

4 MAIN CAUSES OF MUSEUM FIRES

Based on data from 100 museum fires reported between 1994 and 2004 in Canada

...And How You Can Help Prevent Them!

UNSAFE PRACTICES

Fires caused by activities involving heat, sparks or open flames (for example, smoking, cooking or hot work)

Provide designated smoking areas away from the building with non-combustible cigarette disposal units.

Limit the use of open flames within the building.

Choose flameless candles for events or art installations.

If open flames or heat-generating equipment are necessary:

- Never leave them unattended and keep combustible materials away.
- Ensure that portable extinguishers are easily accessible and that staff are trained in their use.
- Require hot work permits that include a fire watch during construction or renovation projects.
- Cease hot work or activity at least three hours before the end of the workday and monitor the area regularly for smoldering materials for the following three hours.



ARSON

Fires caused intentionally

Monitor the surroundings of your building for suspicious activities (for example, loitering) and report them to the police.

Ensure that the building exterior is well lit with vandal-proof lighting.

Install motion-activated lights.

Tend to grounds and gardens to maintain their well-kept appearance and ensure good visibility.

Use closeable, non-combustible trash containers and place them at least 10 metres away from the building.

Keep all entry points in good repair with high-quality locks.

Inform the police department of prolonged or seasonal closures and conduct regular inspections.

During construction, ensure that openings, scaffolding and ladders leading to the inside of the building are secured, and keep combustible debris and materials away.



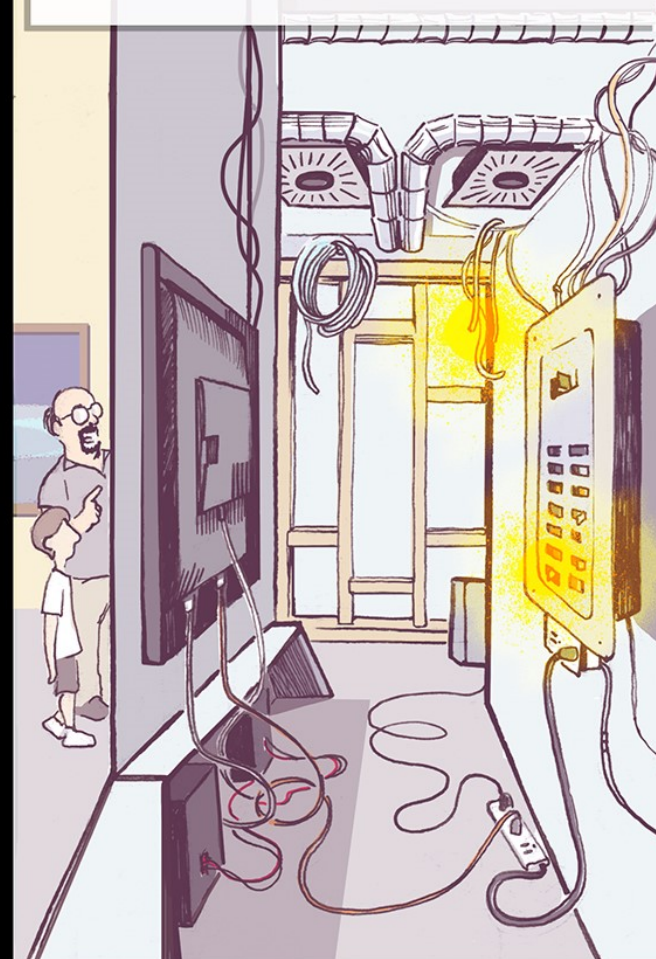
BUILDING SYSTEM FAILURE

Fires caused by the malfunction of electrical or mechanical system components

Regularly inspect and maintain mechanical systems and replace aging components.

If your building is older than 40 years old, have the electrical system inspected by a certified electrician every 10 years.

Limit the use of extension cords.



SMALL APPLIANCES FAILURE

Fires caused by small appliances (for example, portable heaters, kettles, toasters and coffee makers)

Choose CSA-certified appliances.

Unplug small appliances when not in use and before cleaning.

Use only one heat-producing appliance per outlet at a time.

Stop using appliances that show signs of being defective (for example, damaged cords or sparks).

Limit the use of portable heaters, particularly in collection spaces.

Never leave heat-generating equipment unattended and keep combustible materials away.

Verify appliances when recalls are issued and register your new products to receive recall notifications.

