by the health crisis.

Royal Decree 463/2020 of 14 March declared the state of alarm for the management of the health crisis caused by COVID-19, a provision that, after successive extensions, has involved the closure of the museums until specific measures are taken to guarantee both the return of workers to them and the subsequent opening of their rooms to the public and the provision of other services.

The museums are still closed at the time of writing.

4 Sources: National Disaster Coordinating Council and National Center for Preservation Technology and Training. (Translation into Spanish in <https://www.ncptt.nps.gov/blog/covid-19-conceptos-basicos-desinfectar-materiales-historicos/?fbclid=IwAR1tGen1YrXuz8n8HwTZpKkF464aaYj1oKVI00D3CURmk1xDmd6TlxTs9ko>).

5 <https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/blogs/the-scoop/how-to-sanitize-collections-covid-19/> and National Library of Spain (BNE): blog.bne.es [28 April 2020]

6 Moriyama et al.: "Seasonality of respiratory viral infections." Annual Reviews of Virology. March 2020 [07 May 2020]

7 First indications of a correlation between meteorological variables and the spread of Covid-19 and SARS-CoV-2 in Spain. Ministry for Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge http://www.aemet.es/es/noticias/2020/04/Covid_variablesmeteorologicas_abril2020 [07 May 2020]

8 "Cultural Resources and COVID-19 ." National Center for Preservation Technology and Training <https://www.ncptt.nps.gov/blog/cultural-resources-and-covid-19/> [27 April 2020]



ACTION PROTOCOL

- **Purpose**

The aim of this protocol is to establish action guidelines to be implemented in museums that are under the authority of the Office of State Museums in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 within these institutions, while also guaranteeing the service provided by these museums, centred on the cultural assets that they preserve. For all these reasons, its nature is above all preventive in its definition and operational in its way of dealing with the collections, so as to create a climate of confidence and security in the day-to-day running of the institution.

- **Scope of action**

Its scope of implementation focuses on four action areas:

1. The cleaning of public and private spaces with no collections and of no historical value.
2. The cleaning of public and private spaces with collections.
3. The handling and treatment of cultural⁹ assets while there is a risk of contagion from the coronavirus.
4. Access to cultural assets while there is a risk of contagion from the coronavirus.

1. The cleaning of public and private spaces with no collections and of no historical value.

With a view to the gradual return of staff to the institutions and the reopening of these centres to the public, and in order to enable the safe use of the facilities and avoid contagion between people, we have to deal - in terms of cleanliness - with all kinds of surfaces on which the virus can remain, in both public and private spaces, with and without collections.

In the case of areas and surfaces that are of no historical value, cleaning contractors must follow the recommendations issued by the Ministry of Health for the disinfection of such areas and surfaces, both in terms of the use of equipment (masks, gloves, goggles and hydroalcoholic gels) and viricidal products. The Spanish health authorities have therefore published a list¹⁰ of antiseptic products and chemical disinfectants, such as bleach and ethanol, that can be used in these spaces (public and private spaces with no collections and of no historical value) by cleaning contractors.

The Ministry of Health places particular emphasis on differentiating between cleaning, which removes germs, dirt and impurities, and disinfection, which kills germs on those surfaces and objects. It is very important therefore that proper cleaning take place before disinfection¹¹, a fact that is also key if there is reinfection.

As a general preventive measure, products should not be mixed as they can be harmful both to health and to the surfaces to which they are applied. Among those most recommended, because they are easily accessible on the market, are a 2% solution of bleach (sodium hypochlorite that is normally sold at 0.07%) in water; or 70% ethanol, both of which significantly reduce the infectivity of coronavirus on surfaces.

9 The concept covers museum collections, documentary heritage (both historical archives and office files) and bibliographic heritage.

10 List of viricidal products authorized in Spain (Ministry of Health) https://www.mscbs.gob.es/profesionales/saludPublica/ccayes/alertasActual/nCov-China/documentos/Listado_virucidas.pdf [27 April 2020]

11 It gives a series of recommendations for cleaning and disinfection that can be found at the following link: https://www.mscbs.gob.es/profesionales/saludPublica/ccayes/alertasActual/nCov-China/documentos/Medidas_higienicas_COVID-19.pdf [27 April 2020]



The Spanish Cultural Heritage Institute (SCHI) recommends cleaning surfaces such as floors, doors, doorknobs and railings (provided they have no historical or artistic value) with the common disinfectant solutions suggested by the health authorities, although it recommends 70% ethanol rather than bleach, because it is less harmful.

As a general rule, the selection of the cleaning products to be used, and in which spaces, must be known and approved by the management of the centre.

The general cleaning service is continuing to operate at the museums under the authority of the Office of State Museums, so it appears that no special measures, in addition to those already being implemented, are required in order for the staff to return. When the centres reopen, these measures will need to be intensified in public spaces, where the cleaning must be scrupulous, and the cleaning staff must be provided with the necessary equipment and materials to carry out their tasks in a way that is safe both for people and for preventing the spread of the virus (gloves, masks and hydroalcoholic gel; disinfection protocols for cleaning equipment, disposable mops, etc.). This material must be provided by the cleaning company before the institutions open to the public.

2. The cleaning of public and private spaces with collections and of historical value: isolation, cleaning and disinfection.

As general methods for preventing the spread of the virus or containing its expansion, we need to address isolation, cleaning and disinfection.

Since our museums closed on 13 March 2020, the recommended quarantine periods have already been exceeded by isolation, so that in principle, there is no risk of contagion from possible contact with or handling of cultural assets at the time of reopening, but it could reappear after those collections come into contact with an infected person.

For this reason, when reopening public or private spaces with collections, the same cleaning protocol must be followed as at present. In storage areas, where cleaning does not take place daily, the cleaning of areas likely to be touched by the staff entering these facilities must be increased: doors, cabinets, railings, doorknobs, etc.

As staff return or centres are reopened to the public, there is a risk of contagion because of contact with the cultural assets or the spaces that house them (permanent exhibition, storage facilities, library, restoration workshop, photography areas, researcher support areas, etc.), it should be borne in mind that disinfectants can irreversibly damage cultural assets. Therefore, when there is a suspicion that a cultural asset or the space that houses it could be a source of infection from the virus, the safest measure is isolation, either of the object or of the area of the building affected, if not the closure of the building.

As indicated above, the coronavirus can remain on the surface of objects for several days and this time depends on the material of which the objects are made. As a preventive measure, the periods of isolation that are recommended range from 9 to 14 days, as previously established.

If there is a suspicion that the virus may be on the surface of a cultural asset, it is recommended that it be isolated. This should be done whenever possible and when there is no risk of contagion at the usual location of the cultural property (permanent exhibition, storage room, etc.).

It is recommended to keep a log of the cultural assets that are in isolation, which should include the basic data on the object, the location and date of isolation, the reason for isolation and the name(s) of the person(s) who isolated the cultural asset.



On the other hand, if it is presumed that a space in the museum may be infected, special measures must be considered, such as the cordoning off of the affected area, the partial closure of rooms or storage rooms or, if necessary, the closure of the centre for the period of time required for cleaning and disinfection.

Finally, with regard to air quality, options must be analysed to enable regular, controlled ventilation in the spaces that house collections.

3. The handling and treatment of cultural assets while there is a risk of contagion from the coronavirus.

Returning to work at the centres will lead to contact with the collections and their being handled by a number of professional groups in a variety of spaces: curators and restorers; transport and museography companies; users of the centres' libraries; researchers; etc.

As a preventive measure, the handling of cultural assets must be limited as much as possible during this period to avoid possible contagion. Depending on the nature of the asset, its size, vulnerability, and/or difficulty of handling, the circulation and movement of a cultural asset may be temporarily refused.

Similarly, a record must be kept of the cultural assets that have been handled by centre staff or by outside contractors in order to isolate it. It is advisable that cultural assets that are returned to the institutions because they were outside their original centre for a temporary exhibition, restoration workshop, inter-library loan, etc., should undergo a period of quarantine after being unpacked.

In order to avoid contagion through contact with the surfaces of cultural assets or the equipment or media with which it coexists, the following recommendations should be observed as a general rule:

A. Media:

As a preventive measure when working with cultural assets, the technical staff must:

- Wear a mask (unless its use is not advisable for medical reasons)
 - Not touch the part of the mask that is in contact with the skin with their hands, with or without gloves.
- Use disposable single-use gloves, preferably made of nitrile
 - Before putting on gloves, their hands must be washed thoroughly with soap and water.
 - Not use hydroalcoholic solutions on the gloves.
 - Not touch their nose, eyes or mouth with their gloves.
 - Wash their hands thoroughly after removing their gloves.
 - Dispose of the gloves in a safe container (emergency waste management).
- Wear smocks.
 - It is recommended that a space be provided where smocks can be removed, so that in the event of contact the virus does not spread to other areas of the museum.

It is important that technical staff ensure that all materials that may come into contact with cultural assets are cleaned and disinfected before and after use (trolleys, trays, etc.); as well as all other instruments that they use that may come into contact with objects or that may be shared by other technicians: log books at storage room entrances, protective or packaging material for cultural assets, shared computers, office equipment, telephones, photocopiers, chairs, walkie-talkies, etc.



B.-Work team:

Each museum must create a task force of first responders so that, in the event of the confirmation of coronavirus infection among any of the workers or people who have been in contact with the collections, they can provide a rapid response, isolating cultural assets and/or spaces, and arranging, depending on the emergency, for immediate cleaning and/or disinfection, as appropriate.

This task force will meet periodically to monitor the status of the institution.

C. Spaces¹²:

- Maintain a social distance of 2 metres, and if necessary, study the distribution of workspaces and workstations (library reference sections, workspaces in storage rooms, restoration workshops, etc.).
- Ensure ventilation when possible.
- Provide a specific space, as a preventive measure and when the nature of the object permits and/or requires it, in which to isolate the cultural asset after its use/handling when it cannot be returned to its original location.

The information on Personal Protective Equipment prepared by the National Institute of Safety and Health at Work gives alternatives and strategies for optimising the use of masks, gloves and protective clothing¹³.

Information signs regarding hygiene and health measures and how these must be carried out must be posted in accessible areas on the premises.

4.-Access to the consultation of cultural assets while there is a risk of contagion from the coronavirus.

A.-Type of access: When the centres resume their activities, it will be necessary to differentiate between internal and external personnel.

In the case of requests from external personnel to consult cultural assets, until the risk situation has been eliminated access in digital format to the collections and to the archive and library holdings shall be the default option, wherever possible.

As a preventive measure, direct access to cultural assets in situ must be limited as much as possible during this period to avoid possible contagion. Depending on the nature of the asset, its size, vulnerability, and/or difficulty of handling, access to certain cultural assets may temporarily be refused.

For this reason, it is important that each centre defines:

- Which in-person consultation services it can and cannot provide.
- Which services can be offered virtually.
- Which collections, due to their uniqueness, cannot be accessed during this period.
- They must provide information on the institution's website and by telephone of the services offered and under what conditions during this period.

¹² Guide to Good Practices in the Workplace. Ministry of Health. <https://www.mscbs.gob.es/gabinetePrensa/notaPrensa/pdf/GUIA110420172227802.pdf>. [07 May 2020]

¹³ Action procedure for occupational risk prevention services in relation to exposure to SARS-COV-2 https://www.mscbs.gob.es/profesionales/saludPublica/ccayes/alertasActual/nCov-China/documentos/PrevencionRRL_COVID-19.pdf



Consultation of museum, bibliographic or historical archive collections shall be by appointment.

As a consultation protocol, users must be informed that they must follow the recommendations of the technical staff, and wear masks and gloves, which does not mean that they can handle the pieces.

Any cultural asset that has come into contact with an outside user must be isolated for a period appropriate to the nature of that cultural asset (wood, stone, metals, various materials, etc.).

B. Consultation areas: If it does not exist, it is recommended that a specific area be set up for access to cultural assets, that is not a storage area or a normal work area for the centre's staff. Access to cultural asset storage rooms, restoration workshops and technicians' offices must be limited.

C. User/researcher log: A log will be kept of the outsiders and internal staff who access the museum's internal spaces/facilities with collections (including the library) and the cultural assets that they access/handle so that they can be contacted by telephone should a coronavirus infection be detected among the staff or users who have had access to these spaces. The information that will be collected for this log will be their full name and contact telephone number (Organic Law 3/2018 of December 5, Protection of Personal Data and guarantee of digital rights).

5.- Coordination and internal communication

A coordinator will be appointed from the staff of the institution to ensure compliance with this protocol. It is important that frequent meetings are held with the staff members to exchange views and modify the protocols to fit the needs and habits of all users who are in contact with the collections and the spaces that house them, in order to assess the degree of compliance with and relevance of the health measures adopted, and also to optimise the action protocols and ensure that they are maintained and function correctly.

