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Conservation of cultural heritage – Guidelines for management of environmental conditions – Open storage facilities: definitions and characteristics of collection centres dedicated to the preservation and management of cultural heritage

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EUROPEAN STANDARD

EN 16141

NORME EUROPÉENNE

EUROPÄISCHE NORM

November 2012

ICS 97.195

English Version

**Conservation of cultural heritage - Guidelines for management
of environmental conditions - Open storage facilities: definitions
and characteristics of collection centres dedicated to the
preservation and management of cultural heritage**

Conservation des biens culturels - Recommandations pour
la gestion des conditions d'environnement des biens
culturels - Pôle de conservation: définitions et
caractéristiques des espaces permettant la conservation et
l'exploitation des biens culturels

Erhaltung des kulturellen Erbes - Richtlinien für den
Umgang mit Umwelt- und Umgebungsbedingungen -
Schaudepots: Definitionen und Merkmale von
Sammlungszentren bestimmt für die Bewahrung und Pflege
des kulturellen Erbes

This European Standard was approved by CEN on 8 September 2012.

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EUROPEAN COMMITTEE FOR STANDARDIZATION
COMITÉ EUROPÉEN DE NORMALISATION
EUROPÄISCHES KOMITEE FÜR NORMUNG

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Foreword

This document (EN 16141:2012) has been prepared by Technical Committee CEN/TC 346 “Conservation of cultural heritage”, the secretariat of which is held by UNI.

This European Standard shall be given the status of a national standard, either by publication of an identical text or by endorsement, at the latest by May 2013, and conflicting national standards shall be withdrawn at the latest by May 2013.

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Introduction

The importance of preserving and transmitting cultural heritage under the best conditions is imperative for all, but is of utmost importance for cultural heritage institutions. They have the responsibility of preserving, presenting and developing spaces dedicated to the public or reserved for collections. Stored collections have often remained inaccessible to the public but increasingly there is an expectation that collections should be accessible even when not on display, either for the general viewing public or for controlled research and collection management activities. To meet this demand, dedicated facilities are being developed to allow access and research. These "Open Storage Facilities" or "Collection Centres" place new demands on cultural heritage institutions and this guidance document is intended to assist institutions by describing common best practice in the design and function of such facilities.

Open Storage Facilities have four main purposes:

- to fulfil the requirements of conservation;
- to facilitate access to the collections;
- to allow for the management of collections;
- to provide a secure place for the safekeeping of collections.

This standard may be used for designing new open storage facilities or for the improvement of existing storage facilities.

The concept of open storage facilities is general. It relates to places gathering the functions defined in this standard belonging to any type of institutions (archives, libraries, archaeological deposits, museums,...) dedicated to the safekeeping of any type of collection (archives, books, archaeological items, etc...)

1 Scope

This European Standard defines the characteristics of specific areas dedicated to the preservation, storage, management of, and access to collections. It lists the considerations that should be taken into account to achieve optimum storage and accessibility.

2 Normative references

The following documents, in whole or in part, are normatively referenced in this document and are indispensable for its application. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

EN 15898:2011, *Conservation of cultural property - Main general terms and definitions*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in EN 15898:2011 and the following apply.

3.1

handling

method of holding and moving an object according to established procedures in order to limit the risks of damage and deterioration

3.2

integrated pest management

IPM

established procedure for controlling pests such as insects, rodents

3.3

packing

measures and actions to safeguard objects during movement, transport and for storage

3.4

protocol

agreed procedures defining the progress of an operation

3.5

quarantine

isolation and observation of an object which may present a danger of biological contamination

3.6

safety

pertaining to human health

3.7

security

protection against theft and physical damage

3.8

storage

designated area where objects are housed providing the necessary conditions required for preservation, safety and security while not on display

Note 1 to entry: The term “repository” is used in archives and libraries.

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3.9 open storage facilities
places dedicated to housing collections, and to activities relating to their management providing the necessary conditions required for preservation, safety and security and public access

4 Open storage facilities

4.1 General organisation

Open storage facilities are part of the general organisation of a cultural heritage institution. Such premises constitute a set of areas isolated from each other but interdependent and organised according to use.

Open storage facilities have four principal functions:

- a) permanent and temporary storage of objects;
- b) collection management: study of the collections, display, consultation, and scientific examination; some of these functions require areas dedicated to public access;
- c) collection services: movement, packing/unpacking, workshops, and sometimes treatment of the collection;
- d) facilities management (e.g. security system, alarm control unit, and plant room).

The purpose is to offer the best conditions of collections conservation and management. However, all functions of an open storage facility do not necessarily require their own specific area.

4.2 Storage

A clear and rational organisation of the collections is important as well as policies and procedures for managing operations. A balance should be maintained between security of collections and access.

Collections are arranged in spaces which are exclusively devoted to them. These areas constitute the central and vital core of the open storage facilities. Safety and security, climate control, fire prevention and other preventive measures require attention. Storage areas should be protected from risks of natural disasters. They should be kept dark, except when lighting is required for access. They should be equipped with fire detectors, sensors reacting to dampness and pest monitors.

The distribution of the collections in storage areas should follow these principles:

- stable environmental conditions adapted to the requirements of the various collections;
- the placement of storage units such as shelves, cabinets, etc., should be appropriate to the collections, ensuring easy and effective access to objects and secure handling of artefacts.

Storage furniture should be designed according to the characteristics and conservation requirements of the collections and the activities of the institution. It should be designed to allow easy maintenance of the area and facilitate the movement of people and collections without risk. The furniture arrangement should facilitate cleaning of the floor.

Storage areas and furniture should be able to adapt to the growth of the collections without risks to safety and security.

4.3 Collections management

4.3.1 General

Collections management areas fulfil the missions of study, consultation and preparation for display. These functions should be carried out in protected spaces and with preservation conditions appropriate to the collections and similar to those in the storage areas. If collections require particular conservation conditions (e.g. cold storage), the relevant acclimatisation measures should be applied.

4.3.2 Documentation

The documentation process includes e.g. identification, description, location, measurement, data entry, labelling of objects. This work should take place in an area close to the storage area and allow the handling and temporary movement of the objects to be inventoried. During the documentation process, no other activity should be carried out in the vicinity of the objects.

4.3.3 Photography

Photography, which may be for documentation, exhibition, scholarly, promotional or conservation purposes, must be carried out in a designated area, if possible, facilitating and limiting the movement of people and objects. Objects to be photographed shall be kept in the area during the shooting process only.

4.3.4 Study room

In the study room, objects are made available for study and research. This area is close to the storage areas and allows the safe examination and easy handling of the objects, as well as access to documentation, such as files, data base and internet connections. It contains only the objects for consultation.

In archives, documents under consultation on several days are stored in a specific place.

4.3.5 Display

If the storage facilities are connected to public exhibition areas, handling, packing, moving and conditioning of the objects meet the same protocols as all other objects in transit. This also applies to loaned objects. Public entry to the exhibition areas is separate from any access to other activities in the storage facilities.

4.4 Collection services

4.4.1 General

Collection services include all operations relating to the circulation and well-being of objects, especially those related to exit or entry to the open storage facility. They enable accessibility to the objects. Service areas are located in separate areas, connected on one hand with the functions of storage, on the other hand with the functions of collections management.

Collection service activities should be carried out in areas separate from those for storing the collections. Objects should be here only on a temporary basis and should be subject to the same environmental and security conditions as in the storage areas. National standards for health and safety and for operating equipment shall be adhered to.