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**CANTERBURY DISASTER
SALVAGE TEAM**

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**Musings on a Canterbury Disaster Team HANDS ON Disaster Workshop
by Rachael Fone from Canterbury Museum**

Compiled for Canterbury Disaster Salvage Team

"I found the Fire Salvage workshop really valuable, but also quite full-on - in a good way. The way the CDST took us through the process really impacted how important it is to have a salvage plan in place before a disaster actually happens. In our teams we were thrown into the tasks of initial salvage, inventory, and assessment without being walked through a step by step process beforehand. We had to figure out a way to do it ourselves. This was good, as we had to work through a lot of the problems which would present themselves in a real disaster if there was no plan in place. Problems such

as what objects to prioritise, and how to put out a numbering system for inventory if numbers have been lost. As team leader of one inventory group, it was clear how stressful this would be if we were in a real situation with no plan. Communication and working together were key!

I found the sprinkler demonstration particularly interesting. I had no idea of the immense volume of water which comes from one sprinkler. I can only imagine what the water damage would be in some of our stores with multiple sprinklers! "

The container, before



We want more fire!

- After the first fire was put out, another fire is lit at the front of the container to better reflect the damage that would happen in a real situation.

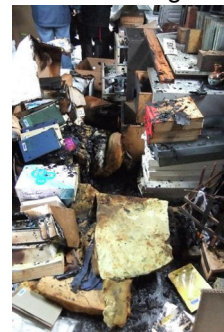


Putting out the fire

- Lots of water was used to simulate what would happen with a sprinkler (as we have in our stores)



The Damage





The salvage work begins...

- We are divided into 3 teams to each have a go at:
- **Salvage** - removing objects from the container and moving them to a safe place
- **Inventory** - to record what comes out
- **Assessment** - deciding what treatment is required according to damage type



Salvage

- What objects to move first – most or least damaged, most valuable, closest...?
- How will we move the objects?
- Is the site secure?



Inventory

- With no existing numbering system, how do we assign identifiers?
- How do we deal with parts?
- What information do we record?



Assessment

- We have burnt, damp and sodden objects to deal with
- Damp to be air-dried
- Sodden to be frozen depending on material
- Not much we can do for burnt objects



Why do we need a disaster plan?

- People will be stressed and panicked, we'll need a process to follow
- Who does what? What if someone's away?
- What equipment we will need
- How we will inventory the collections – numbering, identification etc
- Our cataloguing systems are vital! BUT what do we do if they are lost or damaged?
- Storage of damaged objects – where to keep frozen objects long term, where to dry objects out. We'll need space!!

Things to ponder

- Where in the museum can we find fire extinguishers and disaster salvage kits?
- What's in them?
- Where are some particularly hazardous places in the museum in terms of fire?



WATCH THIS SPACE

NEXT WORKSHOP

MARCH 2012

LESSONS LEARNT DISSECTING THE CANTERBURY EARTHQUAKE AND IT IMPACT ON COLLECTIONS

