The American Association of Museums provides the following information on currently existing policies and ethical guidelines relevant to the process of deaccessioning.

*The Code of Ethics for Museums* issued by AAM in 2000 notes that a museum must ensure that:
- Collections in its custody support its mission and public trust responsibilities
- Acquisition, disposal, and loan activities are conducted in a manner that respects the protection and preservation of natural and cultural resources and discourages illicit trade in such materials
- Acquisition, disposal, and loan activities conform to its mission and public trust responsibilities
- Disposal of collections through sale, trade, or research activities is solely for the advancement of the museum’s mission. Proceeds from the sale of non-living collections are to be used consistent with the established standards of the museum’s discipline, but in no event shall they be used for anything other than acquisition or direct care of collections.

The Characteristics of an Accreditable Museum describe a professionally run, high-functioning museum. They are broadly stated outcomes that a museum is expected to achieve. Those related to collections state:
- The museum owns, exhibits, or uses collections that are appropriate to its mission.
- The museum legally, ethically, and effectively manages, documents, cares for, and uses the collections.
- The museum’s collections-related research is conducted according to appropriate scholarly standards.
- The museum strategically plans for the use and development of its collections.
- Guided by its mission, the museum provides public access to its collections while ensuring their preservation.

Taken together, these statements indicate that a museum’s governing authority must make responsible choices regarding the content of the collections. It is the governing authority’s obligation to remove from the collection material:
- That does not relate to the museum’s mission
- That the museum does not have the resources to preserve

The *Accreditation Commission’s Expectations Regarding an Institutional Code of Ethics* requires that an institution’s code of ethics acknowledge discipline-specific professional practices and exceed them. Examples of discipline-specific professional practices regarding deaccessioning include:
The **American Association for State and Local History’s** *Statement of Professional Standards and Ethics* specifies that “Collections shall not be deaccessioned or disposed of in order to provide financial support for institutional operations, facilities maintenance, or any reason other than the preservation or acquisitions of collections.”

The **Association of Art Museum Directors** issued *Notes on Art Museums’ Use of Proceeds from the Sale of Works of Art from the Collection*. It states that the Association “is strongly committed to the principle that the proceeds from the sale of accessioned works of art by an art museum be used only to replenish the collection through the acquisition of other works of art; the proceeds must not be applied to operating expenses.”

**Additional Resources**
*Codes of Ethics and Practice of Interest to Museums* (American Association of Museums, 2000)

*Code of Ethics for Museums* (American Association of Museums, 2000)  
[http://www.aam-us.org/museumresources/ethics/coe.cfm](http://www.aam-us.org/museumresources/ethics/coe.cfm)


*Statement of Professional Standards and Ethics* (American Association for State and Local History, 2002)  
[http://www.aaslh.org/ethics.htm](http://www.aaslh.org/ethics.htm)