

Safety Protocols to Follow Before Conducting Rapid Heritage Damage Assessment

Please read all these guidelines carefully before documenting heritage damage. Your safety is the highest priority.

Do not enter potentially dangerous areas under any circumstances.

1. Preparations Before Assessment

- Wear a hard hat and boots. Bring a face mask, flashlight, phone, and water.
- Bring a fully charged cell phone and backup power bank.
- If available, bring GPS devices or install location-sharing smartphone applications.
- Work in teams of at least 2-3 people rather than conducting assessments alone.
- If you plan to survey damage, inform family, friends, or colleagues about your intended location(s) before leaving home.
- Keep a list of emergency phone numbers for volunteers, emergency response personnel in your phone or notebook.
- Reread safety information before entering data into the application.

2. Safety Procedures Before Assessment

(a) Safety Assessment

- Do not enter any building that appears unsafe.
- Do not conduct inspections if you observe:
 - Damaged or leaning walls
 - Leaning or collapsing roofs, ceilings
 - Collapsed pillars and beams
 - Damaged electrical wires, gas or water pipelines
 - Flooding or landslides
- Check for loose parts that might fall before entering any building.
- Always check for and be alert to dangerous insects and poisonous animals (scorpions, snakes, etc.).
- Always be aware of cracked areas or damaged structural components and barriers.
- If there is gas leakage, fire hazard, or other concerns, notify local authorities and do not enter.

(b) Initial Structural Assessment

- Before entering a building, inspect the main structural components from the outside.
- Understand hazard warning signs. For example, red tape barrier = high danger, no entry.
- Always be aware that the building you are inspecting could collapse at any time due to aftershocks.

(c) Establishing Access Routes

- Plan safe routes for entering and exiting the building in advance.
- If working with a team, designate emergency exits and meeting points in advance.

- When entering a building for inspection, set a time limit (15 minutes) and keep track of time.

3. Safety Procedures During Inspection

(a) Inspection Methods

- Begin assessment from the least dangerous area. Work from minimal to maximum risk areas.
- Always check the stability of floors or building structures before taking full steps.
- Do not stand under damaged components.
- Inspect only one room at a time, with no more than two people entering at once.

(b) Communication Guidelines

- Maintain communication between team members every 5 minutes during inspection, either by voice or phone.
- If someone you are communicating with does not respond, immediately declare a security emergency.

(c) Emergency Response

- If dust appears in the air, put on a face mask and leave the area immediately.
- If you hear sounds from the building or feel additional vibrations, exit immediately.
- Be vigilant for damaged electrical wires, gas or water pipelines.
- Keep track of time whenever entering for inspection, not exceeding 15 minutes.

4. Heritage Considerations

(a) Preventing Further Damage

- Carefully inspect fragile sculptures and surfaces, taking care not to scratch or damage them with other objects.
- Take care not to damage mural paintings. Do not collect fragments of damaged mural paintings, stucco, etc.
- Document additional damage that may occur due to flooding or moisture after rainfall.

(b) Protecting Moveable Objects

- When possible, note the location of moveable objects for emergency rescue purposes.
- Do not move valuable objects such as Buddha statues, sculptures, stone inscriptions, and other artifacts without notifying the relevant authorities.
- For security reasons, do not disclose or post on social media the location of valuable heritage objects that could be stolen by criminals. Immediately inform and properly hand them over to the relevant authorities such as ward, village, or religious organizations.

(c) Other Considerations

- If the heritage site you are documenting is privately owned, request permission from the owner.
- Remove shoes when entering Buddhist monuments, except in circumstances where doing so would pose a safety risk.
- Do not disrespect religious buildings and objects.
- When necessary, inform monks, locals, and religious leaders in advance about your heritage damage assessment activities.
- Request permission to photograph or handle culturally significant symbols and objects when needed.

5. Health Protection

- It is important to take regular breaks and stay hydrated during documentation.
- Allow team members to rest if they show signs of stress or fatigue.
- Use hand sanitizer for personal hygiene. Thoroughly wash hands after completing documentation. Change clothes.
- If you experience symptoms such as inhaling bad odours, skin irritation, or eye irritation, seek medical attention promptly.