



Post Incident Procedure

1 Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to detail the method of making the site ready for occupation after a fire, alarm activation, or other emergency.

2 Competencies required

Staff must be familiar with the site or building, the normal opening up procedure, and what devices or equipment that might need to be reset after activation of the fire alarm system.

3 When to use this procedure

Staff must use this procedure after the site has been made safe following a fire, fire alarm signal or other emergency. If the incident has caused anything more than minor damage the re-opening may need to be delayed to allow for a comprehensive clean-up or building repairs.

4 What you need to do

1. If visitors are waiting for entry keep them informed as to what is happening
2. Reset the fire alarm system
3. Check that all exit doors and routes are free from obstructions and other hazards; clean or otherwise rectify as necessary.
4. Cordon off any areas that are hazardous and cannot be made safe.
5. Open automatic fire doors that are held open on magnets.
6. Check that all areas are adequately lit.
7. Ensure that the visitor experience will not be unduly affected
8. Restart boilers.
9. Check that room stewards are in position
10. Staff the tills
11. Allow entry



Air-Drying

- Air-drying involves objects being spread out over an area and dried through air movement or dehumidification.
- This method of drying can be carried out in-house. It is cheap, but labour intensive and requires space.

Prepare room

- Remove any wet materials i.e. stationary, boxes, curtains or carpet.
- Open windows and bring in fans to circulate air OR close all windows and use dehumidifiers. (Ensuring damp air or water is vented/ drained out of room.)
- The drying effect can be intensified with a wind tunnel, a tunnel of Correx or plastic sheeting with fans at one or both ends (Ensure air from fans is not aimed directly at fragile items.)
- Washing lines can be put up for hanging or pegging (using plastic pegs) strong, but damp sheets of paper.
- Plastic, perforated racks such as bread trays or airing racks are ideal for air drying objects as they provide support and allow airflow.

Rinsing

If the objects are heavily soiled, the worst of the dirt can be removed by brushing or rinsing off, taking care not to introduce dirt to clean areas, i.e. keep books shut.

Prepare objects

- Assess books and paper based material first. (Heavily waterlogged books should be frozen if possible)
- Treat books in the following order:
 - weak and wet books
 - weak and damp books
 - strong and wet books
 - strong and damp books
- Consider the fragility of paper and fastness of dyes.
- Support all areas of fragile items, either on a board or by holding together loose fragments with a gauze bandage.
- Remove paper clips, string or ribbon (and keep bagged and labelled) to prevent staining or stress on the object.
- Three dimensional objects such as costumes and baskets need to be padded out to their normal shape before air drying. Nylon netting can be used for this
- Books that are strong enough can be stood on their spines and the pages fanned out. Turn them up the other way after a while. See 'Books' sheet for other options.



- Flat items such as maps, newspapers, documents and plans can be dried flat between blotting paper, as long as the inks are not running. Change blotting paper regularly.

Books - Salvage

Handling

- Wear gloves if possible.
- Pack into crates or heavy duty bags.
- Also pack any shelf list for an inventory.
- Consider using a book chute for first floor libraries.

Beward

- Do not over fill crates, books are heavy.

Order of removal to safe area

- Priority Items from room/s of greatest risk.
- Vellum.
- Take from top shelves first unless bottom shelf is in water.

Protection in-situ

(If items cannot be removed)

- Leave books in shelves, but try to cover front of bookshelves with polythene.



Books - First Aid

Separate wet from dry

Wet

- Keep book shut.
- Rinse if dirty, keeping shut.
- Consider freezing, see below.
- If strong, fan books open and stand on top or bottom edge, stand on driest edge first (as strongest.) Never stand on front edge. Turn book upside-down to opposite edge every few hours. This is best done in a wind tunnel to aid drying.
- **OR** lay books flat and interleave with blotting paper every 5 mm. Change blotting paper as soon as wet.
- When book is dry, but still cold to touch, place flat on solid surface with weight on top to minimise distortion.

Dry

- Take to dry area and keep dry.
- Pack in labelled crates, flat, spine to fore-edge.
- Fill voids with padding to stop books moving.

Freeze if wet?

YES – if very wet or dyes are running, or large number of books that cannot be air-dried

- Wrap in freezer paper and pack in labelled crates spine down.

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Ceramics and Glass - Salvage

Handling

- Wear gloves.
- Remove lids or loose parts.
- Check for repairs, old adhesive can fail if heated or wet.
- Pick up from bottom, using both hands.
- Do not pick up using handles or knobs.
- Pack into crate, separating pieces with bubble wrap
- If broken, put pieces into padded envelope.

Beware

- Be careful of sharp, broken edges.

Order of removal to safe area

- Priority Items from room/s of greatest risk.
- Items standing on furniture that needs to be removed.
- Remainder of items.

Protection in-situ

(If items cannot be removed)

- Move to wall, into fireplace or under furniture.
- Place on plastic sheeting.
- Protect from water with plastic sheeting or bubble wrap.



Ceramics and Glass - First Aid

Separate wet from dry

Wet or damp

- Rinse if dirty with clean, cold water.
- Blot surfaces dry with paper towel, DO NOT rub.
- Air-dry if still damp.
- Archaeological glass stored in water should be kept in water.

Dry

- Take to dry area and keep dry.
- Wrap in labelled acid-free tissue.
- Store in safe place.

Freeze if wet?

NO

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Freezing

When to freeze

- If you have a large, wet collection you cannot dry in 48 hours to prevent mould growth.
- If materials have water-soluble components such as watercolours, some dyed textiles and documents with water soluble inks.
- The freezing process can take a long time, and once frozen, you may not have access to the material until the treatment is completed.
- Some objects cannot be frozen; check sheets.

Procedure

- Books can be packed for freezing in plastic containers or cardboard boxes. The books should be packed spine down in a single layer. If there is time, wrap every second item in waxed or freezer paper to prevent the covers sticking to each other.
- Textile items can be laid out flat with tissue or freezer paper rolls in the folds.
- Ensure that freezer paper is used to separate items if you need to have one on top of another. Use long boxes or boards to transport items.
- A commercial blast freezer is ideal as it drops the temperature quickly and has a large capacity. For a small amount of material a household chest freezer with a temperature of -10C can be used (as long as it does not auto-defrost)
- After the freezer has been packed do not open until you are ready to remove the material.
- When transporting material from the freezer to the freeze drier, a freezer truck should be used.
- Alternatively there are disaster companies who will take crates of wet material for immediate freezing. These companies can also offer freeze or vacuum drying.

Once frozen the following procedures can take place.

Freeze drying

In a vacuum chamber the water is turned from solid (ice) to vapour. As there is no liquid stage ink running is minimised.

Vacuum drying

Similar to freeze drying, but the temperature in the vacuum chamber is above 0°C so there is a brief water stage.



Furniture - Salvage

Handling

- Wear gloves if possible.
- If large and heavy dismantle if time.
- Remove drawers, contents can be left in with spaces padded.
- Lock or tie cupboards shut.
- Lift by lowest weight bearing member.
- Don't use handles to lift.

Beware

- Make sure there are enough people to carry furniture.
- Use carrying straps to aid lifting of large furniture.

Order of removal to safe area

- Priority Items from room/s of greatest risk.
- Furniture blocking routes to other priority objects or exits.
- Remainder of items.

Protection in-situ (If items cannot be removed)

- Move to stand next to wall.
- Raise off floor using chocks.
- Cover furniture with wool underlay (if available) and waterproof sheeting.



Furniture - First Aid

Separate wet from dry

Wet

- Remove any detachable upholstered parts, rinse if necessary then blot and air dry.
- If easily removable, take off any metal components, dry with kitchen towel and put in labelled bags.
- Rinse, or sponge clean any dirty wooden components then blot with kitchen towel.
- Air dry slowly to prevent warping and shrinkage.
- Hold veneers in place with weights or clamps, protecting surface with tissue or waxed paper.

Dry

- Take to dry area and keep dry.
- Store in safe place.
- Cover with labelled dustsheet or Tyvek.

Freeze if wet?

NO

**DO NOT FREEZE PAINTED
WOODEN OBJECTS OR
MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.**

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Leather - Salvage

Handling

- Wear gloves
- Place on bread tray/ board or support underneath.

BEWARE

- If leather is wet tannin can stain, wear protective clothing.

Order of removal to safe area

- Priority Items from room/s of greatest risk.
- Remainder of items.

Protection in-situ

(If items cannot be removed)

- Place near walls and cover with polythene.



Leather - First Aid

Separate wet and dry

Wet

- Support on board or in a tray at all times.
- If dirty rinse with clean, cold water.
- Drain and blot with kitchen towel.
- Objects such as bags can be reshaped and padded with nylon netting.
- Air dry
- Do NOT dry with heat.
- Consider freezing.

Dry

- Take to dry area and keep dry.
- Wrap with labelled acid-free tissue or Tyvek.
- Store in safe place.

Freeze if wet?

YES

But only if freezer does not go below -10°C

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Metals - Salvage

Handling

- Wear gloves.
- Check priority sheets for details of chandelier or lantern hanging systems.
- Pack small metal objects into crates, separating with bubble wrap.
- As a last resort, wrought metal can be thrown out of windows.

Beware

- Metals objects can be heavy.
- Check electricity supply to lighting is disconnected.

Order of removal to safe area

- Priority Items from room/s of greatest risk.
- Remainder of items.
- Door furniture.

Protection in-situ

(If items cannot be removed)

- Fixed and large items should be covered with polythene.
- If items can be moved, place on polythene by walls and cover with polythene



Metals - First Aid

Separate wet from dry

Wet

- Remove excess water by blotting with kitchen towel.
- Do NOT blot if there is an applied finish; air dry keeping flaking surfaces horizontal.
- Air-dry as quickly as possible, unless there is an organic component, then air dry slowly.
- Small items can be placed in a sealed box with silica gel.

Dry

- Take to dry area and keep dry.
- Wrap in acid-free tissue and pack into labelled crates.
- Store in safe place, preferably with a low relative humidity.

Freeze if wet?

NO

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Mould

Mould spores are almost everywhere and can cause a major mould outbreak on water damaged material.

Check for mould

- Mould can grow in less than 48 hours.
- Mould can be many different in colours.
- Check if the material feels damp and/or there is a mouldy smell.
- Dirt, dust, stains and cobwebs can look like mould, but in the early stages of growth, mould appears as a fine web of filaments (hyphae). In later stages, the mould develops a bushy appearance; the fruiting bodies containing spores can be seen under magnification.
- Test by brushing with a pony hair brush to see if the mould is dry and powdery (dormant) or soft and smeary (active). Active mould will continue to grow and damage collections. Dormant mould will cause no further damage unless an increase in relative humidity to 70 – 75% or more causes dormant spores to germinate and the mould to become active again.
- Foxing on paper is a closely related phenomenon that can be confused with mould. Foxing involves various agents of bio-deterioration, including mould. Its appearance is characterised by red-brown stains in either discrete spots or irregular splotches, usually with no visible hyphae or mould structure. Like mould, it appears in susceptible papers exposed to high relative humidity.

Stop mould growth

- **REDUCE THE HUMIDITY.** Mould may form in an area with relative humidity of 65% if there is poor ventilation. Mould will grow and remain active when the relative humidity reaches or exceeds 70 – 75 percent.
- **KEEP COOL** – heat makes mould grow faster.
- **DRY OR FREEZE WET COLLECTIONS.** Freezing will not kill the mould but it will stop it growing until a conservator has a chance to dry and clean the material.
- **USE COLD AIR FANS TO INCREASE THE VENTILATION.**
- **CONSIDER THE HEALTH RISKS** – exposure to mould can lead to debilitating allergy even among people not prone to allergies.
- **DO NOT USE BLEACH OR DOMESTIC PRODUCTS.** These will cause additional damage to objects and will not keep the mould from recurring.
- If in doubt contact a conservator.



Natural History - Salvage

Handling

- Wear gloves
- Handle by bases and support at all times.
- Keep all information with the specimen.

Beware

- Specimens and taxidermy can contain hazardous materials, arsenic, mercury etc, so always wear respirator and protective clothing.

Order of removal to safe area

- Priority Items from room/s of greatest risk.
- Remainder of items.

Protection in-situ

(If items cannot be removed)

- Place near walls and cover with polythene.



Natural History - First Aid

Separate wet from dry

Wet

- Taxidermy can be dried with a hair-dryer on a cool setting accompanied by a gentle rearrangement of fur and feather with cocktail sticks.
- Remove botanic/herbarium specimens from enclosures, recording any information. Blot to remove excess water and air dry slowly.

Dry

- Take to dry area and keep dry.
- Wrap with labelled acid-free tissue or Tyvek.
- Store in safe place.

Freeze if wet?

YES – anything with seeds to prevent germination.

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Paintings - Salvage

Handling

- Wear gloves.
- Check priority card for hanging/ security system.
- Check priority card for the number of handlers required.
- Support from the bottom of the frame, do lift from the top.
- Frames can get soft when wet, limit handling.

Beware

- Paintings can be heavy, do not move unless there are enough people.
- Use ladders safely.

Order of removal to safe area

- Priority Items from room/s of greatest risk.
- Remainder of items.

Protection in-situ

(If items cannot be removed)

- Drape polythene in front and behind painting.

Paper - Salvage

Wet

- If possible, remove from

Dry

- Take to dry area and



Handling

- Wear gloves
- Use Melinex to remove paper from water, slide underneath.
- Place damp paper flat on a sheet or in a bread tray, using sheet or tray for handling.
- Wet paper is very fragile, keep handling to a minimum.

Beware

- Lots of wet paper is heavy, do not overload trays.
- Dyes can run and stain.

Order of removal to safe area

- Priority Items from room/s of greatest risk.
- Remainder of items.

Protection in-situ

(If items cannot be removed)

- Place near walls and cover with polythene.



Paper - First Aid

Separate wet from dry

Wet

- Air-dry flat, interleaved with blotting paper, either as individual sheets or in small piles (5 mm high). Change blotting paper as soon as wet.
- Do NOT unfold or separate sheets that are stuck together or very wet.
- **OR** consider freezing, see below.
- Lightweight pamphlets can be hung from a line with plastic pegs.

Dry

- Take to dry area and keep dry.
- Put in sturdy, labelled crates.
- Store in safe place.

Wet framed paper

- Remove from frame in a safe, dry place unless stuck to glass. If paper is stuck leave on glass dry horizontally, glass side down.
- If paper can be removed, dry as for wet paper.
- Bag and label any tacks, pieces of frame or cord.

Freeze if wet?

YES – if large volume of wet paper or hand coloured prints or inks are bleeding.

- Separate with freezer paper and freeze immediately.



Photographs - Salvage

Handling

- Handle by holding edges
- Keep image side of photo away from any contact with other surfaces.
- Place into bread crates/ crates for quick removal.

Beware

- Mould can quickly grows on photographs, wear appropriate PPE.

Order of removal to safe area

- Priority Items from room/s of greatest risk
- Remaining photos in bulk

Protection in-situ

(If objects cannot be removed)



Photographs - First Aid

Separate wet from dry

Wet or damp photos

- The emulsion may become sticky, keep hands and other objects from touching the surface.
- Remove from plastic/paper enclosures or frames, unless stuck.
- Save all information.
- If dirty wash in a bucket or bowl of clean, cold water, agitating water over surface, or clean in light stream of cold water.
- Separate and dry as quickly as possible by;
- Hanging on a line with plastic pegs (do not peg over image.)
- Or, lay flat, image side up, on blotting paper.
- Do **not** use heat or sunlight to dry.

Dry photos, albums and negatives

- Take to dry area and keep dry.
- Wrap in labelled acid-free tissue.
- Store in cool place.

Wet albums

- Fan pages
- Air dry upright
- **Do Not** Interleave

Freeze if wet?

NO

Wet glass negatives

- Separate and lay image side up on blotting paper



Plastics- Salvage

Handling

- Wear gloves
- Foams may absorb a lot of water and be heavy
- Avoid surface abrasion and beware of applied finish etc.
- Generally more than one plastic and/or other material involved in one object.
- Crate up items separated with bubble wrap

Beware

- Toxic and harmful chemicals may be present if item has been subjected to heat – some plastics may be very acidic
- Some plastics will swell or dissolve in water

Order of removal to safe area

- Priority items from room/s of greatest risk
- Plastics on priority items
- Remainder of items

Protection in-situ

(If items cannot be removed)

- Cover with waterproof plastic sheet



Plastics - First Aid

Separate wet from dry

Wet

- Blot gently with kitchen roll but NOT if there is an applied finish
- Remember that there may be trapped water in hollow mouldings.
- If easy – dismantle and store all components together.
- Remove and dispose of any batteries.
- Air dry with no heat

Dry

- Take to dry area and keep dry.
- Store away from direct sunlight and in a cool area
- Protect from frost

Freeze if wet?

NO



Stone and Plaster - Salvage

Handling

- Wear gloves.
- Marble table tops should be carried vertically.
- Plaster is soft when wet, limit handling.

Beware

- Stone is heavy, use trolleys and barrows.

Order of Removal to Safe Area

- Priority Items from room/s of greatest risk.
- Remainder of items.

Protection in-situ (If items cannot be removed)

- Place near wall, with polythene underneath and over the object.



Stone and Plaster - First Aid

Separate wet from dry

Wet

- Blot gently with kitchen roll, but NOT if there is an applied finish.
- Air-dry.
- Monitor for any efflorescence of salts (crystals appearing on the surface).

Dry

- Take to dry area and keep dry.
- Cover with labelled acid-free tissue or Tyvek.
- Store in safe place.

Freeze if wet?

NO



Textiles - Salvage

Handling

- Place on dust sheets or polythene for support and use support for handling.
- Avoid excess folding
- Carpets should be rolled, preferably pile side out.
- Limit handling, textiles are easily torn.

Beware

- Wet textiles can be extremely heavy.

Order of removal to safe area

- Priority Items from room/s of greatest risk.
- Textiles on priority items.
- Remainder of items.

Protection in-situ

(If items cannot be removed)

- Roll carpets, wrap in waterproof sheeting and leave next to wall.
- Wool is a fire retardant so use wool under lays to cover objects left in-situ.



Textiles - First Aid

Separate wet from dry

Wet

- If dirty rinse in cold clean water.
- Consider freezing see below.
- OR, drain and blot with clean towels or kitchen towel to remove excess water.
- Do NOT unfold delicate fabrics.
- Do NOT stack wet textiles.
- Do NOT wring or twist.
- Remove metal elements if possible, but keep and label, OR separate metal from textile with melinex or polythene.
- Nylon netting can be used to pad out costumes and textiles to increase air-flow.
- Place on netting, or in bread crates and air dry.
- Do NOT use heat to dry.

Dry

- Take to dry area and keep dry.
- Roll carpets pile side out. Cover with labelled dust sheet or Tyvek
- Pack textiles in labelled boxes lined with acid-free tissues. Keep folds to a minimum, placing rolls of acid-free tissue in folds. Separate textiles with acid-free tissue.
- Store in safe place.

Freeze if wet?

YES

If large number of wet textiles or dyes are running.

CALL CONSERVATOR