



SUNSHINE COAST MUSEUM & ARCHIVES POLICIES

The SCMA Repatriation Policy was written in 2010, and since its implementation, has been used in the repatriation of numerous culturally significant items to First Nations. To the best of our knowledge, as of May 2021 there is only one ceremonial item remaining in our collection pending repatriation, and we are currently working on its return. Our Repatriation Policy will remain “flexible and responsive to community’s needs” as outlined in the BCMA’s “Call for Repatriation”, and may be updated to better meet the needs of First Nation communities in the spirit of reconciliation. The SCMA is dedicated to this vital and important work.




Repatriation Contact: Matthew Lovegrove, Manager/Curator

Contact Phone Number: 604-886-8232

Contact Email: scma_manager@dccnet.com

3.0 Repatriation Policy

The SCMA is committed to:

-  The return of human remains and directly associated burial materials, upon the written request of an Aboriginal community with a demonstrable claim of historical relationship to those objects in question.
-  The return of objects that may have been acquired under circumstances that render the SCMA’s claim invalid, at the written request of an Aboriginal community with a demonstrable claim of an historical relationship to those objects in question.
-  Negotiating with Aboriginal communities on the return of material culture of spiritual significance or essential to cultural survival, at the written request of an Aboriginal community with a demonstrable claim of an historical relationship to those objects in question.

3.1 Return of Human Remains

The SCMA acknowledges that the retention of Aboriginal human remains against the expressed wishes of the originating Aboriginal communities is not appropriate. The wishes of Aboriginal communities in regard to their human remains will be respected. All requests for the return of human remains, by an Aboriginal community who can demonstrate cultural affiliation or other



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claim of historical relationship, will be accommodated on a case by case basis.

3.2 Return of Burial Objects

The wishes of Aboriginal communities in regard to their burial objects will be respected.

All requests for the return of burial objects, by an Aboriginal community who can demonstrate cultural affiliation or other claim of historical relationship, will be accommodated on a case by case basis.

3.3 Return of Sacred and Ceremonial Objects

The SCMA may negotiate the return, to the appropriate Aboriginal communities, of sacred and ceremonial objects of religious significance and essential to the continuation of ceremonial and ritual life among Aboriginal people. In the case of ceremonial and religious material, the claimant must demonstrate that the materials are needed by a traditional Aboriginal leader, or leaders, for traditional Aboriginal practices. Each request for the return of the sacred and ceremonial objects will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Repatriation Process

- Identification of First Nations burial, ceremonial, culturally significant artifacts/archives within the collection, including collecting location and cultural affiliation. The process may also be initiated by communication from First Nations regarding items within the SCMA collection
- If found by SCMA staff, contact First Nation with cultural affiliation to the item to inform them of the item within the SCMA collection.
- SCMA staff submit item to Acquisition Committee/Board of Directors for approval. Item deaccessioned from collection, paperwork filed.
- SCMA arrange details and transportation of repatriated items in accordance with origin Nation wishes, cultural protocols. SCMA to pay all costs related to transfer.

Repatriation Timeline

- Repatriation of collection items should be treated as an organizational priority, and be conducted in an expedited manner. From first identification to final return of the item, repatriation should be completed as soon as possible (past repatriations have taken 4-6 months from project inception to return).