



**Everyone
goes home!**

**Staff safety within
library off-site
storage collections**





An overview of the off-site library storage facilities at Penn State

Penn State has four storage facilities located within four miles of the main campus at University Park. Together they house over one million books and 65,000 maps along with audio, video and special collection materials. Approximately a dozen staff members occupy offices within one of the facilities while the other three buildings are unmanned.





**At Penn State, we address
staff safety through a
combination of:**

- **Facility security measures**
- **Safe work practices**
- **Safety equipment**
- **Emergency training and procedures**
- **Disaster response and reporting**



Facility security measures

- Our buildings are closed to the public making it easier to account for occupants.
- Security systems are present in each building and require a passcode to engage and disengage the alarm system.
- ID card readers are present outside of building entrances to allow access by authorized personnel only and to maintain an electronic log of who has entered a building.
- Video cameras near the primary entrance doors provide a visual record of people entering and leaving buildings.





Safe work practices

- Staff maintain vigilant awareness of their surroundings when using compact shelving, ladders, and lifts.
- Policy prohibits the entering of compact shelving bays from the back. Barrier tape is in place to visually reinforce this practice.
- Travel aisles within the building are kept clear of obstacles so as to ensure easy and safe passage and quick egress in the event of an emergency.





Safe work practices

- Training is required before a staff person may operate a lift.
- Hard hats, florescent vests, safety lanyards, air horns, and two-way radios are used by staff during their operation of a lift.
- Expandable gates are used to block off aisles in the vicinity of where the lift is being used.





Safe work practices

- A large delivery truck is used for the bulk transfer of material to off-site storage and is followed by a “chase” vehicle that carries additional support staff.
- Additional manpower is provided on site by sister units within the collection maintenance department.
- Occupants of the truck wear florescent vests for visibility.
- Staff assume roles during the transfer for a safe and efficient operation.
- Staff team up to move heavy book trucks.
- Loads are secured within the truck using a combination of bars and straps.





Safety equipment

- Flashing lights outside of each bay of compact shelving are used to provide visual cues regarding staff occupancy of a bay.
- Sensors mounted within each aisle of compact shelving detect any obstacles and stop motion of the shelving.
- Sandwich boards are used to interrupt the light beam of sensors to impede any operation of the compact shelving when occupied.
- Lifts and ladders are used for safe and effective retrieval and reshelving of material.
- HEPA vacuums are used for the cleaning of inbound library materials.





Emergency training and procedures

- CPR, first aid, and active shooter training are available to all staff members.
- Evacuation route signage is conspicuous to assist in quick egress from a building.
- Fire safety packets are in each facility and contain a fluorescent vest, flashlight, and a checklist of procedures that the user can use to ensure all staff safely evacuate the building.
- There is a designated meeting space outside of the building where staff are to meet in the event of a fire.





Disaster response and reporting

- Emergency carts are equipped with personal protective gear and absorbency and water diverting products for dealing with water leaks or other threats to the collection.
- An online facilities help desk ticket system is used to report any problems.
- Numbered blue cones are placed near the problem area for easy identification.
- A close relationship is maintained with the library's preservation and facilities departments.
- Freezer space is available for halting the spread of mold on books that are damp and awaiting further processing.





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Questions for the group

- **What verbal and nonverbal communication does your institution use to keep track of people within your off-site storage spaces?**
- **What resources do you have to help ensure the safety of staff within storage spaces?**
- **What resources do you have to mitigate threats to the collection?**
- **How do you report facility problems that occur?**

