

CLEANING AND MAINTENANCE PROTOCOL

The finish, architectural details, and original materials used to create our State Capitol Historic Furnishings comprise their value, and every effort should be made to protect these elements of every piece. Using this philosophy as a guiding principle, anyone including the tenants and the cleaning staff who are involved in the use and maintenance of these furnishings should adhere to the following protocol.

Use cleaning equipment carefully.

Take care around furnishings with mops, brooms and vacuum cleaners. Furniture finishes can be destroyed by repeated contact with wet mop strands or abrasive broom bristles, and furniture feet, legs and aprons can be bumped, dented, scratched scarred and disfigured by carelessly wielded broom handles and vacuum cleaners. For example a wet mop used to clean the marble floor can strip the feet of a nearby coat rack, bench or table – destroying the patina, finish, or varnish. Many of pieces have badly damaged feet, legs, and aprons caused by vacuum cleaners improperly used.

Do not wax or polish historic furnishings.

Waxing should be done infrequently; only two times a year is adequate even for the most heavily used pieces. Even then, to avoid a wax build-up, the old wax must be removed before a new layer of wax is applied.

Do not use aerosol wax (for example Lemon Pledge) to polish the historic furnishings.

Do not wax/polish areas that have exposed wood, for example where the finish has been lifted because of water damage.

Dust only with a soft clean cloth.

The cloth can be damp but not wet and should be rinsed out regularly with fresh water. A dry dust cloth should be shaken out regularly. Both dry and damp dust cloths should be machine-washed when they become moderately soiled. When dusting watch for loose pieces of veneer, molding or furniture hardware that may pull loose, bend or break by the action of dusting or polishing.

Do not apply abrasives (Dutch cleanser, Bon Ami, etc.) solvents or cleaning solutions (409 spray cleaner, etc.) to historic furnishings.

Do not use feather dusters. They can snag or tear off pieces of inlay, veneer or ornament.

Do not use a “tack cloth” for dusting.

Do not use aerosol “dust attractors” or “dust magnets” that can be applied to the dust cloth.

Take care in moving furnishings.

Anything larger than a small side chair should be moved by at least two people.

Before lifting any piece of furniture, particularly heavy pieces, make sure that every portion of the piece is firmly attached to the rest of the structural framework.

To lift a chair, grasp it by the sides of the seat, not the arms or legs. Do not push, turn or torque the furnishing.

Do not stack furniture on top of one another when vacuuming.

Wipe up spills immediately.

Blot up the liquid with anything absorbent. Speed is essential. Water left on the furniture finish surface will result in a 'bloom' and disfigure the piece. Alcohol is a solvent for shellac, which is often a component in many furniture finishes. Spilled alcohol should be blotted up quickly. Do not rub because this will only spread the alcohol across the finish causing greater harm.

DO NOT place potted plants or flower vases on historic furniture.

Overfilling of these two items is the most common cause of serious damage to table, desk and cabinet tops.

DO use coasters

Do not place a glass or cup of liquid on an historic piece of furniture without a coaster between it and the surface of the piece. If you plan to use a historic table in a place where food and drink are likely to be served regularly, consider procuring a protective glass top for the table.