



Beaton Institute Archives, Cape Breton University
Guidelines for Re-Opening During Covid-19
Draft Procedures Manual

Summary

The Beaton Institute is the official repository for historically significant records of Cape Breton University. Additionally, the Institute is a cultural heritage archive mandated to preserve the social, economic, political and cultural history of Cape Breton Island/ Unama'ki. It is a centre for local, regional, national and international research and strives to promote inquiry through innovative public programming and community based initiatives.

The Beaton Institute offers many services to faculty, students, visiting researchers and local communities. This document provides guidance and documents /procedures that will be implemented and followed in order to keep our staff, students and researchers safe during our 'new normal' with Covid-19 impacting our spaces and usual routines.

The following recommendations and procedures are based on public health advice and guidelines at a Federal and Provincial level. As well, the staff performed a risk assessment to examine where preventative measures would be most effective at keeping employees and patrons safe. This document includes sections focused on the most core archival functions at the archive including; reference and access, collections management and donations, and academic and public programming.

Reference and Access

The top priority at the archive is to protect the health and well-being of staff and patrons. As our staffing is limited we are able to accommodate and implement recommended public health measures. However, after completing a risk assessment of the space and services, the following phased approach to opening is recommended:

1. Return of staff to the workplace (staff only with preparation for reopening)
2. Reopening of the archive to students, faculty, and the public (by appointment only)
3. Reopening to all students and public (with limits on number of researchers on-site)

As we gradually reopen to researchers, we plan to adhere to recommended preventative measures. Following the directives of the Chief Medical Officer of Health in Nova Scotia and guidelines provided by the Association of Canadian Archivists, the following measures and procedures are recommended:

Messaging and Information

- Staff will be encouraged to NOT report to work if they experience any of the screening symptoms for COVID-19 outlined by NS Public Health.
- Patrons (including visiting scholars or researchers) who exhibit any screening symptoms upon arrival at the archive or during the course of their visit will be asked to leave and submit their research request via phone or email.
- Instructional signage and infographics will be placed at the entrance (i.e. sanitize hands, sign visitor registry, proceed to front desk for instructions).
- Registration by all visitors/patrons will be required. Information about collections accessed by the patron will not be shared.
- Our website will be consistently updated to reflect our service levels, and to remind patrons that delays re: service delivery can be expected, as staffing is limited.
- The website, social media channels, and phone messages will relay important public health measures to be expected when visiting the archive by appointment.
- If a reference request can be completed at a distance, this will be encouraged.

Physical / Social Distancing

- Re-arranging furniture and chairs to ensure 2 meters or 6 feet is maintained between all staff and patrons.
- Directional decals and signage will be placed throughout the archive to encourage appropriate distancing. This includes narrower spaces such as office hallways, entrances and exits.
- Plexi-glass barrier will be installed at main reference point of service.
- Time limits on research time may be required depending on demand

Consistent Hygiene Measures

- Hand washing and/or hand sanitizing will be mandatory for all visitors.
- High touch surfaces will be cleaned regularly and good respiratory etiquette will be enforced.

- Consultation with CBU cleaning staff to ensure sanitization of higher use/traffic areas, and to confirm which cleaning tasks will be completed internally or by cleaning staff.
- All researchers to bring own pencils and erasers, etc. to reduce sharing of materials
- Non-medical masks will be worn by staff when distancing is not possible and will be generally recommended. Non-medical masks will be available for providing to patrons if they do not have their own.
- Hand sanitizing station will be available at the entrance of the archive and also directions to the washroom.
- Disposable gloves will be available

Circulation and Quarantine of Reference Collections

- Patrons will be asked to request material for in-person requests in advance (minimum 24-hour notice).
- Textual materials will be quarantined in a separate location for 24 hours before being re-shelved or re-circulated. Hard surface items such as microfilm will require either disinfecting or a longer quarantine period (tbd)
- Cash payment for research services will not be accepted (credit card or cheque only). Fees for photocopying on-site will be waived depending on quantity requested.
- The use of self-scanning (hand-held scanners) and photography (cell phones) will be encouraged to minimize interaction between staff and patrons and facilitate ease of access/reduce future in-person visits.
- Card catalogue and other physical research tools will be used by staff to assist a patron with locating reference materials (tbd)

Donations, Transfers and Safe Handling of Records

- On-site donations or 'curbside' pickup outside of a residence or business required. Staff will wear a non-medical mask and gloves when accepting donations or transfers. Donations and transfers will not be accepted from anyone exhibiting symptoms or who indicate they have symptoms when asked.
- No drop-off donations. All donations must be arranged in advance with the Archivist.
- Donated material will be quarantined in a designated location within the archive. During this time, records cannot be touched. Once the time frame of 9 days has been completed, archives staff can move the materials and go through their contents. Date of arrival will be noted in the collections management database.
- The designated quarantine location will be carefully cleaned after the material is moved.

- Important to note that the Canadian Conservation Institute does NOT recommend disinfecting archival/heritage collections. This can be mentioned to potential donors.

Academic and Public Programming

- Faculty and students can make appointments once we are in a second phase of opening to discuss assignments and research. All public health measures apply.
- Internship students will complete their hours staggered depending on how many are enrolled. They will work separately from staff and patrons, and adhere to the public health rules in place during their internship hours. (tbd)
- Group course orientations are temporarily suspended. Access to instructional videos will be made available.
- Faculty and students who require access to archival records for course assignments or for research purposes can request these materials digitized and forwarded electronically. All efforts to fast-track inclusion on the Beaton Institute Digital Archive will be made.
- Project work and public events are temporarily suspended.

*This document will be reviewed every three months or as needed for updating.

Resources

American Library Association (ALA) “Handling Library Materials and Collections During a Pandemic”. Found at <http://www.ala.org/alcts/preservationweek/resources/pandemic>

Canadian Conservation Institute (CCI) Notes “Caring for Heritage Collections during the COVID-19 Pandemic”. Found at <https://www.canada.ca/en/conservation-institute/services/conservation-preservation-publications/canadian-conservation-institute-notes/caring-heritage-collections-covid19.html>

Government of Nova Scotia – Reopening. Found at <https://novascotia.ca/reopening-nova-scotia/>

Health Canada Covid-19. Found at <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html>

National Center for Preservation Technology and Training (NCPTT) “COVID-19 Basics: Disinfecting Cultural Resources”. Found at <https://www.ncptt.nps.gov/blog/covid-19-basics-disinfecting-cultural-resources/>