



Conservation FAQ

Is the *Titanic* in danger of collapse?

Yes, but it is uncertain when this will take place. Already in the years since the Ship's discovery, there has been a compaction of the decks on the stern section, and decay of the superstructure in the area of the officers' quarters, gymnasium and enclosed promenade.

What is the condition of the Ship's interiors?

Most of the soft woods used in the construction of *Titanic*, such as the pine walls between cabins and staterooms, have disappeared throughout the vessel. This has turned most of the Ship's interiors into enormous steel caverns, with a thick layer of brown ooze covering the decks. There are, however, some remnants of the once-opulent décor, mostly in the quiet water parts of the wreck where the lack of circulation inhibits wood-digesting organisms. Ceiling and wall panels, wainscoting and decorative window coverings are best preserved in the first-class reception room, and a few of the deluxe suites on the decks above.

Who owns the wreck?

Under admiralty law, the owner of a ship retains rights to its wreck, unless the owner abandons it or an unusually long period of time has passed since the vessel sank. It is generally accepted when the White Star Line sold their company to Cunard the *Titanic* was not included in the sale because it had sunk and could not be recovered. A portion of the hull was insured by several insurance companies, none of which have ever stepped forward to claim ownership. To date, no court has awarded ownership rights, due to abandonment, to another entity.

How did RMS Titanic, Inc. (RMST) gain salvor-in-possession rights to the *Titanic*?

RMST, in compliance with admiralty law, recovered objects from the wreck site in 1993 and brought them into an admiralty court in Norfolk Virginia. RMST went through the legal process of arresting the Ship and gave public notice that it intended to become salvor-in-possession and further invited any entity with a claim to come into the federal court and challenge their rights in achieving their goal. A representative from over seven hundred insurance companies filed a claim, which was ultimately settled. On June 7, 1994 the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia declared RMST salvor-in-possession of the wreck and wreck site of the RMS Titanic, excluding all others from going to the site for the purpose of recovery. RMST is the only entity that has recovered and conserved items from the *Titanic*.

How many expeditions has RMS Titanic, Inc. conducted?

RMS Titanic, Inc. has conducted eight research and recovery expeditions to the *Titanic's* wreck site in 1987, 1993, 1994, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2004 and 2010. The 2010 research expedition resulted in the production of the first-ever sonar map of the wreck site and data assessing the ship's condition.

How many artifacts has RMS Titanic, Inc. recovered?

To date, RMS Titanic, Inc. has recovered more than 5,500 objects from the wreck site, ranging from delicate porcelain dishes to a 17-ton section of the hull.

Why is it important to recover and conserve artifacts from the *Titanic's* wreck site?

The bottom of the deep ocean is a hostile environment. Over time, man-made objects will be consumed by bacteria, abraded by sediments, and corroded by salt and acids. Even the Ship itself is slowly being destroyed by iron-eating microorganisms and will one day collapse on the ocean floor. Artifacts that are not recovered from the wreck site will eventually be lost. RMS Titanic, Inc. is committed to recovering, conserving, and exhibiting artifacts from the *Titanic's* wreck site to help preserve the physical memory of the Ship and the people who perished in the disaster. Through these activities, people all over the world have the opportunity to see and touch three-dimensional objects that bore witness to the sinking and to gain new insights into the human dimensions of the tragedy.