

BS EN 16095:2012



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Conservation of cultural property — Condition recording for movable cultural heritage

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National foreword

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A list of organizations represented on this committee can be obtained on request to its secretary.

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Conservation of cultural property - Condition recording for movable cultural heritage

Conservation des biens culturels - Constater l'état du
patrimoine culturel mobilier

Erhaltung des kulturellen Erbes - Zustandsaufnahme an
beweglichem Kulturerbe

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Foreword

This document (EN 16095:2012) has been prepared by Technical Committee CEN/TC 346 “Conservation of cultural property”, 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of an identical text or by endorsement, at the latest by February 2013, and conflicting national standards shall be withdrawn at the latest by February 2013.

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Introduction

Individuals and organizations responsible for the conservation of tangible cultural heritage are required to maintain a record of its condition. A condition record is an essential tool in the management of tangible cultural heritage; it may even contribute to a decision that something should be preserved. A condition record is of historical value and can provide evidence when defining conservation needs and priorities. The information it contains can be of interest to the public, enhancing their understanding and appreciation of cultural heritage.

A condition record is archival in principle. Condition records should be added to the archive of objects or collections.

There are different circumstances under which condition recording is carried out (see Clause 4). Condition recording usually culminates in a condition report, the depth and breadth of which may vary depending on its purpose, context or author. There is a diversity of formats of condition report currently in use, for example: free text, text with a glossary, free text within a pre-defined framework or pro-forma etc. This European Standard deals with the contents of a condition report and not the format in which it is produced, whether on paper or digital. It provides a guide to collecting essential and relevant information in a logical and well organized order for the purpose of making a condition report. This purpose is further illustrated in an annex which sets out examples of information and how they may be collected. It does not claim to impose the use of a universal model for a condition report, but it does set a standard for core information.

This European Standard provides guidance on producing individual reports (which may be about individual objects or whole collections) but does not cover the methodology for collection surveys. An understanding of the condition of a collection may be gained from survey data derived from individual condition reports, whether of all of the items in the collection or from a statistical sample.

1 Scope

This European Standard sets out the purpose and context of condition recording for movable cultural heritage and provides a framework for a condition report. It specifies the status of a condition report and its essential contents.

This European Standard applies to all kinds of movable cultural heritage, whether individual objects or whole collections. It can also be used for immovable features in buildings or monuments.

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 15946, *Conservation of cultural property — Packing principles for transport*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

3.1

condition report

record of condition for a specific purpose, dated and authored

Note 1 to entry: A condition report normally results from a condition survey.

[SOURCE: EN 15898:2011]

3.2

condition survey

inspection to assess condition

[SOURCE: EN 15898:2011]

3.3

diagnosis

process of identifying the present condition of an object and determining the nature and causes of any change, as well as the conclusions drawn

Note 1 to entry: Diagnosis is based on observation, investigation, historical analysis, etc.

[SOURCE: EN 15898:2011]

4 Purpose of a condition report

4.1 General

The purpose of making a condition report is to record the condition of cultural heritage following an inspection and assessment. The contents of a condition report can provide not only technical data but also knowledge and understanding about an object or collection, information produced by monitoring its change over time and information that will assist with future planning. Changes in the condition of cultural heritage may diminish its significance and reduce its potential benefits to present and future generations.

The condition report is an essential tool:

- a) in the short term and on an ad-hoc basis: prior to any movement of cultural property, and in support of the decision to undertake this movement, based on a risk assessment; as part of the sale of property, etc.;
- b) in the short to medium term and for a limited period: before, during and after exhibition and up to return of the property; before treatment; following an emergency and before subsequent treatment, etc.;
- c) in the long term and for an unlimited period: as a contribution to the material history of the object, etc.

A condition report will therefore be completed under a variety of circumstances that reflect its purpose. The following is a summary of the purposes of condition reports and the circumstances in which they are commonly created (see Table A.1).

4.2 Knowledge and understanding

Condition reports are part of the documentation of cultural heritage objects and collections, in which their state and status are recorded. They also serve to deepen knowledge and understanding of cultural heritage. Condition reports contain information that may be of interest to the public and are a source of knowledge for present and future research.

4.3 Monitoring and recording changes in condition

Comparative analyses of condition reports may be used to track the condition of cultural heritage over time. Such a comparison assists in understanding the reasons for change and enables decisions to be made about future care. Condition reports may help in assessing the effects of earlier conservation interventions or of changes to location or environment.

The contents of a condition report specifically intended to accompany objects in transit are also specified in EN 15946.

4.4 Planning

An understanding of condition is a pre-requisite in planning the care or use of cultural heritage. Decisions leading to actions or measures that affect the future condition of cultural heritage should follow an assessment and diagnosis of condition.

5 Status of the condition report

A condition report has permanent validity and should be archived. Signed and dated condition reports may have validity for contractual purposes or as evidence. As a reference document, the condition report may also have a contractual legal value provided that it has been agreed and signed jointly by both parties (e.g. by the owner and borrower of an object).

Formal condition reports may vary in scale and content but their status remains the same.

Informal observations and notes may contribute to the creation of a condition report.

6 Recommended contents of a condition report

6.1 Introduction

It is important that a condition report includes a minimum set of information, clearly laid out for future retrieval. The following is considered to be basic expected information; it is not set out in a hierarchical order. All

relevant information about an object or a collection should be made available to the person producing a report on its condition.

A possible format in which this essential information can be held is suggested in Annex B.

6.2 Reporting information

A condition report shall include the following information concerning its creation:

- a) person(s) who has performed the survey, position and qualifications;
- b) the date of inspection and date of the report;
- c) tools and methodologies used;
- d) the purpose and context of the report;
- e) the name of the client/commissioner;
- f) the working conditions (see Clause 8) under which the report was created;
- g) reliability of collected data (not available, incomplete or exhaustive).

A condition report may also include:

- 1) contact persons for the inspection;
- 2) person(s) present during the inspection;
- 3) inaccessibility of parts of the object, if relevant;
- 4) time used to complete the survey.

6.3 Object identification

An object shall be identified through the inclusion of the following information:

- a) identification number (e.g. inventory or accession number etc.) or statutory protection number (date of the classification or registration order, etc.), and/or acquisition date;
- b) title, heading, designation or object name;
- c) author, creator, attribution, origin, civilisation, etc. and date of creation if known;
- d) ownership, even if reported as unknown;
- e) protection information, where it exists;
- f) a summary of significance, i.e. cultural or functional nature or indicator of relative importance, when determined.

6.4 Object description

The nature of the cultural heritage shall be described before its condition is assessed and recorded. When possible, an established methodology for describing the type of object or collection of objects should be used and referenced. Otherwise, a consistent methodology should be used for describing similar objects (e.g. general to specific; support followed by media, structure to surface, etc.).

The following is a list of possible descriptive criteria: materials; structures; surfaces; history; technique(s); measured dimensions (height, width, etc.) according to a stated unit; with or without frame/base etc.; weight; number of items, components, installation notes, artist installation guides. The description should include how the item was made, whether in summary (e.g. 'a painting', 'a manuscript', etc.) or in detail (e.g. frottage, lost wax cast, etc.). When potentially important information is unknown, this should be made clear.

A photographic or other visual record of the cultural heritage shall be included. The number and viewpoints of the photographs taken should be appropriate to the size and degree of complexity of the object. Any visual records, including digital images, shall be annotated in order that their purpose and contents can be readily understood at the time of production and subsequently. Visual records shall be produced using standardized reference units (e.g. RGB values, scales, etc.) and should be durable, meeting archival standards. For large collections of objects, a representative selection or statistical sample can be made for recording purposes.

6.5 Object environment

The condition report shall include any records of the environment in which an item or collection has been held. The environment should also be recorded at the time of the condition assessment.

If the environment is understood to be having an effect upon the object, this should be noted in the report along with any observed effect.

6.6 Condition description

A condition description shall be a record of observed, measured, tested or evaluated information concerning the current state of an item, including its conservation history. If the condition of an item is known or suspected to have changed from an earlier or original state, or as previously reported, the condition description shall record this change. If earlier addition, repair or conservation treatment is discerned it shall be recorded.

Condition description shall always allow for the option of free text observations or other recorded observations and not only be a choice of pre-listed descriptors. It shall define the nature and extent of any change or deterioration and of perceived stability. If a scoring system is used, for example to classify levels of condition or vulnerability, this classification system shall be explained. Following investigation, any results and further documentation of the object (such as samples, results of analysis or tests, analytical photography etc.) which inform the condition description shall be recorded in the report.

Observed damage shall be described and marked on a scaled diagram or photograph. Any mapping system used to log multiple examples of damage shall be defined with a key.

6.7 Diagnosis and conclusions

The condition report can include a diagnosis of the reasons for deterioration or other changes in condition, and conclusions and recommendations for future care and/or conservation, including environment, handling and packaging. If the information necessary for an immediate diagnosis is not available, the condition record shall propose further scientific, historical, technical or other investigation or analysis and the description shall be up-dated subsequently.

7 Recommended personnel

Condition reports on cultural heritage are performed by experienced professionals who have received specific training in this activity, particularly conservator-restorers. The quality and usefulness of a condition report depends upon the knowledge and skill of its author or authors. Sound knowledge of the materials comprising the cultural heritage, of the processes that led to their creation and deterioration, and experience in examining such cultural heritage are all required to draft a competent condition report. The author of a report should be aware of the limitations of his/her own knowledge and expertise, and appreciate the risks of going beyond these.

8 Carrying out a condition assessment

8.1 General

The following are recommendations of good practice when assessing the condition of cultural heritage.

8.2 Working conditions

The quality of a report is affected by the conditions under which the assessment of the objects is made. Of primary importance is the safety of the person making the assessment, followed by the safety of the object under inspection, and these should be addressed before starting work.

The following shall be taken into consideration:

- a) physical accessibility to the cultural heritage: height, examination distance, structural framework (e.g. scaffolding, work platform, etc.), under glass, in a showcase, etc.;
- b) sufficient and safe lighting: quality, quantity, type, etc.;
- c) sufficient physical support or mounting for the object(s);
- d) suitable and well-maintained equipment to make visual inspections or measurements, e.g. ruler, laser measuring instrument, microscope, camera, scales etc.;
- e) protection of objects and persons: gloves for handling objects, protective clothing suited to the situation, etc.

8.3 Recommended practices

Special attention shall be paid to the following (not listed in order of importance):

- a) using non-invasive test methods before considering invasive methods;
- b) accurate mapping of any observed features;
- c) fully record the metadata associated with the data collected, e.g.:
 - 1) terminology: consider including a dedicated glossary or referring to existing glossaries, terms and definitions;
 - 2) clear explanation of any keys, graphic codes and abbreviations;
 - 3) explanation of the method for taking measurements (scale, units, etc.);
 - 4) dates, captions and keys for photographs and additional scientific documentation;
 - 5) degree of reliability of the collected data (plan additional fields left blank for comments or "not sure", "assumed" and "proven" boxes);
 - 6) definition of scales used to score or quantify the extent of damage (e.g. 1 to 4, percentage, etc.);
 - 7) indicating clearly if a value has been estimated because it could not be verified at the time of the inspection;
 - 8) clearly referenced test methods, e.g. colour measurements, solubility, etc.

Annex A (informative)

Purpose of a condition report

There are different circumstances under which condition reports are made. Table A.1 summarizes these, arranged by their three general purposes (see Clause 4).

Table A.1 — Purpose of a condition report

Purpose		
Knowledge and understanding	Scientific and historical research, documentation Processing an acquisition file, or transferring archives Processing a deposit Processing a legal protection measure Drawing up an inventory or listing for an object or a collection Examining an object in order to supplement a documentation file Evaluating the ability to be transported, stored and exhibited Studying the environment surrounding the object, which may include the building that houses this object Education	
Monitoring	Movements within or outside the institution	Temporary change of location within the responsible organisation/institution Movement from one organisation to another for the purposes of a temporary loan for an exhibition or deposit Movement for conservation-restoration elsewhere
	Temporary change of building use	Functions, concerts, filming, work inside the building, etc.
	Change of assignment	Change of controlling authority Change of owner
	Stocktaking, occasional or regular inspection, microorganism and pest control	
Planning	Emergency planning	
	Planning and executing preventive conservation work, or servicing and maintenance work EXAMPLE Arrangement of storerooms and storage areas.	
	Planning and executing remedial conservation work, or servicing and maintenance work EXAMPLE - pest treatment or disinfection treatment of buildings; - reinforcements, etc.; - repairs.	
	Management of outcomes of claims, e.g. after fire, natural disaster	In the short term following damage In the medium term
	Planning of movement	
	Planning and executing investigation, restoration measures, presentation, promotion and development measures	

Annex B (informative)

Example format for a condition report

The following is an example format of a condition report with contents drawn from the elements of the standard set out in Clause 6 and numbered accordingly.

The features in italics are illustrative of the likely contents, themselves drawn from the relevant text of the standard.

Table B.1 — Example format for a condition report

<p>Reporting information (6.2)</p> <p>Reporter's name and role:.....</p> <p>Date of the report:.....</p> <p>Purpose and context of the report:.....</p> <p>Client/commissioner:.....</p> <p>Reporting conditions:.....</p>
<p>Object identification (6.3)</p> <p>Identification number or statutory protection number, and/or acquisition date:.....</p> <p>Title, heading, designation and object name:.....</p> <p>Author, creator, attribution, origin, civilisation, etc. and date of creation if known:.....</p> <p>Ownership, even if defined as unknown:.....</p> <p>Protection information:.....</p> <p>Summary of significance:.....</p>
<p>Object description (6.4)</p> <p><i>The nature of an object... including materials; structures; surfaces; history; technique(s); measured dimensions (height, width, etc.) according to a stated unit.</i></p> <p><i>A photographic or other visual record etc., including earlier addition, repair or conservation etc.</i></p> <p>Condition description (6.6)</p> <p><i>Including further documentation (such as samples, result of analysis or tests, analytical photography etc.)</i></p>
<p>Diagnosis and conclusions (6.7)</p> <p><i>Descriptive diagnosis of the reasons for deterioration, etc.</i></p> <p><i>Recommendations for further care and/or conservation:</i></p>

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<http://www.iccrom.org/index.shtml>
- [4] The Getty Conservation Institute
<http://www.getty.edu/conservation/>
- [5] Abstracts of international conservation literature (**AATA**)
<http://www.aata.getty.edu>
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