
REGULATIONS FOR THE CERTIFICATION OF FIRE SERVICE MUSEUMS AND FIRE SERVICE COLLECTIONS

1. Introductory note: Importance of history and tradition

To be able to understand the present and develop perspectives for the future, you need to be aware of your roots – a principle which applies also to fire services. Naturally, their main focus of activity is on current emergencies, on training and on appropriate equipment. Where fire services – and associations of fire services – are, in addition to these primary tasks, able to document and present their own history and development in whatever form, these are highly commendable efforts. Showcasing one’s history and preserving one’s traditions, combined with the use of state-of-the-art technology, makes for perfect public awareness-raising for fire service. For each generation of fire fighters, it is a worthwhile undertaking to conserve and safeguard objects and equipment that have become outdated as tangible testimony to their fire service’s history.

Certification is public proof that the respective museums and collections take on responsibility for preserving their cultural heritage and that visitors can expect high-quality presentations and a minimum level of services.

2. Definition of the term “fire service museum”

“A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment.” (internationally recognised definition of the term “museum” according to ICOM [International Council of Museums])

2.1 Sustainable institutional and financial basis

A sustainable institutional basis is provided, inter alia, by means of statutes or by-laws, and ongoing museum operations are ensured with the help of a structured budget.

The **hosting entity** of a museum may be the national government, a municipality, a public-law entity, a federation, a fire service, a private-law association or a private individual.

2.2 Museum mission statement and general policy statement

Laying down a museum's objectives in writing, both documents drive everything a museum does, while also taking into account the museum's responsibilities towards society.

The **museum mission statement** describes the objectives the museum pursues, is subject to regular evaluation and to updates consistent with changes and new objectives, as applicable. The museum's self-perception as well as its responsibilities towards society have to be set out in clear and easily understandable language. Both the mission statement and the general policy statement must indicate that the institution is committed to abiding by ICOM's Code of Ethics for Museums.

Drawing on the museum's mission statement, the **general policy statement** describes how the museum positions itself within its immediate social and cultural environment. It reflects the objectives set out in the mission statement while at the same time detailing the way the museum works in terms of functions, organisation, contents and funding.

2.3 Open to the public

Being "open to the public" is generally understood to mean making all the contents of the museum available for viewing to interested members of the public, a principle which is also contingent on the requirement for the museum to have regular opening times.

2.4 Collection and collecting policy

A museum collection is a collection of authentic objects, either owned by or in the possession of the museum, which provides the basis for the museum as such. A museum without a collection is not a museum.

"Collecting" is understood to refer to all legal manners of acquisition, including being in possession of, or intending to acquire, a substantial permanent collection in connection with the stated objectives of the museum. A collection policy sets out the areas covered by the collection and provides guidelines for the conservation of existing objects. The museum must have an inventory of the collection. The inventory serves the purpose of providing proof of ownership and must therefore be maintained with great care and kept safe. The object index or database is maintained for research purposes and allows the museum's objects to be made accessible also for third-party research. A photographic documentation of all objects makes it easier to conduct research and serves as proof in the event of loss or damage.

A fire service museum documents the full range of fire service activities of individuals, groups and federations, at local, district, regional and national level. This level of complexity offers visitors as well as researchers opportunities for pertinent comparisons.

2.5 Conservation and preservation

It is the museum's task to conserve the heritage of both the past and the present for the long-term and ensure its safe-keeping for the future. The term "conserve" includes all aspects of conservation and safe-keeping, but also an obligation to document, i.e. to keep ongoing records and, in particular, to establish an inventory meeting international minimum standards. In storing and publicly exhibiting its objects, the

museum must, within the limits of available capacities, take all necessary measures to adequately conserve the collection. To do so requires special precautions and qualified skill and knowledge.

2.6 Research

The term “research” means that the museum’s collection is to serve to generate scientific benefit. Enabling scientific research on a collection is one of the key tasks of a museum. Findings from research conducted on objects directly impact exhibition and education activities and can help intensify interaction with visitors. The museum is managed by a team of staff members who also dedicate themselves to research. The work they do results in the publication of the insights gained as well as in special exhibitions.

2.7 Education

“Education” refers to taking appropriate didactic measures to provide a generally understandable frame of reference for the contents of the museum. In addition to in-person activities (guided tours or workshops), this also includes other elements that need to be integrated, such as information tools and supporting materials made available for each exhibition, in keeping with the museum's size and resources, to allow visitors to view and appreciate the museum on their own. The broad range of options in this context includes analogue wall text, booklets, or interactive (multi-sensual) stations, creative zones/studios for children, tactile models for persons with visual impairments as well as digital offers such as audio guides, apps, virtual tours (3D) or streamed live tours.

2.8 Exhibiting

“Exhibiting” underlines the requirement to adequately curate and exhibit at least a representative cross-section of the collection. More recent museum philosophy subscribes to the principle of “less is often more”. This is to say that a specifically chosen exhibit will sometimes convey more to visitors than a large number of the same or similar items. To enable learning, what is being exhibited must be presented and explained in a concise and understandable manner. Where possible, exhibitions should include a few items that visitors can touch or try out themselves.

3. Definition of the term “fire service collection”

“Collections can be a compilation of objects relating to a specific fire service or fire service association, as well as special collections of helmets, distinctions, badges, insignia, awards, stamps, fire engines, vintage vehicles, etc.”

3.1 Sustainable institutional basis

A sustainable institutional basis is provided, for instance, by means of statutes or by-laws.

The **hosting entity** of a collection may be the national government, a municipality, a public-law entity, a federation, a fire service, a private-law association or a private individual.

3.2 Open to the public

Being “open to the public” is generally understood to mean making all the contents of the collection available for viewing to interested members of the public; this principle is deemed met also in cases where opening times are by prior arrangement.

3.3 Collection and collecting policy

The term “collection” refers to authentic objects, either owned by or in the possession of the respective legal entity, which provide the basis for the collection.

“Collecting” is understood to refer to all legal manners of acquisition, including being in possession of, or intending to acquire, a substantial permanent collection in connection with the stated objectives. The collection must have an inventory. The inventory serves the purpose of providing proof of ownership and must therefore be maintained with great care and kept safe.

3.4 Conservation and preservation

The term “conserve” includes all aspects of conservation and safe-keeping, but also an obligation to document. In storing and publicly exhibiting its objects, all necessary measures must be taken to adequately conserve the collection, within the limits of available capacities. To do so requires special precautions and qualified skill and knowledge.

3.5 Education

“Education” refers to taking appropriate didactic measures to provide a generally understandable frame of reference for the contents of the collection. In addition to in-person activities (guided tours or workshops), this also includes other elements that may optionally be integrated.

3.6 Exhibiting

The collection must be designed in a manner consistent with contemporary standards and explained using suitable media so as to be appropriately accessible to visitors.

4. Certification process

4.1 Coordination

The chair of the History of Fire Services and CTIF, Museums and Documentation Commission shall either take on the coordination function or appoint a suitably qualified person to act as Museum Certification Coordinator. Such Coordinator may be invited to attend Commission meetings unless he or she is already a Commission member.

The responsibilities of the Museum Certification Coordinator include:

- appointing jurors
- assigning jurors
- keeping a list of jurors
- keeping a list of museums and collections classified so far
- submitting an annual report to the Commission

Further responsibilities can be assigned to this function by the chair of the Commission.

4.2 Jurors

Persons eligible to act as jurors must have in-depth knowledge of fire service history and must have worked for several years in a fire service museum certified according to the CTIF guidelines. Such persons shall be appointed by the Museum Certification Coordinator.

Assessment and certification shall in each case be handled by two jurors, who shall be assigned by the Museum Certification Coordinator.

Jurors must not act without being instructed to do so.

4.3 Application and application form

The History of Fire Services and CTIF, Museums and Documentation Commission shall create and publish an application form.

Applicants shall fill in the application form and submit it, in digital form, to the respective national member of the History of Fire Services and CTIF, Museums and Documentation Commission, who shall verify the data provided in the application for completeness before forwarding the application to the chair of the Commission.

4.4 Certification

Two jurors shall conduct the certification process and draw up the certification report on site, inspecting the relevant areas of the institution and checking whether the information supplied in the application form is correct.

4.5 Report

Certification as well as classification (as either museum or collection) shall be confirmed in a report issued in two copies, one of which shall be handed over to the applicant. The second copy shall be archived in the CTIF archive in Přebyslav (Czech Republic).

Where a museum already holds a national certificate issued by a recognised institution (e.g. museum association) or a similar assessment, this shall be taken into account in the certification process.

The decisions of the jurors shall be non-appealable and have final effect.

4.6 Validity period of certification and recertification

Certification shall be valid for seven years from the date of issue. Recertification may be applied for no earlier than one year before the validity period expires. Recertification shall be a simplified process, mainly documenting the development of the museum/collection during the past certification validity period. Recertification shall then again be valid for another seven years.

4.7 Certificate

Certification shall be documented by means of a certificate issued by the History of Fire Services and CTIF, Museums and Documentation Commission. Such certificate shall bear the signatures of the chair of the Commission and the two jurors. In addition, the certificate shall feature the logos of CTIF and of the Commission, the date and place of certification, as well as the classification (museum or collection). The certificate shall be issued in German or English.

4.8 Plaque

Applicants may also opt for a certification plaque to be issued to them. The silver-coloured square plaque (200 by 200 mm) features the CTIF logo, with the flame symbol shown in red and silver, with the following inscription below in black font:

“INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES”. The centre of the plaque depicts a stylized fire helmet with black outlines, below, again in black font, the inscription “CERTIFIED FIRE SERVICE MUSEUM” or “CERTIFIED FIRE SERVICE COLLECTION”. Applicants can choose the language to be used for the inscriptions.

Where no recertification is applied for and granted after expiry of the certification validity period of seven years, holders must no longer display the plaque. The use of self-designed plaques shall be prohibited.

4.9 Cost

Cost shall have to be verified in advance. Travel expenses as well as cost for room and board (if applicable) incurred by the jurors shall be borne by the applicant. The cost of a certification plaque shall likewise be borne by the applicant. The certificate shall be issued free of charge.

4.10 Publication

Certified museums and collections shall be listed on the CTIF website. Additional publication on other sites, for instance on the website of the International Study Group for the history of the fire service and fire protection in the CTIF shall be admissible.

5. Final provisions

5.1 Execution and implementation

The chair of the History of Fire Services and CTIF, Museums and Documentation Commission shall be tasked with executing, implementing and correctly applying these Regulations. A written or oral report on the status quo of certified museums and collections shall be provided to the Commission once a year. Such report may also be submitted by the Museum Certification Coordinator.

These Regulations and related documents shall be published on the Internet website of the CTIF. Additional publication on other sites, for instance on the website of International Study Group for the history of the fire service and fire protection in the CTIF shall be admissible.

5.2 Amendments to the Regulations

Amendments to these Regulations shall require the approval of the History of Fire Services and CTIF, Museums and Documentation Commission and of the CTIF Executive Committee.

6. Entry into force

Upon approval by the History of Fire Services and CTIF, Museums and Documentation Commission of October 12th, 2022 and by the CTIF Executive Committee, these Regulations entered into force on xxx Xxxxxx 202x in xxx, xxx, thereby superseding any and all prior documents.