



SALVAGE AND RECOVERY FOR COLLECTIONS

BUREAU OF HISTORIC SITES ♦ PEBBLES ISLAND RESOURCE CENTER

DIVISION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

NEW YORK STATE OFFICE OF PARKS, RECREATION AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The resources described below are the most direct, useful and practical for all collections—regardless of whether they are public or private. The first two steps are to: 1. report the damage to organizations that can organize hands-on assistance and aid, such as AIC-Cert and the Heritage Preservation Emergency Task Force (both are aligned with FEMA); and 2. seek practical advice to address the damage using tools such as Heritage Preservation’s *Emergency and Response Wheel* which provides step-by-step guidance.

AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR CONSERVATION OF HISTORIC AND ARTISTIC WORKS

AIC-CERT 24 hour hotline 202.661.8068 www.conservation-us.org/
DISASTER RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

AIC-CERT responds to the needs of cultural institutions during emergencies and disasters through coordinated efforts with first responders, state agencies, vendors and the public. **Hotline volunteers can provide advice and referrals by phone.** Requests for on site assistance will be forwarded by the volunteer to the AIC-CERT Coordinator and Project Director for response. Less urgent questions can also be answered by emailing info@conservation-us.org. **Disaster Response and Recovery Guides** include:

[*Emergency! If You're First*](#)

[*Saving Photographs After the Flood*](#)

[*Salvaging Water-Damaged Textiles*](#)

[Conservation Online Disaster Portal](#)

[*Tips for the Care of Water Damaged Family Heirlooms and Other Valuables*](#)

HERITAGE PRESERVATION THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR CONSERVATION

HERITAGE EMERGENCY NATIONAL TASK FORCE www.heritagepreservation.org 202.233.0800



Emergency Response and Salvage Wheel offers step-by-step procedures for dealing with damage to framed art work, photographs, books and paper items, electronic records, textiles, furniture, ceramics/stone/metal, organic materials and natural history specimens. Order [here](#) or call 888.388.6789. A Spanish version of the wheel is available. For more information, call or email TaskForce@heritagepreservation.org. A companion publication, *The Field Guide to Emergency Response*, is also available from the same source. Additional guides and tools are on several website sections:

Resources for Emergency Planning and Preparedness website sections include *Know Your Risks, Plan for Collections Emergencies, Prepare a Historic Property for Emergencies, Learn What Funding is Available and How to Get It, Train Your Staff and Volunteers* and *Protect Family Treasures from Disaster*.

Resources for Response and Recovery website sections include: *Respond to an Emergency, Get Professional Help, Assess Damage, Get Funding to Aid Your Recovery, Share Information with Your Community and Local Media, Protect Your Health, Salvage Your Collections, Salvage a Historic Property, and Salvage Family Treasures from Disaster*.

Information on major disasters

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

www.nps.gov 215.597.7013 (Northeast Regional Office)

Museum Management Program

Primer on Disaster Preparedness, Management and Response (Paper-based materials)

Continued

RESPONSE AND SALVAGE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BOOKS, PAPER ITEMS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

Documents and photographs are especially vulnerable to water damage. Water degrades the structural integrity, making them fragile and difficult to handle, and mold can start growing as early as 48 hours after the event. The recommendations below are steps intended to render paper photographic materials into a relatively stabilized state to arrest further damage and buy time to plan and organize recovery.

If materials are damp and space is available most paper and photographic materials can be air dried. When confronted with a large volume of material or materials that are very wet, soiled and/or moldy these items can be frozen until air drying and mold remediation procedures can be done. Freezing sets photographs and paper materials into a suspended state, allowing them to be processed in easier to manage batches when the surroundings are more controlled. Freezing will retard mold growth on wet materials, and will stop mold that has started to form. Material can stay frozen for weeks, even months, until air drying can be done or professional help procured. Freezing is best done with sub zero commercial freezers, but home freezers will work. Refrigerated trucks will keep materials cool enough to slow mold growth.

Books:

- If damp stand on end (top or bottom) on a clean surface and fan out pages to air dry.
- If very dirty and wet, books can be rinsed holding the book closed, then wrapped in freezer paper or wax paper, bagged (if Ziplocs are available) and frozen for processing at a later date. Pack books spine down in sturdy plastic boxes if possible.
- If there is space to process and air dry wet books, lay them flat and interleave them with clean absorbent paper (paper towels, unprinted newsprint), periodically changing the interleaving to absorb as much water as possible, then tip the book up and fan the pages out to air dry.

Documents/loose papers:

- If damp, air dry flat on absorbent paper as individual sheets or small piles no greater than 1/4" thick. Change the interleaving frequently.
- If wet or moldy, do not try to separate or unfold, interleave with freezer paper or waxed paper for processing at a later date.

Framed paper items:

- If damp and the piece is not stuck to the glass, unframe and air dry face up as for loose papers above. Place frame in safe place to air dry.
- If damp and stuck to the glass, do not unframe, air dry face down (glass down).
- If fully wet, and or moldy and stuck to the glass, unframe but do not try to separate glass and paper, wrap with freezer paper and sandwich glass and art work between cardboard and freeze. Mark piece as containing glass, handle carefully. If glass is broken, tape cracks and loose fragments as much as possible, sandwich with cardboard.

Photographs and negatives:

- Do not blot surfaces. If damp, negatives and prints can be air dry by hanging on clothesline with clips at corners or lain flat on absorbent paper. Remove them from their plastic sleeves or paper envelopes.
- If soiled, negatives and prints can be rinsed with clean water and air dried on a clothesline.
- If moldy, sticking together or too many to air dry, freeze with wax paper or freezer paper interleaving for processing at a later date.
- Do not freeze glass plate negatives.
- Note some digital prints may run in water, limit water exposure, dry face up on absorbent paper.

Basic materials:

Newsprint (unprinted), paper towels, rags, blotting paper, absorbent material that will not run or transfer.

Hang tags and pencils for labeling tags

Indelible pens (i.e., Sharpies) for labeling bags only— not to be used on the original pieces.

Plastic crates (cardboard boxes fail when wet).

String/clothesline, clothespins Packing tape

Wax paper/freezer paper Cardboard

Freezer bags (Ziploc, all sizes) Chest freezer

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PEEBLES ISLAND RESOURCE CENTER
518.237.8643
www.nysparks.com/historic-preservation/bhs/