

Information for Borrowers

Introduction

As a group of National Museums we are committed to providing greater access to our collections, knowledge, expertise and skills through our work with organisations in the UK and internationally. The Science Museum Group (“SMG”) cares for and houses over one million items which we regularly loan to museums and other institutions in the UK and internationally, enabling more people access to these unique collections.

The SMG comprises the Science Museum in London, the National Railway Museum in York and Shildon, the Museum of Science and Industry in Manchester and the National Media Museum in Bradford. Loans are available from these four stored collections and in exceptional circumstances objects may be lent which are on permanent display at one of the Museums.

Loan Purpose

The most frequent types of lending are short term loans for exhibition purposes and longer term loans for permanent galleries or similar. Long term loans are for a maximum of three years with an opportunity for the loan to be renewed after the first term, subject to availability and our standard checks.

Short-term loans for educational, academic or filming purposes may be possible and we also lend some of our operational locos from the National Railway Museum and Museum of Science and Industry collections. Further information is available on request. We lend largely to other museums, galleries and similar institutions but are able to lend to commercial organisations. An increase in costs applies for international or commercial loans, see the relevant section below.

Application for a loan

A request for a loan should be made with at least six months’ notice for loans within the UK and nine months’ notice for international loans. The application can be made using our online request form. The application should outline why each object is important in the overall display narrative, or to that organisation requesting the loan if it isn’t for exhibition purposes. We will need a start date and an end date of the loan to be able to process the application, as well as a venue name and address, a contact name and an explanation of the purpose of the loan.

Decision Making

The Curatorial team from the relevant Museum will make a decision on whether a loan can go ahead, with support and advice from the Conservation and Registration team. If a loan is declined the reason will be explained in full.

Loan Conditions

Security and Environment

Approval for a loan will not be given until the SMG is satisfied that adequate security will be provided by the Borrower. The standard of security required will vary with the nature of the object, the place of exhibition and the degree of public access allowed. A security assessment request is submitted to the Arts Council England Security Officer for each loan, once agreed, and we can only lend on their approval.

The Borrower will be asked to complete a UK Registrars Group (“UKRG”) Facilities Report and Security Supplement, and where applicable a Display Case Supplement. They will also need to provide at least three months’ worth of environmental data from the display area. A loan will not be approved unless the Borrowing institution can provide suitable environmental conditions. The SMG will advise on the specific environmental and display conditions required for each object once the loan has been agreed.

Insurance

There are various options for insurance for loans out which will depend on the type of institution we are lending to, in addition to the location of this institution and the advice provided by the Arts Council England security assessment. For long term loans insurance valuations may be reviewed periodically and the insurance arrangements will need to be amended appropriately.

For national loans to museums and non-commercial institutions that pass a security clearance check, the Borrower must have adequate commercial insurance for the total agreed minimum liability amount.

For international and commercial loans, the Borrower will need to ensure that you have adequate commercial insurance or adequate cover through a suitable National Indemnity Scheme for the items to be loaned.

For loans to other National Museums the Science Museum Group follows the ‘UK Government Indemnity Scheme (“GIS”) Guidelines for Nationals’

Packing and transport of objects

The Borrower is responsible for appointing and paying for a GIS compliant transport agent, to be agreed by the SMG before the arrangements are made. The transport agent will normally be expected to pack the objects as well as transport them, when the SMG packs the objects a charge will be applied.

The SMG may stipulate that couriers travel with the objects and/or are present for the installation and de-installation. The courier costs are paid for by the Borrower, these include (but are not limited to) travel, overnight accommodation and the per diem, which is to cover the daily living costs. Please note that the SMG may insist on business class travel for couriers travelling with objects.

During the Loan period

During the loan period the SMG may ask for condition reports, or a member of SMG staff may need to visit the Borrowing institution from time to time to inspect the objects and to confirm that the conditions of the loan are being observed. This will be at the Borrower’s expense.

Loan Costs

The Science Museum Group operates a full cost recovery for loans:

Preparation of objects

All charges for conservation work are passed to the Borrower. This is usually an hourly cost at a minimum of three hours' work per object for condition assessment, condition checking and cleaning. In addition to the minimum, any required conservation work will increase the number of hours and the cost.

Once the loan has been agreed the Borrower will be informed of the estimated costs for conservation work. As soon as they agree these costs in writing if a loan is cancelled and conservation work has already started the Borrower shall be liable to pay these costs.

Other Costs

Commercial and international Borrowers are charged a loan administration fee which is calculated over the loan preparation period and covers staff time for the planning, documenting and coordinating of the loan.

A daily courier fee is charged to commercial or international Borrowers to cover the time that members of staff are away from their main role. As explained above, all other courier costs are also paid for by the Borrower.

Documentation

Loan Agreement

A suitable contact at the Borrowing institution will be asked to sign the SMG Loan Agreement in duplicate, agreeing to accept the objects on loan under the conditions stated in the agreement.

Other Documents and Information

As well as the UKRG documentation and environmental data the Borrower is asked to provide a venue map showing the display area and may be asked for a route map with images, a risk assessment and/or a method statement for transporting/displaying certain objects. The Borrower will be asked for invoicing information once the loan has been agreed and will be asked to complete a SMG New Supplier form where applicable.

Acknowledgements

The following acknowledgment should be used in all exhibition labels or catalogue entries:

Science Museum Group