



COVID RECOMMENDATIONS – HERITAGE OF GIPUZKOA

In the current global pandemic situation and at the risk of spreading the virus, disinfection operations are being carried out on streets and public places that, applied indiscriminately to cultural heritage, can cause irreparable damage. This is already happening.

That is why, always aware of the health priority and in the common endeavor to combat contagions and protect the life and safety of people without damaging our artistic and historical heritage, numerous entities responsible for their care have produced small guides with recommendations to consider. We summarize the most important ones here:

HISTORICAL-ARTISTIC ENVIRONMENTS AND BUILDINGS

- In public spaces (historic quarters, public squares, parks, streets) AVOID spraying disinfectants directly on objects and buildings of historical-artistic value.
- AVOID disinfections near polychromatic goods (church covers, altarpieces, etc.). Alternative: perimeter fencing to avoid approach and direct contact with people. If necessary, do it more than 1 m. away preferably (nearby sidewalks, baseboards, etc.) with a 70% ethanol solution in low-pressure sprayed water.
- In museums, archives or religious spaces, fumigation or spraying is not recommended in a general way, since after its closure to the public more than a month ago, the existence of the virus in the environment of these places is unlikely.
- The cleaning of surfaces is recommended: floors, doors or handlebars that lack historical or artistic value with the common disinfecting solutions proposed by the health authorities, although the use of 70% dissolved ethanol is preferred.
- For the cleaning of modern tile or marble floors: soap and water and even water and bleach without exceeding 0.5% recommended by health authorities. Do not increase concentration, since we do not gain effectiveness and we increase other types of problems. Avoid contact with walls and other types of surfaces.



- Bleach will affect old and / or wooden flooring. Use neutral soaps such as most of the ecological cleaning soaps found in stores. Avoid conventional dishwashers and floor cleaners. Soap is a good disinfecting agent for Covid-19. Ideally, proceed with cleaning, leave it to act for a minute and remove the soapy solution with water. Avoid forming puddles.
- For modern metal or glass surfaces, spray with neutral soap mixed with water, leave to act for a minute and remove the residues with cloth or paper moistened with water. Then throw them away.
- In elements such as furniture and wooden doors, alcohol or bleach will damage the finishes of patinas and varnishes. Wet a cloth or paper with the soap solution, clean the surface and leave to act, then remove the soapy remains with cloths or paper moistened with water and discard them after the operation. Be careful, not to wet excessively.
- DO NOT use products derived from chlorine (for example bleach). They can cause serious damage to the constituent materials of cultural property. They are very oxidizing and can easily degrade pigments, patinas and protection layers. In addition, they are also harmful to health and the environment.
- Do not use corrosive products, soda, ammonia, industrial detergents for cleaning and disinfection, etc.
- Do not use compounds that can cause alterations, such as ethanol or hydrogen peroxide.
- Avoid mixing products without knowing their compatibility in advance. The well-known reaction between bleach (sodium hypochlorite) and ammonia generates highly toxic vapors.

OBJECTS (PAINTINGS, SCULPTURES, VALUABLE FURNITURE, APPLIED ARTS, ETC.)

In addition to the aforementioned, we point out other specific observations:

- It is never advisable to touch directly cultural property. This premise, in a situation like now, is even more necessary. Viruses can only develop in living beings, but the permanence of viral particles (from direct contact or by saliva) on surfaces can be a source of contagion.
- After social distancing measures, and if they are not objects that are frequently manipulated, the risk of contamination of movable cultural property "is practically nil". So it is recommended to avoid the use of



disinfectant products that can damage the materials. To ensure that it is not contaminated, it would be enough to isolate it for a certain time (3 to 9 days, according to the bibliography). This is easy to achieve in the current situation.

- It is recommended to clean the exterior surfaces of showcases that may have been touched by visitors, but any measure in their interior space is not recommended, since their access is punctual and carried out by few (specialized) people. Use disposable cloths or rolls of kitchen paper and neutral soap.
- CONSULT disinfection alternatives to specialists in the care of cultural property before acting on them.
- If necessary and always under the supervision of a conservation and restoration professional, diluted hydroalcoholic solutions or neutral soaps, applied with controlled pressure, could be used.
- IN NO WAY TRY TO DISINFECT A WORK OF ART, A HISTORICAL OR DOCUMENTARY ELEMENT. The products being used can permanently damage it. Contact the email we provide to give you the appropriate instructions

PROTECTION OF WORKING PERSONNEL AND VISITORS

- After disinfection and cleaning, it is recommended to ventilate the cleaned spaces to avoid the accumulation of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) arising from the evaporation of disinfecting solutions.
- All cleaning and disinfection processes will always be carried out with the corresponding PPE (Personal Protective Equipment: gloves, masks, glasses, gown, diver or similar, etc.) that guarantee the safety of the working personnel.
- If the professionals of institutions are forced to have to work directly with the objects (carrying out inspections, movements of artistic works or restoration treatments), it will be done at all times with single-use disposable gloves and if possible with mask.



THE CULTURAL HERITAGE IS UNIQUE

LET'S DON'T DESTROY IT UNCONSCIOUSLY

***THE BEST WEAPON FOR ITS CONSERVATION IS
PREVENTION***

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