



Miami Tribe of Oklahoma

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MIAMI TRIBE OF OKLAHOMA

NAGPRA Duty of Care Policy

This policy statement outlines the minimum standard duty of care for our ancestors human remains and their associated funerary objects (AFOs). This policy may not be exhaustive of all situations, therefore consultation with the Miami Tribe NAGPRA Department will be necessary to ensure the minimum safe standards are met. It must be clearly understood collections comprised of ancestral human remains and their AFOs must be given the same care and respect afforded any other human being and their possessions in a modern contemporary burial. To that end, we require, and will seek to ensure that all ancestors and their AFOs are treated with the same respect as any contemporary burial.

Respectful consideration should be given for Tribal customs for the handling of ancestral human remains and AFOs. Consultation with participating Tribes can determine the best conditions for the handling of collections. Miami Tribe policies are culturally informed and therefore we request that participating individuals of childbearing age and pregnant women should not handle or be in close proximity to ancestral human remains and their AFOs. Furthermore, food, liquids and tobacco intended for consumption should not be present with collections to be relocated. Tobacco to be used as an offering is allowed.

Containment and storage:

- 1) When possible, the ancestral remains and their AFOs should be joined together in the same container. If the AFOs are too numerous or heavy, they should be placed in a separate container(s), placed along side of the ancestral remains and labeled accordingly.
- 2) Ancestral remains and AFOs should be stored in acid free cardboard boxes either legal size or longer to accommodate the specific ancestor and their AFOs. Plastic containers should be avoided due to chemicals that in some states are found to potentially cause cancer or other health issues.

- 3) AFOs that are currently contained in plastic bags should be transferred into paper or other suitable biodegradable bag or pouch. This transfer can be accomplished when an inventory is created for consultation/NIC completion. If consultation is in progress, the successful transfer to paper bags should be accomplished prior to the transfer of legal control for the purposes of burial.
- 4) Newsprint or any form of paper with ink impregnated on it should not be used in wrapping or cushioning of human remains or funerary objects for long term storage.
- 5) Consultation with the Miami Tribe as well as other consulting Tribes will be needed to properly determine the appropriate method of destruction of any plastics used for prior storage.
- 6) Packaging and storage materials cannot be used again for other projects without the consensus approval of the consulting Tribes.
- 7) Photos, illustrations or video recordings of the human remains, and funerary objects is not permitted without the consensus permission of the consulting Tribes.
- 8) Casts, molds, scans or other three-dimensional reproductions are not permitted without consensus permission from the consulting Tribes.
- 9) Storage facilities for NAGPRA eligible collections should be both temperature and humidity controlled to museum standards if possible.
- 10) Security should be maintained to limit access to those staff with a specific need to access. If available, access tracking should be implemented for accountability/auditing purposes.
- 11) The Miami Tribe has specific ritual practices that are performed on the ancestors. However, we do support other consulting Tribes in the practice of their rituals in accordance with their cultural traditions.

Preparation for Burial:

- 1) The bundling of ancestors and their funerary objects is preferred, especially in the case of large numbers of individuals.
- 2) Red muslin (other natural, biodegradable material is acceptable) should be used for the bundling process. Natural hemp or fiber thread can be used to secure the knot to close the bundle. Care should be taken to not apply excessive pressure in closing the bundle due to the potential to harm fragile contents.
- 3) Ancestors and their funerary objects should be placed in the same bundle. If this is not possible, the bundles should be kept together and marked for identification.
- 4) Members of the Miami Tribe NAGPRA Department, other Tribes with similar policies and/or the institution staff can participate in the bundling process as scheduling permits.

Transfer of Collections Procedures:

Storage Facility Transfers:

- 1) All Tribes engaging in consultation should be notified with as much advanced notice as possible of ancestral collections being transferred to a secondary storage facility on campus.
- 2) At Tribal request, accommodations should be made to allow for Tribal representatives to either assist in the physical transfer or to monitor the transfer.
- 3) An inventory checklist should be used to ensure all collection materials are transferred.
- 4) With multiple collections, transfer should be made one complete collection at a time. Do not mix collections during transfer. Color and/or numerical coding is recommended to maintain collection integrity.
- 5) Physical transfer should be completed by NAGPRA Consultation staff and appropriate anthropology, archeology, museum, or other related departments as needed. Tribal representatives may also be available to assist in the physical transfer. Volunteers from outside departments must be pre-approved by the Tribe(s) and public volunteers should not be allowed to participate.
- 6) Public announcement or campus wide announcement (not including administration/legal) should not take place to avoid public curiosity or scrutiny.

Institutional Transfers:

- 1) All Tribes engaging in consultation should be notified with as much advanced notice as possible of ancestral collections being transferred to another institution.
- 2) Planning meetings with consulting Tribes should take place to discuss details pertaining to the transfer. Tribal input and recommendations should be taken into consideration during the planning process.
- 3) At Tribal request, pre-approved monitors or escorts should be allowed to participate in the transfer.
- 4) Collection size and travel distance should determine the best, most efficient method of transportation between institutions.
- 5) For ground travel, transportation should be scaled to prevent accidental movement and damage to collection boxes and the collections within. Multiple vehicles and trips may be necessary to protect the integrity of the collections.
- 6) Individuals in charge of driving transport vehicles should carry official identification and a letter certifying the transport from the institution and tribe in the event they are stopped by authorities, or in the event of an accident. Transport drivers should not travel alone, even if the personnel at the destination will take responsibility for transfer of collections from the vehicle(s) to the storage facility. When available, a safety escort should travel

with the transfer vehicles. (See sample Repatriation Transport ID Card and sample Human Remains Transport Letter supplied under the Resources Tab at mtoknagpra.com)

- 7) Notification should be made to the participating Tribes following the successful conclusion of the transfer.
- 8) If requested by the participating Tribes, copies of the associated paperwork should be distributed to the Tribes. Digital copies may be acceptable. (See samples of repatriation paperwork used by the Miami Tribe under the Resources Tab at mtoknagpra.com)