



Salvage plan for special artefacts

1. Introduction

1.1. During an emergency, it is essential that salvage operations are carried out according to plans which have already been established in the pre-planning stage. Members of the emergency support team will have planned and rehearsed evacuation operations but at the moment of emergency they will need to adapt these plans to suit the particular situation.

1.2. Emphasis should be placed upon removing objects nearest the danger of fire or flood. Depending upon the seriousness of the danger and upon the size of the piece of furniture, painting, etc, or the sheer volume of the objects (some libraries contain several thousand books) it may be impossible to remove every object.

1.3. Objects which cannot be moved should be covered with polythene sheeting to prevent damage from water and smoke:

- Flame retardant polythene sheeting should be made available.
- Polythene sheeting for covering large pictures and pieces of furniture should be pre-cut to size and stored in a convenient place for emergencies.
- Battens should be attached to the ends of polythene sheets to ease the placing of sheets over the tops of picture frames or book cases.
- If it is possible, sheets should be brought down behind the object between it and the wall, protecting it from water running down the wall.
- Where furniture sits directly on floors, wooden blocks (10cm x 10cm x 7.5cm) wrapped in polythene can be placed underneath to minimise damage from water.



1.4. During rescue operations it is important that contents are removed to a 'safe area' where they will not be in the way of emergency operations and where they will be secure and dry. Polythene sheeting can be placed on the ground to prevent dampness or the penetration of mud.

1.5. As objects are removed to the 'safe area' they should be checked against the inventory. If this is not practicable, it should be done as soon as possible after the event. As damaged items are packed for removal the exterior should be labelled with the inventory number or, if not immediately identifiable, a brief description of the object. The safe area must be supervised by a responsible person at the earliest opportunity.

1.6. All salvage equipment mentioned in this document should be provided by the owner/ occupier and all members of the emergency support should be trained in its use.

2. Books

2.1. Character

2.1.1. Books are heavy and large numbers cannot be carried at once. Large boxes filled with books are very difficult to move. Large numbers of books require a long time to remove.

2.2. Equipment

2.2.1. Canvas slings with wooden or aluminium battens stitched into the ends to act as handles are best for handling books. Unloading/loading is much easier. A canvas sling can be carried in each hand for a balanced load. Heavier loads can be managed if a canvas webbing strap (50mm-100mm wide) is slung over the shoulders and attached to the handles of the sling like a yoke.



2.2.2. Plastic skips (as used in National Trust shops) are preferable to cardboard boxes, but slings are the easiest to handle.

2.2.3. A canvas or nylon chute may be helpful in clearing a large library situated on the upper floor of a house. The chute should be designed like a children's slide so that the books do not hit the ground with speed.

2.3. Handling

2.3.1. Books should be handled as carefully as possible and taken from shelves by reaching over the front of the book and pulling off the shelf. If there is a space between the back of the shelves and the wall remember that water will run down the wall to the bottom shelf and then out onto the floor. It is important in this case to begin removing books at the bottom shelves first. Books of roughly the same size should be packed together. This should not be a problem as books of similar size are often arranged together on shelves.

2.3.2. Slings - books should be stacked on the spread sling with their spines facing inwards.

2.3.3. Plastic skips - books should be stacked flat in plastic skips and should not be wedged in vertically as this can damage spines.

2.4. Safe Area

2.4.1. Books should be removed to a dry 'safe area' and should be stacked in boxes and skips. Consideration should be given to the position of the 'safe area' so that access by freezer trucks is possible in case the books have become wet.



3. Textiles

3.1. Character

3.1.1. Many textiles are very heavy and bulky. When rolled they may take several people to move them. Although textiles do not break, they can easily tear when they are wet and they can be seriously damaged by water. It is important when moving wet textiles that they are carried in sheets of polythene or dust sheets. Textiles are often difficult to take down from their fittings. Emergency support teams should know how curtains, carpets and tapestries are mounted and fixed. It may be feasible to have a pole with a forked attachment at the end which would enable a person standing on the ground to lift curtain poles or rods off brackets.

3.2. Equipment

3.2.1. Polythene sheeting and white dust sheets are important for carrying wet textiles. Where textiles cannot be removed they should be covered with polythene to protect from water and smoke.

3.3. Handling

3.3.1. Support team members should work in pairs as textiles can be heavy. One person should work at the top of the ladder with the second person standing on the floor holding the textile in order to take the weight of the material. As a last resort it may be necessary to cut a tapestry out of its architectural frame with a Stanley knife.

3.3.2. State beds - remove bedspread and bed curtains. Cover the rest of the bed in polythene sheeting. These covers should be measured for size, folded and kept nearby (possibly under the bed).



3.4. Safe Area

3.4.1. The 'safe area' should be dry. If there is space textiles should be laid out flat on top of polythene, otherwise place them in dust sheets. If the textiles are wet, the dyes can run so be careful to separate pieces with polythene sheeting.

4. **Sculpture and plasterwork**

4.1. Character

4.1.1. Sculpture is frequently too heavy to carry. Heat and smoke can do great damage to sculpture. Marble, stone, scagliola and plaster are porous and will absorb water and dirt. Alabaster will dissolve in water. Water will set up rusting in iron fixings frequently found in sculpture.

4.2. Equipment

4.2.1. A sack barrow with plywood lining can be used to remove smaller pieces of sculpture. When pieces are too large to move they can be protected from falling masonry and plaster with white foam sheets and white dust sheets. Do not cover sculpture with anything coloured as the dye might stain.

4.2.2. Polythene sheeting should be draped over sculpture for protection from water. Wooden battens wrapped in polythene can be placed beneath marble and stone plinths by rocking the plinths from side to side. This will prevent the absorption of water off the floor.



4.3. Handling

4.3.1. Smaller pieces of sculpture should be removed from danger. If there is not enough time to remove larger pieces of sculpture, they should be placed on the floor against a wall, which will give protection from heat, smoke and falling masonry.

4.4. Safe Area

4.4.1. Remove to a secure dry area. Take care to prevent damage from other objects.

5. **Ceramics and glass**

5.1. Character

5.1.1. Ceramics and glass are fragile and ideally should be wrapped before removal from a room. They are more susceptible to damage from heat than from water.

5.2. Equipment

5.2.1. Bubble wrap, or fast foam, should already be cut into appropriate sizes for wrapping ceramics and glass. Ceramics and glass should be transported in rigid collapsible plastic boxes (which can pack flat for storage). Solid plastic skips can also be used but they are heavy to carry and the lids cannot be secured.



5.3. Handling

5.3.1. Heavier and larger items should be packed first in the bottom of the box, with lighter smaller objects on top.

5.3.2. If it is not possible to remove the ceramics from the room, try to stack them under tables or large solid pieces of furniture against the wall which would protect them from falling plaster and masonry.

5.4. Safe area

5.4.1. Leave ceramics and glass in containers, stored in a dry secure place until there is time and sufficient storage space to unpack them.

6. **Furniture (including clocks, musical instruments and taxidermy)**

6.1. Character

6.1.1. Some furniture can be too large for easy or quick removal. The assembly of various parts can be complicated for they are often held together or fixed to walls by screws.

6.2. Equipment

6.2.1. A lightweight four-wheeled trolley is recommended for moving large pieces of heavy furniture. A smaller bogey is recommended for less bulky pieces. A webbing strap can be connected to the front of the bogey for pulling to ease handling. These bogeys can be made by the resident housemen and estate staff.



6.2.2. Upholstery webbing is useful for carrying heavy furniture. Several acts of different lengths should be stored throughout the house. Blocks of wood (10cm x 10cm x 7.5cm) covered in polythene can be placed beneath furniture to prevent damage from wet floors.

6.3. Handling

6.3.1. In many cases the only means of removing large pieces of furniture is by carrying them. Webbing should be wrapped around the hands and slung beneath the piece of furniture so that it is carried just below waist level with arms fully extended. Webbing also keeps drawers shut while furniture is being moved.

6.4. Safe area

6.4.1. Furniture, clocks, musical instruments and taxidermy should be stored in a dry 'safe area' on blocks of wood covered in polythene.

7. **Metalwork and metal movements of clocks**

7.1. Character

7.1.1. Metal can be severely damaged if it becomes wet. In some cases metalwork can be very heavy. Metal movements of clocks are often housed in wooden cases and the pendulum should be removed to avoid damage to the clock movement.

7.2. Equipment

7.2.1. Metalwork can be carried by various means and heavier objects can be transported in plywood lined sack barrows or on four-wheeled bogeys.



7.3. Handling

7.3.1. Lift items carefully by holding their bases or the most solid stable part.

7.4. Safe area

7.4.1. Ideally the safe area should be dry and warm in contrast to the ideal atmospheric conditions for other types of contents.

8. **Paintings**

8.1. Character

8.1.1. Paintings and their frames are delicate and must be handled with due attention to the following points. The surface of the painting is susceptible to scratching and abrasion if touched. The canvas may tear if pressure is put on it, or from impact with a sharp point. Mouldings may break off a frame if roughly handled and gilded surfaces are easily abraded. Great damage is likely to be done by water as well as fire. Paintings should be removed from any room where there is a risk of fire or flooding.

8.1.2. Large paintings, however important, may have a lower priority because of the difficulty of moving them. The same applies to paintings in architectural surrounds or those that are hanging very high.

8.2. Equipment

8.2.1. Use metal and wire cutters for cutting chains or wires when paintings cannot be lifted off hooks. A jemmy may be necessary to remove security screws quickly. Canvas webbing should be used to lower high hung paintings to the ground.



8.2.2. Use polythene sheeting with battens attached to the end to protect paintings from smoke and water when it is impractical to remove them.

8.2.3. Only as a last resort use a Stanley knife to cut canvasses out of their frames. Canvas must be rolled with the paint surface outward.

8.3. Handling

8.3.1. Paintings can be very heavy, especially those that are glazed. Always work in pairs, but the handling of full length portraits and larger paintings will require at least four people.

8.3.2. Most paintings can be lifted off their chains, wires or hooks with an upward movement. Paintings should always be lifted by their frames, never by their stretchers. Hold only those areas of the frame without elaborate mouldings. For small frames hold the painting upright, with one hand in the centre of the bottom frame member and the other between half and two-thirds of the way up a side member. Larger paintings should be lifted by two people with both their hands holding a side frame member. Never pick up a painting by the top frame member because the weight of the painting can pull the frame apart.

8.3.3. Large paintings should be lifted down with two people up ladders and two on the ground to receive the painting. To lower the painting, use canvas webbing.

8.4. Safe area

8.4.1. Stack paintings vertically in a cool, dry and secure place. Stacks should contain no more than 4 paintings. Separate frames with a piece of bubble wrap or foam. Never lean a frame against a canvas surface or



reverse of another painting. Check that fixing, hooks, chains and wires do not stick into any other painting.