



Community Archiving Workshop

Webinar 5: Disaster Preparedness

Southwest Region IMLS + NEH Cohorts

Disaster Preparedness

June 9, 2021

Presenter: Pamela Vadakan

In this session, participants learn the elements of disaster planning including assessing and mitigating risks (natural and manmade), setting priorities for salvage, and considering both immediate and long-term steps of emergency response and recovery, with a focus on saving audiovisual collections. Preparing a detailed disaster plan for your organization is a time-consuming and complex task that is beyond the scope of this session, but what you learn here will enable you to return to your organization and get started.

#cawesome

~5 min

Share in the chat or any volunteers:

- Does your organization have a disaster plan?
 - Does this plan include collections?
 - Is it written?
 - What style of plan? Large document, flip chart, online, printed, etc.
 - Do you feel that it prepares you for a disaster?

We can discuss more at the end!

Agenda

Why prepare?

Building community relationships

Emergency management cycle

Collections care: risk assessment

Salvage priorities

Parts of a disaster plan

Response & recovery



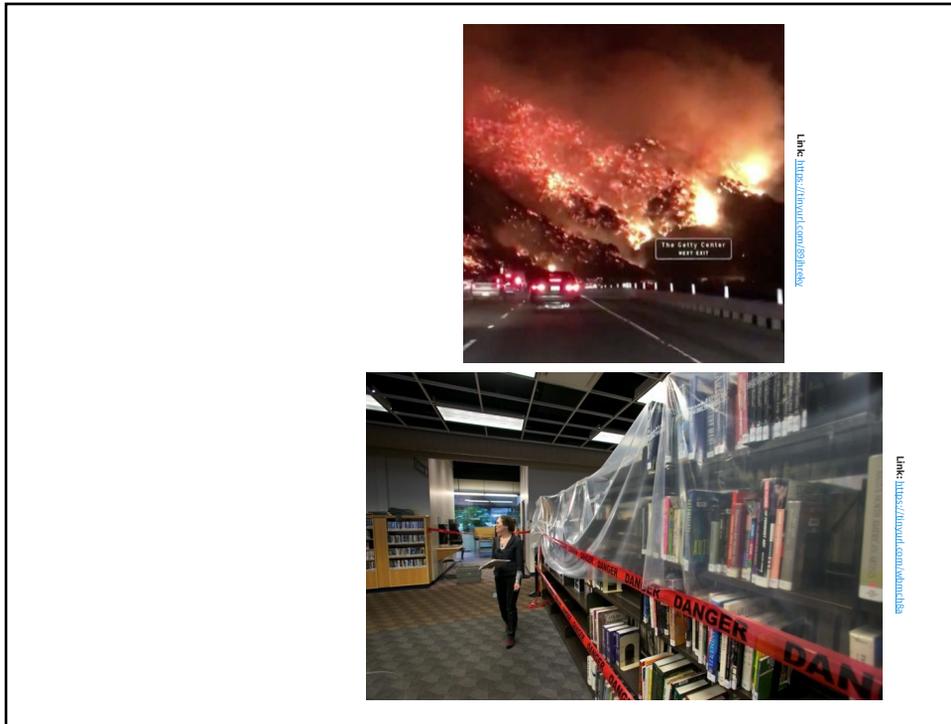
Here's what we'll cover this morning: Why we should prepare; how building community relationships is a crucial link in emergency planning; the parts of the emergency management cycle with a focus on risk assessment and salvage prioritization - steps that you can do now as part of prevention and mitigation. We'll also go over the parts of a disaster plan so that you can improve your plan if you have one or begin to put one together, and last we'll cover response and recovery steps with a focus on salvaging audiovisual materials.

This presentation is a condensed version of Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC)'s regional course on emergency preparedness that I trained for last fall - a series of four webinars and two workshops - I'm trying to pack in as much as I can this hour, and of course there's so much more we could get into! but I will point out more resources as we go along, and I'll follow up with links later, along with any additional resources that you all like and refer to in your own disaster planning.

Recommended resource:

NEDCC's myriad resources and preservation leaflets available at:

<https://www.nedcc.org/free-resources>



UNESCO categorizes disasters as either natural or manmade
 Natural disasters include rain and windstorms, earthquakes, tornadoes, floods, *pandemics*, biological agents such as mold, insects, vermin infestation (which could be caused by human error).
 Manmade disasters include building deficiencies - structure, design, environment, maintenance); water (broken pipes, leaking roof, water from fire extinguishing); fires and explosions; acts of war and terrorism; vandalism; chemical spills; power failures

How often does a fire occur in a library nationally? Every other day – 180 days a year – more than half are suspicious

Water disasters are the most common

A lot of disasters are caused in-house by simple errors or mistake. Industrial or environmental disasters can be caused by HVAC or power failure, through a construction accident, or through an incident outside your building that affects your systems.

Damage can also be on an object-level - caused by improper handling or storage

Consider a holistic view of risk.

Your organization may have a disaster plan for people, but not necessarily for

collections.

We're all busy with our normal day to day work. We don't want to think about the possibility of losing our cultural heritage - some barriers to preparedness may include the running thoughts:

"that won't happen here" or

"it's already happening! I don't know how to deal with this situation" or

"I don't have the resources" or

"Whatever I do won't make a difference in the event of a big disaster"

But you have to be more proactive - take the time now - and anticipate that something big or small *will* happen! Of course, none of us can prepare for every possible disaster. We want to prepare for our most likely disasters, disasters that pose the greatest risk to ourselves and our collections, and might have the largest impact.

Awareness and education are crucial to mitigating damage and loss of our cultural heritage, and there are many low-cost to no-cost actions you can do to reduce risks, ideally before the emergency happens, so you'll be able to respond more quickly and efficiently when something happens.

Mgmt Agency

Top: Fort Ticonderoga museum staff trained in disaster response and recovery when Fort Ticonderoga hosted a workshop run by the Documentary Heritage & Preservation Services of New York in 2017. Training paired with a updated plan is essential for moving into action quickly in the event of a disaster.

Bottom: Workshop participants assess items that have been part of a simulated water event during the 2017 MayDay two-day workshop at the Museum Support Center, Smithsonian, 04/26/2017, by Michael Barnes.

- Prevention/mitigation
 - ◆ Collections care (local practices; building(s); fire/water protection; mold/ pest prevention; security)
 - ◆ Risk assessment
- Preparedness
 - ◆ Your disaster plan
 - ◆ Phone tree/emergency call list
 - ◆ Quick response guide
- Response
 - ◆ Protect others & yourself: wait for clearance
 - ◆ Walkthrough and monitor
 - ◆ Coordinate help
- Recovery
 - ◆ Prioritization
 - ◆ Documentation
 - ◆ Crisis communication
 - ◆ Mutual aid/community assistance
 - ◆ Lessons learned

Emergencies are often described in terms of a life cycle. The phases of an emergency include prevention/mitigation (reducing the effects or risks); preparedness (actions taken prior to an emergency to feel ready and facilitate response); response (actions taken during an emergency); and recovery (actions taken after an emergency to restore damage and resume operations). These phases are not linear but circular, interrelated, and our efforts at each phase are ongoing in order to minimize loss.

Note that if there is a disaster, remember to build in a phase post-recovery for reflection and documentation to strengthen your plan.

Risk assessment

What:

- Identify hazards: AKA Agents of Deterioration
- Determine “loss exposure”
- Monitor & reassess risks

Why:

- Maximize resources
- Cost-benefit analysis
- Mitigation strategies

Who:

- You!
- Emergency responders
- Staff, insurance company, recovery vendors

Mitigation and risk assessment is a key component of collections care and disaster prevention

This is a phase of the emergency management cycle that you can do now and it's ongoing! Taking care of your building, all your maintenance and upkeep, is your emergency prep in action.

So, what are we assessing? We are identifying possible hazards both natural and manmade AKA the Agents of Deterioration through an imaginary stress test – largely a thought experiment.

See your surroundings and collections areas with fresh eyes.

For example: that stain on the ceiling you pass by every day? a vinegar smell emanating from a closet? Take a closer look to see if it's the start of a larger problem

Don't do this alone - get input and again, build upon a network of your community, emergency responders, colleagues, insurance company, and recovery vendors.

Risk assessment

10 Agents of Deterioration

- Water
- Fire
- Physical forces
- Pests
- Pollutants
- Incorrect temperature
- Incorrect relative humidity
- Light, ultraviolet and infrared
- Dissociation

**TO THE
RESCUE:
INVENTORY &
ASSESS!**

Are the Agents of Deterioration haunting your collections? The Canadian Conservation Institute breaks down large scale and object-level risks into 10 Agents or primary threats: water (most common), fire, physical forces such as earthquakes, pests, pollutants, unstable or fluctuating temperature and relative humidity, light, and dissociation, which CCI defines as the “natural tendency for ordered systems to fall apart over time” resulting in - examples include misplacing objects, losing labels or not migrating description (including metadata); and handling objects disrespectfully or out of context.

A collection assessment is a great step to take to locate, *inventory*, prioritize, and *identify and assess* risks - consider your local practices and policies, the building, water protection, fire protection, mold prevention, pest prevention, security. Assess your maintenance and inspection schedules, and monitor your building and collections environments. Identifying and locating your most valuable collections will help you consolidate by location so it's easier to find and evacuate them in the event of an emergency. Assess storage conditions and consider upgrading; e.g. good quality polypropylene containers will better protect your audiovisual recordings in the case of a water disaster, and also provide a better micro climate for long-term preservation.

Recommended resource:

Canadian Conservation Institute's Agents of Deterioration

<https://www.canada.ca/en/conservation-institute/services/agents-deterioration.html>

This guide will help you learn how to avoid, detect, report and treat damage caused by these threats.

Salvage priorities

Consult your inventory! What are your priorities - what should be recovered first in the event of a disaster?

- Consider significance of content
- Consider material type/format, date and condition
- Identify location

BIG QUESTIONS

- What records will be crucial in getting your organization up and running again?
- What would we lose of our memories, our cultural identity, and our history if our cultural resources no longer existed?

What do you have and where is it? Consult your inventory! Your inventory supports preservation, storage planning, budgeting, and will feed into your disaster plan! What are your priorities - what should be recovered first in the event of a disaster? What records will be crucial in getting your organization up and running again? What would we lose of our memories, our cultural identity, and our history if our cultural resources no longer existed?

You know your collections best and can determine what is most significant. Consider prioritizing in groups rather than item-by-item. Document material type or format, date, and condition, which should be considered during recovery. Gather the input of your community as you prioritize.

Prioritizing collections for salvage includes some difficult decision-making, and there are a lot of tools and advice to make those decisions less painful - we'll get into that a little bit later today.

Also consider important institutional documents in your overall disaster planning. These are things like accession and financial records, perhaps contracts and signed documents – your inventory and priorities list! These are the types of documents that will help you recover from a disaster, as well as resume operations after recovery.

Perhaps these are mostly digital records at your organization, or your legacy paper records are all scanned for redundancy and safe keeping – understanding your digital storage structure is also a good idea. Are digital copies stored in redundant, off-site storage? If not, what happens if your hard drives are in the area that suffers a flood?

Recommended Resource

Salvage At a Glance chart - a quick reference about what drying methods you should use for different formats - pamela will email

Parts of a disaster plan



AKA a COOP (Continuity of Operations Plan)

- Remember to include your local community and network
- Practice your plan
- Review and update:
 - ◆ Once a year
 - ◆ After events
 - ◆ After changes in your organization
- Keep copies in multiple locations

Your disaster plan is your preparedness. A staff trained with emergency procedures is the best preparation for a chaotic situation.

What assistance would you require to access your collections and to respond to and recover from a disaster?

If your org has a disaster plan, make sure it includes response for collections

- Be prepared to handle the most likely threats, based on the past history of the building and location
- Train staff in-house or by having them attend a disaster preparedness workshop
- Make sure all staff know the first steps to take when an emergency arises

Your disaster plan

- Institutional Information
- Services needed in an emergency
- Emergency equipment and supplies
 - Life safety
 - Facilities
 - Collections response & recovery
- Additional services needed in an emergency
- Daily upkeep checklist
- Weekly upkeep checklist
- Other emergency issues
- Drying station location
- Salvage priorities
- Procedures

These are the different parts of a standard disaster plan - a template - you may have this information already but it may need consolidation.

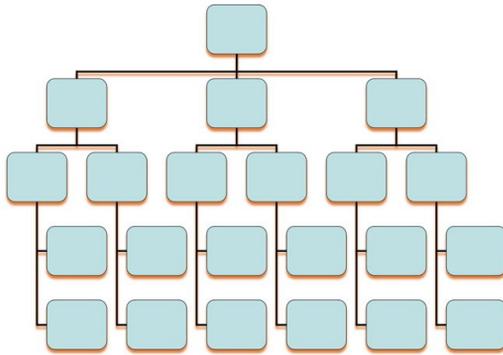
There are lots of resources available to walk you through the process of writing a disaster plan and walking you through each section of the template. There are also workshops devoted to “stress tests” or tabletop exercises - theoretical scenarios - that test your response plan.

Recommended resource:

dPlan: Online Disaster Planning Tool

<https://www.nedcc.org/free-resources/dplan-the-online-disaster-planning-tool>

Phone tree/ emergency call list



Emergency: Dial 9-911

Visitor Center Staff are to dial # 9-911 to report all emergencies such as fires, bomb threats, acts of physical violence and life threatening, critical emergencies.

When calling # 9-911, be prepared to provide the following information:

1. Your name, title, and telephone number.
2. The nature of the emergency.
3. The exact location of the emergency.
4. The victim or other persons involved.

After calling 911, call the Ranger Station at extension 2817.

Suspicious Person Guideline

If you have a problem or suspicious person in the visitor center or other locations and they have not responded to an appropriate helpful contact, or if you feel uncomfortable making that contact, proceed as follows:

1. If you believe the suspicious person is a threat and/or an emergency, call # 9-911. Otherwise contact your supervisor and Ranger Services at extension 2817.
2. Alert your supervisor. Observe, but **DO NOT CONFRONT THE PERSON**. Let law enforcement staff do their job.
3. Ask the victim (if any) to remain until rangers/officers arrive.
4. Obtain names, addresses, and phone numbers of witnesses.

Emergency: Dial 9-911

Compile an up-to-date telephone list for staff, including home and cell numbers
- remember to revisit and update each year!

Consider who's physically closest to collections and who can get there first

Also keep a call list of emergency numbers.

I recommend having these available at desks and at home so that staff may readily respond to a situation.

Quick response guide



AKA Pocket Plan:
a distilled plan/cheat sheet

- Remember to include your local community and network
- Practice your plan
- Review and update:
 - ◆ Once a year
 - ◆ After events
 - ◆ After changes in your organization
- Keep copies in multiple locations

A pocket plan is a one-pager or flipchart that gives you the basic steps to follow in the moment of an event – a little more information and support than the call sheets.

This guide is easiest and most efficient to complete *after* your full disaster plan because it distills the most essential information from the longer plan into a small, convenient size.

Having just this is certainly better than nothing, but you would want to revise this with information from your full disaster plan, and update them both on a regular basis to make sure the information's still relevant.

All of your emergency preparedness tools need to be active, living things.

Response: Safety first!

- Keep calm.
- Wait for clearance to access collections.
- Conduct a walkthrough.
- Be on alert for mold.
- Continue to monitor the safety of the environment.
- Protect yourself with PPE as needed.
- Gather supplies as needed.

Use your plan!

We really do want to stay calm, and take that measured, organized approach, and it's important to recognize that we are talking about all of this emergency preparedness in regard to our collections. However, human safety absolutely comes first.

Some disasters will close down your buildings, while a particular disaster is being remediated. So, we want to check in with safety responders and inspectors first, and then continue to monitor the safety of working conditions throughout the recovery effort.

Even with smaller disasters, be vigilant about your health and safety. Even if there are not emergency responders present for a given disaster, keep an eye out for possible hazards and use Personal Protective Equipment as needed.

Then do a walkthrough and quickly assess the situation – where is the damage the worst? Are there areas that were unaffected? Identify dry collections and dry, safe areas for salvage & recovery work.

Be especially careful about any mold – it can become active within a couple of days of a water disaster, especially if mold outbreaks have happened in the past. If you are seeing mold that inspectors may have missed, be sure to alert them and allow that to be addressed before moving forward.

Response: Coordinate help

- Centralized coordination:
one location
- Community assistance
- Focus on priorities first
- Consistent recordkeeping
- Divide in-house activities and
outsourced projects



You will also need help!

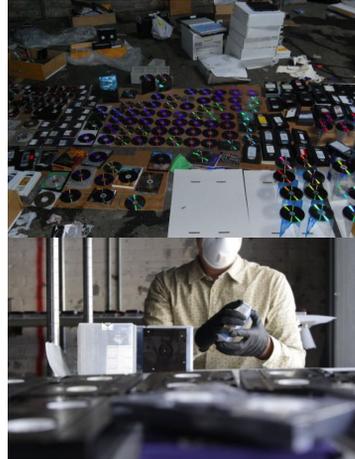
Preparing recovery work spaces, sorting collections, monitoring the collections and environment, and so on requires that many people help out. Again, rely on your community.

Another note about mold. Different people have varying tolerance for mold. Another good thing about a central command center, check-ins, and coordination is making sure that everyone has the PPE they need available to them, or that they can be assigned to tasks that accommodate their needs.

eyebeam case study <3

Recovery: Collections

- Inventory
- Prioritization
- Triage
- Documentation
- Salvage, discard, or replace
- Building restoration
- Lessons learned



So, what do we do when an emergent event occurs? So, we panic right? :)

No! Of course not.

It's easy to get flustered when dealing with disaster recovery, because, well, you've just been through a lot! It can feel chaotic and it's scary for us to imagine losing the things we care so much about, not to mention the effect an event may have had on us personally. It's also tempting to just start doing things randomly in order to feel like the recovery is moving along and that you're being proactive and helpful.

But, it's better – and safer – for you, your institution, and your collections if you take a calm, planned, and measured approach. It helps everyone involved to take overwhelming tasks in a series of steps, and we can work more effectively when the effort is organized. Remember your inventory, and your priorities - which following your plan - should be easy to find - with labels, lists of locations, and an annotated floor plan.

I know it's hard to pick favorites, but those favorites will have a better chance of surviving longer if they are designated as such and placed at the top of priorities list. Putting everything on equal footing puts everything at an equally

high risk of being lost or sustaining more damage during a disaster. It's just not possible to save every single item simultaneously, so we have to make some choices about what to attend to first.

During recovery you may find yourself re-prioritizing and triaging depending on the nature of the event, the value of the items, and the age and condition of the collections.

Compare your list of the most valuable collections with the ones most affected by the disaster. Deal with the most valuable *and* most affected items in your collections.

Recovery: Operations

- Prioritization
- Documentation
- Crisis communication
- Building restoration
- Continuity of business operations (COOP)
- Mutual aid/community assistance



When it comes to getting back to business, you can follow your Continuity of Operations plan. The COOP is something you will have completed in advance of a disaster. It prioritizes the steps for running your organization and for resuming activity that uses your collections, like exhibits and research. If you are struck by a local or regional disaster, you may have a role in assisting neighboring organizations once your organization is stabilized.

Recovery: Salvage

- Triage and prioritize
- Sort by format & sensitivity
 - use salvage guides like Salvage-at-a-Glance
- Sort by extent and type of damage
- Lay items in single layer
- Determine appropriate salvage technique - rinse and clean as needed and when safe



- Rinsing
- Freezing
- Air-Drying
- Pressing
- Surface cleaning

are techniques for salvaging wet collections, since water damage and water disasters are the most common.

You can practice this!

Salvage workshops are available, and consider hosting one at your own organization with your staff and volunteer - a hands-on learning experience and a good team building exercise!

Recovery: Salvage AV

Salvage at a Glance

Magnetic Media: Video and Audio

Material	Priority	Handling Precautions	Packing Method	Drying Method
Audio and Video Tapes	Immediately rinse off tapes soaked by dirty water. Dry within 24 hours.	Do not touch magnetic media with bare hands. Keep away from magnets (i.e. loud speaker enclosures).	Keep tapes in wet plastic bags. Pack vertically in plastic crate or tub.	Air dry. Never freeze.
 Paper enclosures, boxes, labels	Air dry or Freeze within 48 hours.		Pack in plastic lined cardboard box.	Air Dry according to paper type. Freeze, then Vacuum Freeze Dry.

Motion Pictures

Material	Priority	Handling Precautions	Packing Method	Drying Method
Motion pictures	Rewash and dry within 48 hours.	Do not remove from cans.	Keep wet. Pack in plastic pails or plastic lined cardboard box.	Arrange with a film processor to rewash and dry.

Here are some of the challenges associated with AV materials.

- Note that AV items often include paper sleeves, inserts, and labels, so you have to deal with both media and paper, which have different needs.
- Film will stick together when it is drying, so this bumps it up on the priority list.
- Interestingly, magnetic tape can stay wet for a while, and is usually the best option until you can get them to a professional. So in a water disaster, you can keep your VHS tapes and audiocassettes wet while you tend to other items.

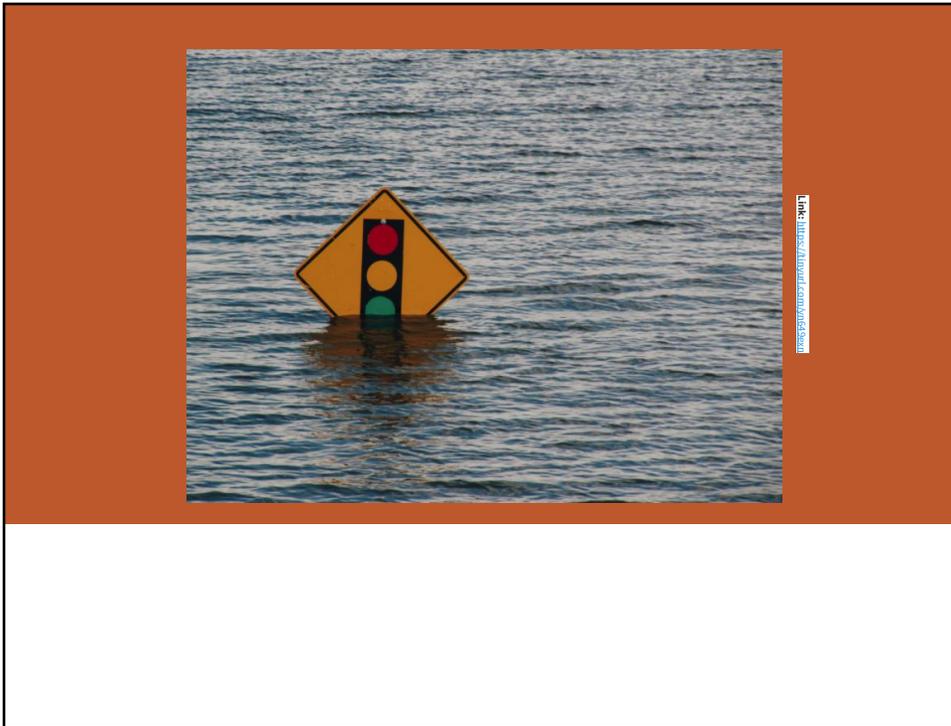
Recommended resources:

Salvage at a glance guide - pamela will send

Emergency Response and Salvage Wheel (\$18)

<https://www.hollingermetalede.com/emergency-response-salvage-wheel/>

NEDCC salvage workshops



Discussion

- What kind of disasters has your organization faced - big and small?
- Does your organization have a disaster plan?
 - Does this plan include collections?
 - Is it written?
 - What style of plan? Large document, flip chart, online, printed, etc.
 - Do you feel that it prepares you for a disaster?
- Are there any tools you've used or would like to recommend to your cohort?

Thank you!



Community Archiving Workshop

