

FAQ's: INTRODUCTION



If you are first on the scene

These suggestions may help you respond to an emergency. These are only guidelines and as each disaster is different it may be necessary to modify these procedures. It's tempting to "get right to work," but planning and initial organization will save you stress, work and possibly additional loss.

Contact local, regional, or institutional conservation facilities and local conservators,

Remember that safety comes first; don't endanger yourself or your staff

Initial Reaction:

control or eliminate the source of the problem;
Turn off the electricity and gas;
Inform appropriate authorities;
Inform proper civil authorities;
Find the person in charge of the building

Assessment

Will begin after the building is declared safe for re-entry. Officials may prevent re-entry for several days.
Consult your emergency plan if you have one.

Take time to coordinate and plan activities.

Priorities:

human safety
ensure that staff and volunteers have been inoculated against such as tetanus and
obtain masks for mould obtain equipment, records, forms, information needed to manage salvage and reopen institution
make a thorough photographic and written record of emergency conditions and salvage activities
assemble collections records: shelf lists, inventory, registrar's logs, etc.
stabilize building prioritize collections, from important (valuable; heavily used; significant; vulnerable to irreparable damage) to least important

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Designate:

emergency coordinator
liaison with civil authorities
individual with financial authority
volunteer coordinator
journal keeper and photographer to keep detailed records of damage and -recovery activities
individual who can authorize object movement and treatment

Secure the site perimeter

Establish a communications network

Inform your insurance company:

document all stages of response photographically and with a written journal
accompany the insurance adjuster and all investigating persons and contractors, taking extensive notes of conversations. Such records may be required in court

Protection of Artifacts:

- Protect objects by covering, lifting, or evacuating if staff is available and capable
- Diminish mold growth by reducing the temperature and humidity and by promoting air circulation
- Obtain containers and supports for moving and handling objects: plastic crates, polyethylene sheeting, plywood, saw horses, rubber gloves, dollies, carts
- Identify temporary storage
- Set up work areas for items that need to be packed or air dried
- Locate cold storage or freezing facilities
- Handle objects only with rubber gloves, contaminated objects may pose a health hazard
- If time and conditions permit, record objects and destination with film, video, or pencil and paper
- Label object containers