

# 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

# FAQ's: INTRODUCTION - CONT



## **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