



150-2248 McAllister Ave, Port Coquitlam BC V3C2A5
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Repatriation Policy and Procedure

1 Introduction

1.1 Definition

Repatriation shall be defined as “recognizing people’s stake in their heritage, which in practice can mean such things as negotiated return of objects and related cultural materials, and/or sharing authority and responsibility for care and interpretation of collections in the museum”.¹

1.2 Purpose

As laid out in the PoCo Heritage Museum and Archives’ (henceforth “PoCo Heritage” or “the Museum”) *Reconciliation Commitment*, If requested to do so, PoCo Heritage is committed to working collaboratively with First Nation peoples to return cultural objects currently held as part of the collection in a respectful, sensitive, and timely manner.

This policy outlines the process by which repatriation claims can be made, how claims are processed, and defines the criteria for what objects can be repatriated.

1.3 Respect

PoCo Heritage acknowledges that all First Nations’ material is part of the intellectual and cultural heritage of the respective First Nations.² It is for this reason that the Museum considers all requests for repatriation of cultural materials respectfully and on a case-by-case basis at the request of an eligible claimant with a demonstrable claim to the artifacts in question.

2 Criteria for repatriation

2.1 Eligibility of claimant

Requests for repatriation may only be submitted by First Nation individuals, groups, or the government of a First Nation or an authorized individual or organization acting on behalf of the government of a First Nation.

¹ Royal Saskatchewan Museum

² See [The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People \(UNDRIP\)](#), Article 31



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A relationship must be demonstrated to exist between the claimant(s) and the requested material. This relationship can be lineal descent or cultural affiliation. Cultural affiliation can be based on biological, historical, geographical, genealogical, archeological, linguistic, ethnological, archival, or expert opinion.

2.2 Eligibility of objects

Only objects related to the material culture of a First Nation are eligible for repatriation. Art commissioned by PoCo Heritage is not eligible for repatriation.

3 Claim Process

3.1 Format of claim

Requests for repatriation of cultural materials should be made in writing and addressed to the Museum Manager of the PoCo Heritage Museum and Archives.

Requests must:

- a) clearly identify the group(s) and/or individual(s) making the claim
- b) identify the object(s) requested for repatriation
- c) indicate the reasons for the request including a statement on the relationship between the materials and the claimant(s)

3.2 Acknowledgement of claim

The Museum Manager will acknowledge receipt of the claim, inform the Board of Directors, and direct the Collections Committee to review the request.

4 Claim Review

4.1 Process

Upon receipt of the repatriation claim, the Collections Committee will:



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- a) Review all records and information received from the requestor(s) concerning the object(s) requested;
- b) Notify relevant First Nation communities of the request.
- c) Take other necessary steps to identify other possible claimants.
- d) Submit recommendations in writing to the Board of Directors for approval.
- e) Inform claimant(s) of the Board of Directors' decision and, if approved, carry out transfer of the object(s) and/or alternate resolution(s) after ensuring that records are properly maintained as outlined in Section 6.

4.2 Conflicting claims

PoCo Heritage will not be involved in the adjudication or resolution of conflicting or duplicate claims and will not act on a claim until all the claimants have resolved all ownership disputes.

If conflicting claims exist, PoCo Heritage will inform parties that a conflict exists and defer decisions about repatriation until the conflict has been resolved between claimants and written confirmation of this resolution is received from all involved parties.

4.3 Other factors governing decisions

While PoCo Heritage recognizes that First Nations are governed by their own traditions and policies, any negotiating position taken by PoCo Heritage must be guided by Canadian Law and PoCo Heritage's own policies and procedures.

5 Alternate resolutions

PoCo Heritage will honour the particulars of each claim to the best of their ability should they include requests for solutions other than transfer of the claimed material. This may include: special access to holdings, loans, exhibits, stewardship and/or co-ownership arrangement; replication of artifacts; and/or respectful storage and/or display of collections in accordance with the advice of the originating peoples.

If the Museum is requested to maintain the items for any reason or length of time, PoCo Heritage will commit to maintaining the material culture in a facility accessible to the public and see to the long-term preservation of these objects to the best of its ability as long as they remain in their possession.



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6 Retention of records

The Museum will maintain a written record, photographs, and copies of all documents pertaining to the repatriated object(s) for their own records. The Museum reserves the right to reproduce any repatriated object in its collection before it is removed from its collection except in the case where said object is culturally sensitive in nature as indicated by the claimant.