

STANDARD RECOMMENDED LIGHTING INTENSITIES

These are the lighting levels recommended by conservators for the protection of art and artifacts.

LIGHT LEVEL (in footcandles)

OBJECTS: Detailed Description, Examples	
1 to 5	INSECTS, FLORA, FAUNA: Butterflies, grass clothes, hemp products, flax textiles, berry dyes, dried flowers, native baskets
2 to 5	FRAGILE PAPERS, RARE PHOTOGRAPHS: Documents, letters, hand-written items, newspapers, drafts, checks, rare books, Daguerreotypes
2 to 7	STAMPS, TAX TAGS, RIBBONED MILITARY OBJECTS, BRAID: Rare stamps, event tickets, tax stamps, military ribbons, sword handles, paper money
2 to 12	ANCIENT CERAMICS, GLASS, POTTERY: Biblical glass, Faïences, bilbils, seals, painted pottery, unearthed ceramics, iridescent glass
2 to 20	ORGANICS, ANIMALS, BIRDS: Mounted animals, dioramas, furs, feathered objects, untanned hides, hair objects, shells
3	FLUORESCENT DYES AND PAINTS: Asian art, safety clothing, stick-on post notes, modern posters, bright markers, children's paints
3 to 10	TEXTILES, COSTUMES, ABORIGINAL OBJECTS: Shrouds, quilts, samplers, movie costumes, shoes, African art, Native American artifacts
3 to 10	PROMOTIONAL PRINTED OBJECTS: Trading cards, movie posters, game boards, ads, printed packaging, fliers, rare handbills, can labels
3 to 12	ILLUMINATED BOOKS, ILLUSTRATIONS, ART PRINTS: Fragile books with color, flower illustrations, hand-tinted prints, Sumi-e ink paintings
3 to 25	BOOKS, PRINTED MATERIALS: More durable books, collector fine art prints (modern), printed plates, greeting cards
5	BONE, IVORY, HORN, PHOTOGRAPHS: Inlaid instruments, horn chairs, scrimshaw, more durable photographs, paintings on ivory
5 to 10	UNSTABLE PLASTICS, STYRENES: Plastic toys, dolls, promotional items, telephones, kitchen table-top appliances
5 to 12	WATERCOLORS, PASTELS: Paintings on paper, art studies, fugitive pastels, bright chalks, cloisonné. 5 fc for permanent exhibits, 12 fc for exhibits under 1 year.
5 to 15	PEARLS, FRAGILE GEMS, FRAGILE MINERALS: Soft stones, uncut gems, carved jade, cameos, intricate-structured minerals
10 to 20	LEATHERS, CURED HIDES, SADDLES: Unpainted leathers, boots, harnesses (no clothes, no ancient artifacts)
10 to 30	WOODS, FURNITURE, VENEERS: Tables, Chinese boxes, classic car interiors, (use lowest fc level for cherry woods)
10 to 30	NATURAL RUBBERS, LATEX, AGED RUBBER: Balls, hats, rubber shoes, belted machinery, construction equip., sales models
10 to 50	ANTIQUE CERAMICS, POTTERY, CHINA: Fine china, ceramic sculptures, clay pots, porcelain, Victorian tiles, bisques
10 to 30	PAINTINGS IN OIL/ACRYLIC: Well-constructed paintings only (no objects on paper or older works) folk art, painted furniture, whirligigs. 10 - 12 fc is the limit for masterpieces or really fine work. 30 fc is for commercial retail galleries showing a work for a short time, usually 1 year or less.
20 and up	STABLE PLASTICS, CLEAR RESINS: Plastic sculptures, tables, cases, water dioramas, computer housings, castings
20 and up	GLASS, CRYSTAL, COLORED GLASS: Stained-glass windows, carnival glass, stemware, cut crystal, light fixtures
30 and up	METALS, SILVER: Damascus steel, swords, copper pots, brass instruments, engraved silver, bracelets
30 and up	ACRYLIC, SYNTHETICS, CARBON-FILLED RUBBER: Stress test models, nylon webbing, military hardware, tires, no textiles or fabrics
50 and up	GEMS, MINERALS, ROCKS, FOSSILS: Diamonds, set jewels, necklaces, carved coal sculpture, sculptures, dinosaurs