

HARRY RANSOM HUMANITIES RESEARCH CENTER
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

*Policy and Guidelines for the Protection of Collection Materials
During Photography, Filming, and Videotaping Sessions*

Policy

To protect its collections from accidental damage during photography, filming, and videotaping sessions, the Ransom Center requires adherence to the following policy and guidelines.

1. Staff must have at least two weeks notice in advance of the session to select and/or assemble collection materials. This will permit staff to evaluate risks posed to individual items, allow for negotiations about alternative selections for problematic materials, and ensure the availability and suitability of the proposed filming site. More advance notice may be required for sessions when requests involve large numbers of items, require special preparation, such as conservation or construction of structural supports, or when personnel or facilities are unavailable to meet the terms of the request.
2. Because of the risks of high temperature, ultraviolet exposure, and light intensity to the stability of certain types of collection artifacts, quartz and mercury lamps are not permitted. HMI [Hydrargyrum (mercury) Medium Iodides] are highly recommended because they produce less radiant heat in relation to their light output than other lamps. These must be fitted with ultraviolet absorbers. If tungsten lamps are to be used, thermal radiation filters are required. Lamps of all types must have wire screening shields not larger than 1/16 inch mesh. All apparatus and equipment proposed for filming is subject to Ransom Center approval, and a list of equipment to be used must be submitted at the time of the initial request.
3. A Ransom Center staff member will be assigned to attend photography, filming, and videotaping sessions to ensure that the guidelines described in this document are followed. At the discretion of the designated staff member, some variations in these guidelines may be authorized which take into consideration the nature and condition of materials being filmed, the effects of the production on the site environment, and the physical effects on the items being filmed. In all cases, the decisions of the Center's staff will be final.
4. The Ransom Center will not be responsible fiscally or otherwise for any inconvenience or liability to the schedule, deadlines, or obligations of camera and filming crews or their administration for any delays or stoppage of work caused by the decisions of Ransom Center staff authorized to enforce this policy or its guidelines.
5. Eating, drinking, and smoking are prohibited in all filming areas and elsewhere according to Ransom Center building protocols and University regulations. All building security, inspection, clearance and safety procedures must be followed.

Guidelines

Collection materials may not be used as props, stands, or supports for other items, nor may they be positioned in such a way as to cause potential or real stress or damage.

Collection materials approved for filming must be handled and positioned during the session by designated Ransom Center staff only.

Lamps must not raise the surface temperature of collection materials or the room environment beyond levels appropriate to the safety of collection materials. This is an item specific, non-quantifiable measure, and will be assessed during the session by appointed Ransom Center staff according to the response of materials during filming. Maximum duration of continuous lighting will be determined by these considerations.

Lamps should be turned off when not in use. If intensity of lights can be controlled, low intensity should be used while positioning lights. Lights should be brought up to full intensity only just before shooting begins.

Precautions should be made to prevent damage to collection materials should a lamp fall or explode; this may be done either by assigning a crew member to hold the lamp stand during filming, or by placement of the lamps at a distance from collection materials which is greater than the height of the extended stand. It is for this concern that protection gratings are required for lamp fixtures.

Should power overloads or other malfunction result in erratic electrical behavior, blown building fuses, overheating cables, or other potentially dangerous situations, the session will be terminated immediately until the problem can be resolved to the satisfaction of appropriate Ransom Center, Safety Office, or Physical Plant personnel.