Museum "Open to the Public" Guideline Considerations

The following information includes ideas to demonstrate a museum's commitment to provide a comfortable, safe, and healthy space for visitors and staff.

Please be advised that some or all of the following information may not be applicable to every institution. It is strongly recommended that before implementing any of the ideas below the institution carefully evaluates, and consults with outside legal counsel as appropriate, the legality, applicability and potential efficacy of this information for the institution.

Museum, physical building

- Determine how many days a week the museum is open, taking into consideration time needed for deep cleaning and natural virus degradation
- Determine hours museum is open which could range from being open pre-coronavirus hours to reduced hours
- Determine schedule for custodial staff to thoroughly clean/disinfect both public areas and back-of-the-house areas that might be influenced by the museum's ability to source masks, gloves, cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing products. Supply list can be found at https://www.okmuseums.org/museum-supplies-list/
- Post a sign at the front entrance stating that individuals who have a fever or other symptoms of COVID-19 or have had contact with a person with COVID-19 should not enter the museum
- Post signs reminding visitors to wear face masks, wash hands, use sanitizer, and social distance
- Hand sanitizer stations should be present in the lobby and throughout the museum
- Tissues should be available to visitors
- Add extra trash receptacles with closed lids
- Sanitize the entrance and exit doors consistently throughout the day
- Only allow two individuals in the elevator at a time
- Limit the number of individuals allowed in the restroom at a time
- If an external company is contracted for cleaning, museum staff must coordinate and supervise the cleaning in the exhibits and/or collections area
- Establish an isolation room for suspected infected staff or visitors with COVID-19 showing symptoms, having the room stocked with masks and gloves to be given to the possibly infected individual and all individuals attending to the suspected infected individual
- Should a staff member or visitor have a confirmed case of COVID-19, plan to close the museum immediately for a deep cleaning or to allow natural virus degradation

Museum Exhibit Areas

- Manage visitor flow by considering one-way travel patterns through exhibits
- Consider closing hands-on areas; touchable education collections and/or traveling trunks should be discontinued
- Offer alternative programs or media to provide access to information usually provided via touch screens and other interactive exhibits, such as downloadable audio tours
- Consider suspending any touchscreen interactives or placing a plastic sheet (Mylar) over touchscreens that can be disinfected or replaced on a regular basis
- Frequent cleaning and sterilization of high touch areas
- Add security in exhibit areas to ensure adherence to guidelines

Museum Staff

- All museum staff should wear face masks
- Consider suspending volunteer program, or at a minimum extra protection of the vulnerable population

Museum Visitor Services

- Offer dedicated entrances/special opening hours for the vulnerable population
- Consider discouraging visitors from bringing in personal belongings to the museum
- Encourage visitors to use hand sanitizer upon entering the museum
- Individuals or groups must social distance at 6 feet apart at all times
- Install a physical barrier such as a sneeze guard at front desk
- Minimize all touch points and staff to clean area touched by visitors
- Utilize advance online ticket sales with timed entry on the quarter-hour including timed entry for museums who do not charge admission
- When ready to phase in walk-in visitors, adopt technology that alerts individuals when they can approach the entrance
- Encourage visitors to make non-cash payments; frequently clean and sanitize point-of-sale equipment
- Limit number of individuals at any one time in public areas
- Groups must stay together while maintaining social distancing
- Require all visitors to wear face masks and make them available
- Consider taking temperature of each visitor upon entering the museum
- Encourage staff to report any safety and health concerns to museum security

Museum Store and Cafe

- Install a physical barrier such as a sneeze guard at cash register
- Limit number of individuals in museum store
- Offer curb side pick for museum store items
- Place sample museum store products on floor with stock in back
- Encourage visitors to make non-cash payments; frequently clean and sanitize point-of-sale equipment
- Ensure food service areas adhere to the same guidelines as restaurants, including limitation of seating and offering take-aways
- Establish a waiting area for people to stand in line at appropriate distances

Museum Collections

- Caring for museum collections presents special considerations during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Collections staff are encouraged not to touch artifacts unless absolutely necessary during this time
- As few people as possible should be handling artifacts and no two people should handle the same artifact within natural virus degradation period
- Alternative collections management work, including database management is a good alternative during this time
- Limiting the number of persons in collections and on shared work space (computers and tools that part-time staff use on different days) should be enforced

  The following are resources that will prove helpful during this time:
- Isolating, Disinfecting, and Cleaning Historic Materials - National Center for Preservation Technology and Training - Transcripted video presentation explaining cleaning methods for historic materials. https://www.ncptt.nps.gov/blog/covid-19-basics-disinfecting-cultural-resources/
- Cultural Resources and COVID-19 - National Center for Preservation Technology and Training - This document explores how COVID-19 persists on surfaces and how you can effectively deactivate the virus while preserving valuable cultural resources. https://www.ncptt.nps.gov/blog/cultural-resources-and-covid-19/
- MNHS Workplace Historic Properties Enhanced Cleaning Guidance for COVID-19 - Minnesota Historical Society - Example of a cleaning plan from one institution. https://www.culturalheritage.org/docs/default-source/resources/emergency-resources/mnhs-workplace-historic-properties-enhanced-cleaning-guidance-for-covid-19-(1).pdf?sfvrsn=0
- National Park Service COVID 19 Exhibitry Cleaning Guidance - Guidance for Cleaning/Disinfecting Exhibitry to Combat Novel Coronavirus https://www.nps.gov/subjects/hfc/covid-19-exhibitry-cleaning-guidance.htm

Compiled by the Oklahoma Museums Association, April 2020

High-Touch, Deep Clean Areas Identified For Museums

As a museum's commitment is to provide a comfortable, safe and healthy space for visitors and staff, this includes enhanced cleaning and disinfecting procedures on the high-touch areas highlighted in the graphic.

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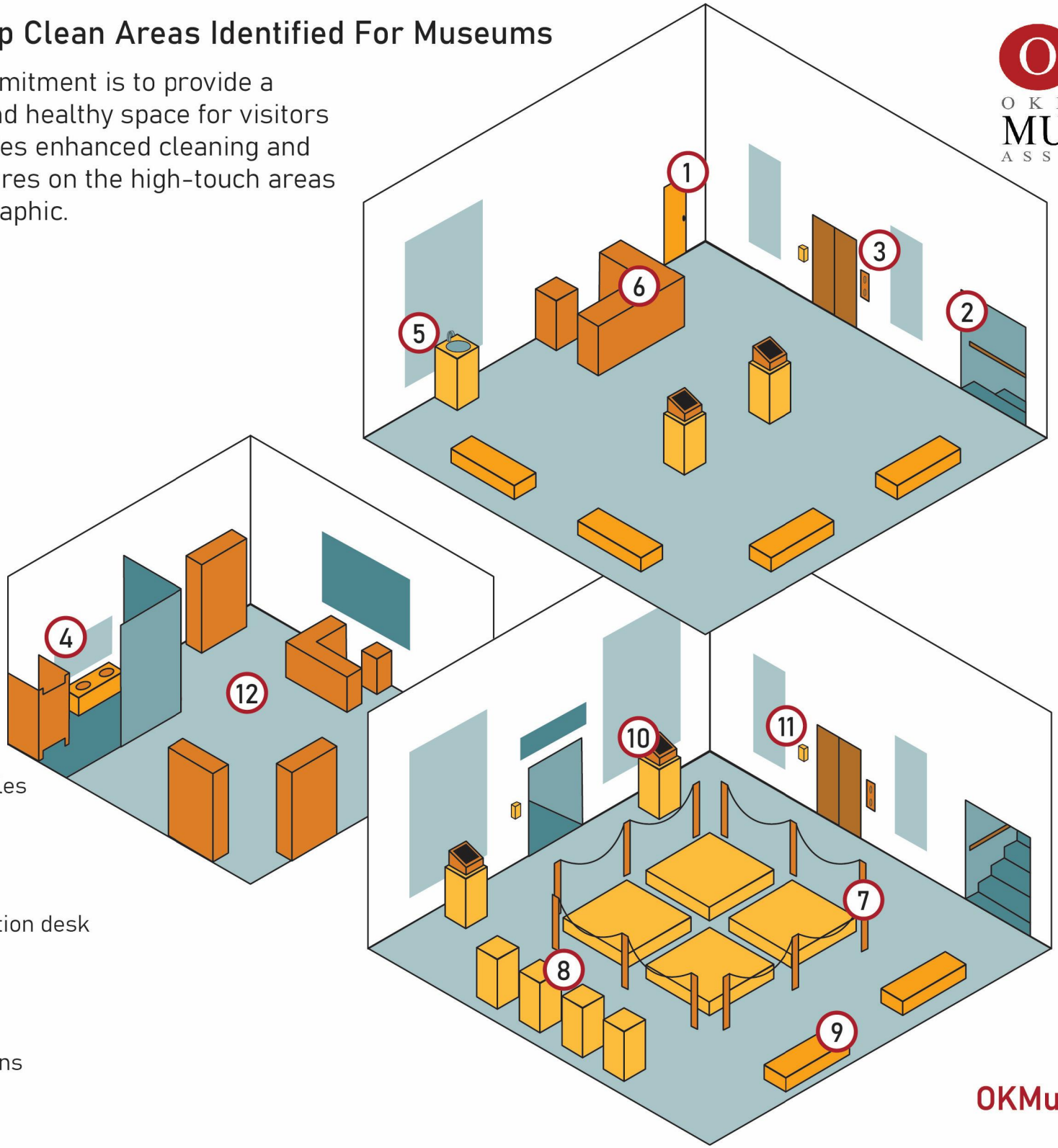

1. Door knobs and handles
2. Stair rails
3. Elevator buttons
4. Bathroom surfaces
5. Water fountains
6. Registration/information desk
7. Stanchions
8. Exhibit areas
9. Seating areas
10. Interactive screens
11. Hand sanitizer stations
12. Museum stores

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