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## Introduction to the First Edition, 2000

A desire for practical courier guidelines has been clearly expressed by many UK Registrars' Group (UKRG) members and by those involved in all aspects relating to the loan of artworks. We cannot claim that these Guidelines are definitive but we hope that they will be useful and that you will extend their value by adding your own experience and supplementary information. They are aimed at all people who either organize or carry out courier duties primarily in the context of the fine arts, but are also intended to be widely relevant to the care and transit of a range of objects for any purpose, be they loans or acquisitions. The Guidelines are written from the lender's perspective administering the object loan to an exhibition.

These Guidelines grew from the UKRG 'Sense and Sensibility' seminar held at Tate Britain on April 17<sup>th</sup> 1996. The UKRG is grateful to the many people, both members and non-members, who have advised and worked on the preparation of these Guidelines, in particular:

Stephen Dunn:	Exhibition Registrar, Tate, London
Sue Liddell:	Former Registrar, Tate, London
Patricia Goddard:	Head of Art Handling, The National Gallery, London
Freda Matassa:	Head of Collections Management, Tate, London
Margaret Stewart M.B.E:	Former Registrar, The National Gallery, London

## Introduction to the Second Edition, 2004

The impetus for this second edition of UK Courier Guidelines was the two 'Courier Training' seminars, held at Birmingham City Art Gallery on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2004 and the Horniman Museum on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2004. The brief for this new edition was not only to consider the political and technological changes that have occurred in recent years, but also to consider the application of these guidelines to social and industrial collections.

It is testimony to the quality of the first edition that very little has needed changing: the increased use of digital technology and mobile phones is mentioned, as are the longer term results of the 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States of America, but little else has changed.

When looking at the application of these guidelines to social and industrial collections it was found that few alterations were necessary. When using these guidelines the reader should bear in mind that they have been written from the perspective of a lending art gallery administering an object loan to an exhibition, possibly abroad and possibly involving air travel. Whilst this scenario will not be applicable to every museum and every object movement, most of the principles in these guidelines will be applicable to all types of couriership, no matter the type of object or the type of journey.

These guidelines should be used in conjunction with the other national and international standards and laws which we adhere to. SPECTRUM is a good starting point for a museum developing its own procedures and these guidelines build on many of its recommendations. It should also be recognised that these guidelines are a statement of best practice: we should all aspire to these levels, but we always have to work within available resources. Bearing all of these points in mind, registrars and others responsible for the administration of loans will be able to use these guidelines to develop policies and procedures that are applicable to them.

We are again grateful to those who have provided input and comment in the development of this second edition, specifically:

Tim Egan:	Registrar, National Museums & Galleries of Wales
Eleanor Moore:	Registration Officer, South West Museum Libraries and Archive Council
Kevin Ward:	Head of Collections Management, RAF Museum

Paul Fraser Webb, Editor, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition

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## Section 1

### Overview

#### The Key Movers - Definition of Roles

It is acknowledged that in many institutions, especially smaller ones, one person (often a Curator) may undertake many of the roles listed below. This list should be viewed as a list of roles and tasks (rather than separate individuals) and the actual person who undertakes them will be dictated largely by an institution's structure.

- **Curator:** will provide initial approval for a loan to commence
- **Courier:** usually appointed by the lender to accompany and oversee the loan in transit until an agreed point of handover
- **Registrar:** co-ordinates the needs of the lending and borrowing institutions in liaison with the agents, airlines, customs and shippers. The registrar plays a pivotal role in the 'choreography' of the loan and is the key contact for the courier
- **Conservator:** advises on all conservation aspects of the loan
- **Art Handlers:** carry out the packing, handling and installation of the object
- **Transport Agent:** works in close consultation with the registrar to transport the loan. The agent communicates with the other agents worldwide on such matters as:
  - Road transport provision
  - Booking flights, air freight, ship berths, ferries
  - Attending courier at point of arrival and departure
  - Documentation: export licence, customs brokerage
  - Security
  - Schedules and accommodation.

## **Why send a courier?**

Each institution will determine its own policy. Couriers may be assigned for one or more of the following reasons:

- Complicated journey
- Special handling
- Fragility/conservation reasons, complicated installation/size of object
- Concerns relating to the borrowing institution, e.g. first time loan, previous problems indemnity/insurance.
- Value of item. It should be always be borne in mind that the value of an object can go far beyond its financial or security value. An item with considerable cultural value, be it of national, local or community significance, may have little financial value nor be considered “nickable”. The quality of provenance should also be considered.

## **How is a courier allocated?**

This may be influenced by the following factors:

- Knowledge of the object/item concerned, conservation, handling or display requirements
- Courier suitability: temperament, common sense, stamina, good health and the ability to speak a foreign language.
- The courier requirement must be pointed out to the borrower at the earliest opportunity and the terms agreed between the lender and borrower. At this point, it might be considered whether sharing a courier would be appropriate.
- Previous experience, e.g. of venue, journey, or a personal knowledge of the lender/vendor when collecting objects (a courier with no previous experience should accompany an experienced courier, preferably on an inland journey before graduating to an overseas location).

## **Sharing a Courier**

There are occasions when sharing a courier may be an appropriate option:

- Exhibition organiser escorts a group shipment from one venue to another
- Borrower escorts loan to a venue at the owner’s request
- Staff availability: Institutions may consolidate their staff resources to cover each other. If institutions agree beforehand to share couriers, responsibility for the objects must be clarified at this point and clearly explained to the courier.

## **The Courier’s Authority**

The courier, acting as the agent of the lending museum, has full authority to act in protection of the object, up to and including the termination of a loan agreement if the courier feels that it is necessary, until the object is officially released to the borrowing museum.

## Section 2

### Preparing the Courier

#### The courier briefing

It is essential that the courier is told about and understands all conditions relating to the loan of the object as far in advance as possible. For example, written information such as copies of agreements may assist the courier's position. Barrier rails and glazing are frequently areas of contention between couriers and the borrower.

The courier needs to know:

- Destination
- Dates of packing, travel and installation
- Agent's names and details
- Special requirements such as visas or immunisation
- Accommodation, per diem and travel arrangements
- Any special lifting or handling requirements.

The following are key areas in the preparation of a loan, all of which, to different degrees, should be included in the briefing given to couriers:

- **Loan Agreement:** The courier should be familiar with their institution's conditions of loan, which may include such specifications as barrier rails.
- **Transport:** The method and route.
- **Conservation Requirements:** Physical environment: agreed parameters for display and storage.
- **Insurance:** The courier should be aware of type of cover, whether Government Indemnity or commercial insurance.
- **Courier Expenses:** The lending institution should have a policy document that addresses the issue of expenses. The courier should be told in advance the "per diem" amount, date to be issued and by whom. It is the registrar's responsibility to ensure that the courier is clear about what the subsistence covers.
- **Travel Tickets:** will be provided in advance by either registrar or agent.
- **Hotel Bookings:** will be made by either agent, registrar or institution. How the bill is to be settled will vary according to destination. The courier should have this information in advance.
- **Security:** In transit and at destination.
- **Packing Method:** Casing, transit frame or soft-wrap.
- **Installation Requirements:** All of the handling, installation (including display case), display and storage (including packing case) assembly and operation requirements should have been agreed during the initial loan negotiations. The courier should be informed before departure of these arrangements.

- **Transfers Between Venues:** The courier must remain flexible as schedules can change sometimes at short notice.
- **Trans-shipment:** is a transfer of goods between planes when it is not possible to fly non-stop to the final destination.
- **Touring Exhibitions:** Courier responsibilities may vary according to the terms of the exhibition contract.

## Confidentiality

For security reasons, courier details must remain confidential, both in and outside the institution, and especially when travelling with a loan. Couriers should avoid discussing their duty with fellow travellers. Information should be given on a need to know basis only. Couriers are advised to travel alone and make no conflicting arrangements. If a courier is to be joined by family or friends, they should make entirely separate travel arrangements, and the courier should conclude his/her duties before joining them.

## Documentation - The courier pack

A checklist of the following may be useful:

- **Conditions of loan**  
This may take the form of a checklist or a more formal document, but something which provides written evidence of the lender's requirements.
- **Copy of loan forms (optional)**
- **Copy of indemnity/insurance cover (optional)**
- **Contacts**  
Lending and borrowing institutions' relevant staff telephone numbers and addresses and e-mail addresses (also out of hours) agents, home and abroad, mobile and office numbers and e-mail addresses (also out of hours) hotel, telephone/fax number and address, and e-mail address.
- **Receipt**  
This should be signed after the unpacking at the borrower's premises
- **Condition report and photograph**  
This should be dated, signed and countersigned once condition is agreed.
- **Specification of object**  
Details of dimensions, weight, materials, number of parts, assembly and operation instructions. COSHH papers and any other documentation relating to any substances which the object may contain.
- **Digital camera**  
Take spare batteries and memory cards. Consideration should also be given to including appropriate hardware for downloading images (such as card driver) in case images need to be downloaded and e-mailed to the lending institution following damage to the object etc.
- **Packing instructions**  
These should include display and handling requirements, keys, labels.

- **Copy of the export licence (if appropriate)**
- **Details of travel subsistence (per diem)**
- **Hotel booking**  
This is usually done by the borrower or transport agent. It should be made clear to the courier in advance how the hotel account is to be settled.
- **Travel tickets**  
These, or more likely “e” tickets, are normally booked by the agent and (if appropriate) sent directly to the registrar.
- **Personal travel insurance**  
Organised either by the agents or the registrar and should be checked by the courier to ensure that any personal circumstances are covered.
- **Courier instructions**  
A plan of action or schedule of events normally prepared by the registrar which includes detailed instructions and all necessary information for the courier. It should include any known information of the borrowing venue’s facilities, for example, whether cases are off-loaded in a covered loading bay or in the street, how cases enter galleries (by lift or carried up the stairs) and so on. It is useful to include a street map and any other local information. Local domestic information is often provided upon arrival at the hotel/venue by the borrower’s registrar in the shape of a courier pack, which may also include the per diem if the courier has had responsibility to subsist several days en route.
- **Passport**  
It is the courier’s responsibility to check his/her passport and the transport agent’s to advise on any necessary visas when required.
- **Local currency**
- **Mobile phone**  
It should be ensured that the mobile phone will operate in all of the countries that the courier will be working in and that it has adequate credit. Its charger and (when appropriate) an international socket adaptor should also be taken.
- **Object handling gloves**  
Appropriate handling gloves should be taken and kept accessible in case the packing case must be opened, for example in customs.
- **Normal traveling aids**  
Maps for the route, locations of hotels and borrowing institutions, coins for tolls etc should be considered.

## **Documentation - In Transit**

### **Customs Documents**

Within the EC no Customs documents are required. However, a shipment may travel through an EC country before exporting to a non-EC country. In such a case, the UK and overseas agents will prepare the necessary Customs export and entry documentation. These are not needed by the courier.

## Transit Documents

The courier should always carry copies of:

- **Airway bill**  
This is a contract between a shipper and carrier which lists the goods to be carried and represents the carrier's responsibility for the delivery of goods.
- **Pro forma shipping invoice**  
This lists all the items included in the shipment, with details of ownership and values.
- **Export licence (if applicable)**  
An Export Licence is required when various categories of objects over a certain value leave the UK and/or EC either temporarily or permanently. Permission has to be given by a government department (in England DCMS) and the licence number is entered on the Customs documentation. Usually the transport agent applies for the export licence.
- **CITES (if applicable)**  
The Cites convention (Convention on international trade in endangered species of wild fauna and flora) is a means of controlling the movement of objects made of materials from extinct or endangered species (such as ivory) from one country to another.
- **CMR (if applicable)**  
(*Convention relatif au contrat de transportation international des Merchandises par Route*).  
This is a contract for the carriage of goods by road (and ferry) from one country to another which sets out the responsibilities and liabilities of the sender and the carrier.
- Any other documentation relating to any hazardous or controlled substances or objects that the courier is legally obliged to carry.

## Documentation - On Return

### The Courier Report

This may take the form of a checklist or brief written summary. The report should include a comment on the following:

- Each stage of the transport, agent's service, quality of vehicles, handling.
- Loan venue (both storage and galleries), environmental conditions, security, art/object handling, administration.
- Hotel, local transport arrangements.

This formal report is part of the record of the loan and should be a concise comment by the courier on the positive and any negative aspects of their courier duty. It also serves to establish a source of information for future reference by the lender and may influence future loan policy. If the returning courier is different from the outward, the former should refer to this for pertinent comments.

## Section 3

### Transport

#### The Transport Agent

The agent provides a service, meeting the demands of both the lender and the borrower and is usually paid for by the latter. The agent and the registrar are both key players in organising the transport of the object; there should be a constant process of information exchange and consultation between both parties in order to facilitate the safest and most effective route from A to B. The agent is a source of expertise but also acts at all times on the registrar's instructions and will not make unilateral decisions concerning the transport of the loan. For international loans, the lender and the borrower usually use one agent, but the lender should be aware that a main Agent might sub-contract without prior notice. This may apply especially when trans-shipment is involved.

At ports and points of transfer, the agent is the authorised individual in the eyes of the airline or customs official, but the degree of authorisation will vary between countries. The courier has no automatic legal rights of access to port or airline-controlled areas, e.g. below decks in a ferry or in cargo sheds. The agent arranges for the courier to have maximum access to the object in transit, but this is a concession. Problems and concerns should be raised with the agent in the first instance. Should the need arise however, e.g. where the safety of the object is compromised, the courier must be prepared to seize the initiative and take appropriate and reasonable action.

#### Road Transport

There is a current trend for some airlines to discontinue carrying freight and, post the World Trade Center attacks of September 2001 there is an increased trend for former established airline routes to be dropped. It is likely, therefore, that the transport of shipments by road will increase.

An overnight stop en route may extend to three or four nights with longer distance destinations. The transport may comprise one or two vehicles with or without a follow car, depending upon the size and value of the shipment together with the number of couriers present.

It is helpful for the courier to be familiar with the route and key stops (fuel, refreshments, toilet, overnight stops), and any security arrangements throughout the journey, including the use of security compounds, follow-cars, police escorts. It is a cardinal rule that the vehicle is never left unattended at the roadside or service station when carrying objects. The vehicle should carry a mobile telephone with a range appropriate for the journey; this is also desirable for the courier. Telephone communication is particularly important if the courier is travelling in a follow car.

Road transport in the UK for national institutions should also be carried out by carriers approved by the MLA (Museums, Libraries and Archives Council) Security Advisor and to Government Indemnity standards.

## **Courier Responsibilities**

The courier has a shared responsibility with the drivers for the care of the work in transit, from loading to unloading at the point of delivery but it must be remembered that the drivers are officially in charge of their vehicle, the load and for safety.

- In the event of unforeseen circumstances, the courier is ultimately responsible for his/her load, e.g. if Customs insist on the examination of the objects.
- The object(s) must be at a minimum risk at all times: Safely and securely stowed, and correctly strapped (two straps recommended).
- Environmental control - maintaining the correct temperature is especially important. The courier should continually be aware of the object's needs and its current environment. The courier should be prepared to take all practical measures to ensure the well-being of the object, and should take advice from the lending institutions Conservator if necessary. This includes ferry journeys and requires courier vigilance.
- Awareness of any official paperwork in the driver's possession e.g. Export Licence.

## **Be Prepared**

- On long-haul journeys the drivers will work shifts, this may affect arrival and departure times.
- The journey may be hampered by local road transport regulations, i.e., no lorry driving is permitted at weekends or public holidays in many European countries.
- Carry a credit card and/or local currency in case of unexpected delays.
- Find out who the drivers will be and the vehicle details. Couriers should inform the registrar of their smoking/non-smoking requirements before departure.
- Couriers should be aware of their scheduled stops and arrange a rota to ensure that the vehicle is not left unattended during breaks. Ensure that drivers are equipped with the necessary road maps.
- The vehicle itself should carry water and basic medical supplies.
- Long-haul journeys which may include several overnight stops are tiring. Stamina and good health are required by the courier.
- The vehicle should not be opened on route. However there may be exceptional circumstances when a courier will need to act decisively, eg. in the event of a breakdown, or customs inspections at ports (see Crisis Management).

## **Air Transport of Freight Shipments**

### *(i) Before Departure*

- In the cargo shed the agent acts as mediator between the courier and airline. The courier's safety in a hazardous area is paramount; the agent should provide safety guidelines where appropriate.
- The agent will attach the airway bill (AWB) to the case, communicate the pallet or container number to the courier and escort the courier to the passenger terminal to clear Security and Passport Control.
- The courier should discuss with the agent before departure how the agent will confirm that the freight has been loaded to the plane. It is advisable also that the courier checks with airline personnel just prior to boarding to confirm that the pallet has been loaded. Often the courier is in a position to see the actual loading of the container or pallet from the Departure Gate lounge but this should never replace the official check.
- It is generally recommended that the courier only takes hand luggage with them. If the consignment is not loaded and luggage is checked this may result in the courier not travelling with the consignment or a flight delay. If accompanying freight, awaiting personal luggage from the hold will prevent the courier's swift transfer to the cargo shed upon arrival. However the courier may wish to consider checking in some baggage. This may not only be for practical purposes concerned with the length of a courier's stay but also, in the event of the consignment not being loaded and the courier refusing to board the aircraft, the delay caused by the location and retrieval of the luggage does give additional time for the agent to locate the offloaded cargo and negotiate a new flight with airline staff. It is also possible that the inconvenience caused by such a delay may result in space being found for the consignment in the original flight.
- The agent will remain at the airport usually 1½ hours after the flight has departed (in case of any diversion/return of the aircraft) and then inform the registrar from the lending institution that all has proceeded according to plan.

### *(ii) On Arrival*

- It is the registrar's responsibility to make sure that the courier knows the arrangements for meeting up with the borrower's agent.
- The agent may meet the courier airside (at the cabin door). It is most usual, however, for the courier to be met beyond customs in the Arrivals area by an agent brandishing a name board.
- It is important that the courier leaves the plane at the earliest possible moment in order to meet the agent and reach the cargo shed as quickly as possible.
- The agent, whilst escorting the courier to the cargo shed, will inform the courier of the unloading schedule; arrival of the pallet/container in the cargo shed and the eventual breaking down of the load which the courier must witness.
- Couriers accompanying hand-carry shipments should limit personal effects to hand-carry luggage only.

## Air Transport of Hand-Carry Shipments

An unpacked item may look like an obvious hand-carry but once packed and cased it may exceed the acceptable hand-carry dimensions.

There is no legal definition of hand-carry size measurements. Aircraft interiors vary and aircraft types may be altered with little or no warning, despite the agent's pre-planning. A hand-carry case is defined by whether it is readily portable by the courier without reliance on assistance by agents or a trolley. This could determine the choice of courier, not only in terms of physical strength but also stamina. If correctly cushioned within its case, a hand-carry item may withstand a small amount of vibration. It is probable that airport trolleys far exceed the acceptable vibration limits and should therefore be avoided.

If a decision to hand-carry is made by the lender, he or she must be fully aware that airline staff have the authority, be it at the ticket desk, boarding gate, or in the aircraft cabin to refuse carriage on the day. Given the uncertainties surrounding hand-carry transports, temperament will also be an influential factor in the initial selection of an appropriate courier.

It could be considered that hand-carries, by virtue of their size, portability and vulnerability, represent a high level of risk for transport. Conversely, a small object of an especially fragile nature will certainly be safer hand-carried than in the cargo hold of the aircraft. The decision to hand-carry must be made after consideration of all factors related to the loan itself and the courier accompanying it.

### *(i) From the Point of Departure*

- Maximise the usefulness of the journeys between the museum and the airport. Couriers should check and discuss all arrangements with the agent.

The hand-carry case must be secured upright in the vehicle like all larger cases, and not held on the lap. At the airport, the transport agent should escort the courier through any formalities and assist in cases of difficulty. The agent liaises with the airport and airline personnel to ensure that someone is available to assist the courier in the aircraft. The agent may also arrange for airport security to remain with the courier from the departure lounge to the gate. Couriers should request access to an airline lounge or quiet room if possible.

The agent's work and documentation will hopefully deter Customs and Security staff from insisting on x-ray or visual examination of the case contents. The level of radiation to which the object might be subjected will not harm the item, but opening the case and handling **are** clear risk factors. Therefore, in all cases an x-ray is the preferred option. If airport staff insist on opening the case, the courier must insist that this is done in a separate, closed room and that the courier alone should handle the object. Sealing the case with a numbered seal which is confirmed by accompanying documentation may deter customs from demanding to see the contents of a case. A photograph of the item ready to hand may also provide a helpful disincentive.

The courier must keep the item securely at his/her side at all times before the flight departure. This also includes any visit to the toilet (the disabled toilet allows both courier and case a degree of comfort).

Couriers should check with the Agent before proceeding to the departure lounge or boarding that the airline has straps or rope for securing the case if required.

### *(ii) In the Aircraft*

Stowing and securing options will vary according to the aircraft type, and indeed the crew on the day. Despite all arrangements made by the agent and registrar, accompanying a hand-carry item demands flexibility and diplomatic skills of the courier. Normally, an extra seat will be purchased for the case which may be secured on or in front of the seat with straps or rope requested of airline staff or cabin crew. However, the courier may be offered the option of stowing the case in a cupboard. This is perfectly acceptable, providing that the case can be safely and securely wedged in position. In this case, a pre-purchased seat may be relinquished. **On no account should a hand-carry case be stowed in the overhead locker.**

*(iii) On Arrival*

Ideally, the Agent should be at the cabin door. Couriers should request to leave the plane first, if not, they should wait until a quiet and opportune moment to move arises. If necessary, couriers should wait until all the passengers have exited. If couriers are met beyond Arrivals, they should go through the red channel at Customs, and declare that they are carrying a work of art/object. The correct procedure should always be checked with the agent prior to departure and any appropriate documentation required in order to clear Customs issued to the courier by the agent.

## Section 4

### At The Borrowing Institution

#### Arrival

- Use your transit time to prepare and re-read your instructions.
- Know in advance when and where to report and whom to contact.
- Monitor the estimated arrival time, phone ahead if possible shortly prior to arriving.
- Have all your paperwork, ID and passport ready.
- Be clear what your hotel arrangements are, and how you will obtain your per diem.
- Be aware of whether there are any unusual customs/security formalities.

**In summary, know what has been agreed and why.** The time of arrival may not be within normal working hours and night security staff may be in attendance. Be clear about the arrangements for an out-of-hours delivery.

If your loan is not straightforward e.g. oversize or heavy, ensure in advance that any special equipment, extra staff and routing arrangements have been made and confirmed.

- Supervise and accompany the loan to secure storage in correct environmental conditions.
- Verify the unpacking schedule following an agreed acclimatisation period for the packing case.

#### Installation

- Establish that the unpacking area is safe and clean with suitable equipment (packing table, adequate light) and is free from non-essential staff.
- If you are responsible for a number of loans, establish the order of unpacking, and confirm that you are to witness the opening of every case (padlocks are useful as a means of control). Oversee the unpacking: power tools should only be used for uncasing works and for drilling pilot holes on the wall.
- Establish the person with whom you will examine the condition of the unpacked work. Ideally, this should be a conservator. Check the work against the condition report. Note any changes or other information which either of you regard as pertinent and request that the borrower countersigns the report.
- Ensure that all aspects of display case handling and installation comply with your conditions of loan (gloves, fixings, security screws, alarms, barriers, light levels, ambient temperature and %R.H etc. – it may be necessary for the courier to provide equipment in order to measure the environment; if this is not practical then a provision for borrowing the borrowing institution's equipment should be made before the commencement of the loan). Are you satisfied with the level of security prevailing in the space during both public and quiet hours (locked doors, object's location in relation to windows or other exits, warding and security staff, CCTV)? Before departure, the courier should be fully satisfied that all loan requirements have been met. Consult the borrowing registrar initially if you have concerns which cannot be assuaged; ultimately consult your own registrar in case of need.
- If you are not required to see the installation, fully inform yourself of the borrower's intentions and that these comply with your wishes. If de-installing, see the packed work

loaded on the vehicle and strapped in, or supervise any interim deposit in secure storage as on arrival.

- After unpacking ensure that empty case(s) and/or packing materials are appropriately stored and, if off site or in non-climate controlled conditions, that arrangements will be made to return these at least 24 hours prior to re-packing in order to re-acclimatise to the gallery environment.
- Sign and date all paperwork, including a receipt for the loan delivered.

## Section 5

### Crisis Management

#### Difficulties can occur in transit. Couriers should therefore be:

- prepared
- fit and able
- aware at all times
- alert and level-headed
- firm, yet flexible and pleasant.

#### A crisis might be:

- a missed flight
- non-loading (or “bumping”) of freight by the airline
- breakdown of vehicle/mechanical apparatus
- a road accident
- ferry port strike
- exhibition venue is a building site on arrival, contractors still present, etc.
- bad weather conditions
- re-routing e.g. change of aircraft/destination airport
- courier illness
- damage to the object whilst in transit
- political unrest/civil commotion
- terrorist attack
- theft or attempted theft
- misinformation on facilities e.g. doors not large enough.

#### Appropriate Action

A crisis can vary in degrees of severity but in the event of any trouble, the courier should let both lending and borrowing parties know immediately. A crisis of any sort has safety implications primarily for the work of art or object but also for the couriers themselves.

The action to take in a crisis will be specific to the circumstances involved. For example:

- **If a case is dropped or toppled in the cargo shed**  
Before anything else, all further activity must cease. Couriers should make note of the circumstances, times, names, etc. Photographs should be taken if possible or appropriate. The quality of the case will clearly affect any further decision, but if an accident were to involve a glazed painting, the courier must ascertain whether the glass is broken by opening the case in a secure area of the cargo shed and remove any debris to prevent further damage.
- **“Bumping” of freight (by the airline)**  
The courier might be informed of this as late as arrival at the departure gate only minutes before take off. No explanations may be given by the airline (but often this is due to extra fuel being required in winter months). If the agent is not still with the courier, the airline should be asked to page them, so that the offloaded freight can be safely secured, allocated to a later flight and then new tickets assigned to the courier to accompany the freight. The agent should notify the receiving agent, transport company and receiving

institution of the revised arrival times and should remain at the airport until after the flight has finally departed to confirm this to all parties.

- **Water ingress.**

Again, couriers must only open the case in the cargo shed if it is certain that water has entered and might damage the object(s). Otherwise, action should be delayed until the arrival at the gallery or museum.

Whatever the circumstances, the safety and security of the work(s) are paramount, as is of course the courier's own safety. Further damage should be prevented by the courier managing the incident personally. In the event of an emergency, however, contact should be made with home base as soon as possible to seek further advice. If damage is severe or any other aspect of the situation irreparable, the loan may ultimately need to be withdrawn and accompanied eventually back to base.

Should any situation arise where both the object and the courier are put in a situation of severe jeopardy then the well being of the courier should always take precedence.

### **Help! Guidance**

- Couriers should consider taking mobile telephones. Investigate the possibility of institutional phone-cards for international use. Inter-continental telephones in a vehicle are invaluable.
- Couriers should carry a list of emergency contact numbers, both home and abroad, with names, job titles, etc. of relevant individuals, museum and transport agent staff, together with accurate telephone prefixes.
- Couriers should check their own personal insurance cover.
- The registrar should regularly check agents' emergency contingency plans for vehicles and drivers.

## Section 6

### Training

It is recommended that all couriers undergo some form of training. In some of the larger institutions this may be available 'in-house'. If not, organisations such as the UKRG hold seminars on Courier issues. It may also be possible to approach a large institution to enquire whether they would be able to provide training. Such opportunities may vary widely from formal seminars to workshops addressing specific topics, such as casing, soft wrapping or documentation, one-to-one briefings between courier and registrar, all or any of which will depend of course upon time and available resources.

Relevant information and knowledge empowers the courier and will give him or her the confidence to deal with a wide range of situations which may be encountered on any one journey.

### Training should cover:

- **Condition Reporting:** Examination and assessment of the object with conservation staff. Understand the terms of the report and to what they relate. Do not forget the frame. The courier should have visual familiarity with the work, viewed under good lighting and must be able to recognise important changes in its condition. Good quality photographs are indispensable in this process.
- **Handling and Packing:** the function of a packing case, soft-wrapping, handling in relation to weight and size considerations for both freight and hand-carries.
- **Hanging and Installation:** Fixings, acceptable variants and equipment.
- **Loading and Unloading:** Airport procedures i.e. containerisation or palletisation. Loading a vehicle, climate control and air-ride mechanism. Hand-carries.
- **Paperwork and Documentation:** Comprehensive packing notes detailing packing and hanging method, case padlocks, key nos. etc. Familiarity with airway bills/customs papers / receipts.
- **Reporting:** The courier should make a verbal report to the registrar immediately upon his/her return so that any outstanding problems may be swiftly dealt with. A formal written report should follow shortly thereafter; this should be a concise and informative record which can be referred to during subsequent loans.

Formal training to cover the key areas outlined above is but one of the components in the education of the ideal courier! Interpersonal skills are less easy to teach but tact, courtesy, respect, discretion and flexibility are all invaluable courier assets and can be developed with experience. Take the initiative towards your own training. You will be exposed to many variables once you are underway despite the most meticulous planning of colleagues and transport agents; it is important that you know why you are being asked to do something and to satisfy yourself as far as possible with all relevant information.

Training, information and experience are the foundation of courier work. As a courier, you are independently entrusted with the care of a work of art or object, you represent your institution and protect its reputation. However, in your eagerness to be the perfect courier do not try and handle more than you can manage; know your own limitations and remember that expert help and advice in the form of your registrars, agents, conservators and art handlers is never far away!

## Glossary

<b>Acclimatisation</b>	Process of case contents adjusting to external ambient conditions. Temp/% RH. Before unpacking, a case should acclimatise to ambient conditions, preferably in the exhibition area. 24hrs is the standard period applied, but may be commuted depending on the circumstances.
<b>Air-ride vehicle</b>	A vehicle with pneumatic suspension system situated under the back axle.
<b>Airline container</b>	A metal box with unique serial numbers, the size of which varies according to aircraft type, in which cargo is loaded and secured with straps.
<b>Airline pallet</b>	Large flat tray-like base with unique serial numbers on which airline cargo is stacked and secured (c. 3 x 2 metres).
<b>Airway bill</b>	Contract between shipper and carrier, a receipt for the material being shipped. It confirms that the material has been accepted for shipment and travels with the material. The number (usually at the top right-hand corner and bottom of the AWB) identifies the airline and the airway bill. The case label supplied by the agent includes the AWB number.
<b>Backboard</b>	A rigid barrier fitted to the frame at the back of the painting. It protects the painting from accidental damage and reduces exposure of the canvas to environmental oxidants and pollutants. Examples: Gatorfoam ,CappaboardTM, Fome-CorTM
<b>Bill of lading (or lading)</b>	Basic document in the shipping of goods: it is both a contract between agent and carrier and the receipt for the shipment.
<b>Box or case</b>	A rigid container of framed construction faces that completely encloses the contents.
<b>Brackets</b>	Right-angled or other support for a painting attached to or projecting from a vertical surface.
<b>Captive bolts</b>	A method of securing a packing case lid with bolts and screws, where the bolt is permanently located in one position on the lid of a case.
<b>Container</b>	A large box-like receptacle of standard design for the transport of goods, esp. in airport cargo shed.
<b>Courier pack</b>	A pack of local domestic travel, subsistence and, sometimes, cultural information made available to the courier upon their arrival at the venue. If the courier is to arrive at their hotel a day or so earlier than the installation/takedown it is customary to make this available at their hotel for their use upon arrival.
<b>Climate-controlled</b>	Climate control of transport vehicles such as lorries usually means heating or cooling.

<b>Crate</b>	A rigid container of framed construction which may or may not be enclosed.
<b>Custom security seal</b>	Used by HM Customs and Excise to ensure that the contents of a case, vehicle or cargo unit are not tampered with during transit or while under customs control. The seal is usually a small piece of lead that can be secured to the case, vehicle or cargo unit in such a way as to render opening the case impossible without breaking the seal. Cases would be sealed by Customs, if at time of import, they required to examine the goods but agreed to carry out the examination at the importer's premises. For example if art works arrived at Heathrow for the National Gallery and the consignment was selected for examination by Customs, the cases would be sealed at the airport and transferred to the NG for subsequent inspection by the Gallery's local officer.
<b>D-ring</b>	A closable metal ring normally secured by a captive sleeve nut onto a threaded end.
<b>Data logger</b>	A small monitor (9 v battery) normally used in fine art/object transport to record temperature and % rh variations in transit.
<b>Dollies/skates</b>	A small platform on wheels used to move objects too heavy or large to carry easily. These consist of a metal frame or solid piece of plywood (18-25mm thick) to which 4 or more wheels are attached. Skates are used on their own or in conjunction with another skate.
<b>Foot candles</b>	The imperial equivalent of the lux (qv). One footcandle equals approximately ten lux.
<b>Glassinetm</b>	A dense smooth-surfaced translucent paper used as a packing material.
<b>Government indemnity</b>	A government or state policy offered as an alternative to commercial insurance which without the payment of a premium, insures against damage or loss with the risk borne by the government.
<b>Hydraulic scoot</b>	Used in pairs, hydraulic scoots enable heavy rectangular objects to be moved in a very controlled manner. They have a number of load ratings eg. 300kg, 900kg, 2000kg.
<b>Johnson bar/"j" bar</b>	A long steel bar with two small wheels and a flat tongue which is used either for leverage or the movement of packed or empty cases.
<b>Lifting straps</b>	Two or more lifting straps are used mainly to carry large heavy paintings.

<b>Link hanger</b>	A versatile type of plate metal fixing which can safely support a wide range of picture weights and sizes and accommodate a range of frame to frame rebate depths.
<b>Loose loading</b>	A term commonly used in the air freight industry to describe the manner in which cargo is carried in the hold of a narrow-bodied aircraft. The handling of the cargo is done in much the same way as passenger luggage and is placed on and taken off the conveyer belt by hand for loading onto the aircraft. The cargo is always unpalletised and is generally unsupervised which can be less secure and inadvisable unless closely monitored.
<b>Lux</b>	The SI unit of illuminance.
<b>Lifting tables</b>	Enable controlled effortless raising and lowering of large and heavy sculptures and paintings, typically heavy busts onto or off plinths.
<b>Manifest</b>	A customs document listing the details of the cargo and its destination that is to be conveyed by sea, road air or rail. The Manifest must also include a unique identification reference such as an Airway Bill or Bill of Lading number.
<b>Mirror plate/ Mending plate</b>	Mild steel plate with countersunk holes for screw attachment of painting to wall.
<b>Oz cliptm</b>	A proprietary screw based and hinged plate metal fixing which can be adapted for transport, storage and display applications.
<b>Pallet truck</b>	A mobile lifting platform which is pump handle operated. Most commonly used to move packing cases and palletised work. May be lowrider, standard format or long bladed.
<b>Per diem</b>	A daily subsistence to cover meals and local travel. It sometimes includes the cost of the hotel accommodation.
<b>Piano wheels</b>	A small sturdy 4 wheeled truck, 75cm long, 40cm wide and approx 25cm high. Two strong, fixed axles are fitted with a pair of wheels. The payload travels on two high density rubber feet. With a heavy object the rubber components provide the suspension. With either axle within 25cm of the centre of gravity, steering is achieved by shifting the weight forwards or backwards over either axle and raising one pair of wheels clear of the floor. Thus the trolley and payload can turn within 30cm of its own length.
<b>Plastazotetm</b>	Expanded polyethylene. An inert plastic foam material used to furnish the interior of packing cases.

<b>Plugging - in</b>	When it is necessary to maintain climate control eg. on a long journey overnight, in an unheated warehouse, the generator can be operated electrically by plugging it into an appropriate mains terminal. This facility cannot be guaranteed and should be checked in advance since alternative forms of power (e.g. diesel generators) may well interfere with local air conditioning/environmental sensors.
<b>Pro-forma invoice</b>	An invoice sent in advance of goods being supplied.
<b>Ratchet strap</b>	Made of webbing these are used to restrain or secure loads.
<b>Red-cap</b>	An aircraft dispatcher who, in the absence of the agent, is the ultimate point of contact as to whether the freight has been successfully loaded on board the aircraft.
<b>Relative humidity</b>	The ratio of the amount of water vapour in the air relative to the maximum possible at a given temperature.
<b>Ryman fixing</b>	A flush-fitting highly discreet security fixing with a key hole which results in a very tight fit between wall and frame.
<b>Scissor-lift</b>	A platform that raises to a height not exceeding its length or width. Scissor refers to the design of the mechanism beneath the platform. Larger examples are fixed, smaller versions can be portable. The best example of a scissor supported platform is the domestic ironing board.
<b>Skate/dolly</b>	A small platform on either fixed or multi directional wheels used to move objects too heavy or large to carry easily. These consist of a metal frame or solid piece of plywood (18-25mm thick) to which 4 or more wheels are attached. Two may be used concurrently.
<b>Slings</b>	Ropes, cables or woven straps used to lift large / heavy objects.
<b>Tail lift</b>	A mechanised platform at the back of a lorry (truck) which can be raised, lowered or tilted to assist loading large or heavy objects. They are electrically operated and load rated e.g. 500kg, 1000kg, 2000kg etc. They must not be overloaded.
<b>Thermal half-time</b>	The time required for an internal environment to reach half the difference between the internal temp and the external temp. A useful measurement of the effectiveness of thermal insulation.
<b>Tie webbing</b>	Used primarily to secure objects against wooden tying off rails. 1 3/4 in wide with a breaking strain of 900 + lbs.
<b>Trans-shipment</b>	The transfer of a shipment usually between aircraft eg. Long haul flights via Europe.

<b>Travelling frame</b>	An open wooden frame onto which a painting is attached for transportation which is subsequently wrapped. Often used for paintings with ornate frames.
<b>Tri-wall© container</b>	A container or box made from a thick corrugated cardboard. Tri-wall is a product name for a rigid thick sheet material constructed from three layers of plain card and two corrugated. The corrugated layers are sandwiched between two plain sheets. In the centre a third plain sheet divides the two corrugated layers
<b>Vibration</b>	The response of any material to the input of continuous energy.