Disaster Recovery & Salvage for Government Records

Texas State Library and Archives Commission

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HELP: Email us at **slrminfo@tsl.texas.gov**

✓ An archived recording and all supplemental materials will be available at the link above (http://bit.ly/imagingpt2)

About Us

- Records Management Assistance unit
  - 6 Government Information Analysts
  - Consulting and Training
    - Retention, destruction, imaging, managing email, disaster preparedness and recovery…
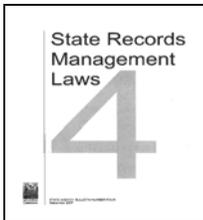 - Retention Schedule Reviews/Development

Outline

- Legal Obligations
- Water Emergencies: Paper, Books, and Photos
- Mold
- Insects
- To Salvage or Not to Salvage?
- Resources

Legal Obligations

- Records Management
- Permanent records
- Essential records

Local Government Records Act D

State Records Management Laws 4

Storage Standards

Records
Storage
Standards
F

- H.B. 1559 took effect September 1, 2011. Text: http://bit.ly/hb1559

- TSLAC shall adopt rules for storage of permanent and historical court records.

- Bulletin F (created in cooperation with Local Government Records Storage Task Force) published April 2013. http://bit.ly/bulletinf

- Rules go into effect **April 2015**.

- http://bit.ly/storagestandards

Emergencies/Disasters

- **Natural**
  - **Hurricanes**
  - **Floods**

- **Intentional**
  - **Arson**
  - **Vandalism**
  - **Terrorism**

- **Technological/Accidental**
  - **Building or equipment failures**
  - **Electrical malfunctions**

What Causes a Water Emergency?

- Rain
- Water main breakage
- Plumbing back-up
- Irrigation system malfunction
- Fire suppression

Water and Paper

- Paper is hydrophilic.
- Fibers may expand unevenly.
- Mold
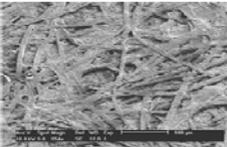- Insects
- Dry items as quickly as possible.

Photo courtesy Princeton Center for Information Technology Policy

Avoiding Water Emergencies

- Store items off the floor and away from danger.
- Routinely inspect water sources.
- Pre-purchase plastic tarps, clean-up supplies, and absorbent towels or blotter paper.
- Develop a disaster plan: http://www.dplan.org/

What's Needed

- Large enough to accommodate several tables
- Good air circulation
- Securable
- Environmental controls

Photos: Lane Community College Archives (Eugene, Oregon), 2007

Recovery of Paper

Handle carefully!

1. Spread out on flat, absorbent material.
2. As it dries, move into stacks and interleave with paper towels or blotter paper.
3. When almost dry, place between paper towels or blotter under light weight.

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Recovery of Books

1. Stand book on end, open 90 degrees, and fan pages open.
2. Circulate air with electric fan.
3. Can interleave with absorbent material if needed, especially for coated papers.

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Recovery of Photographs

Some photos will not survive water damage.

1. Dry flat on absorbent material with image facing up.
2. Alternatively, affix on a line with a clothespin that does not touch image area.

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Recovery of Electronic Media

- CDs, DVDs, open reel tape, microfilm, flash drives, memory cards: small numbers can often be air-dried. May wish to purchase dedicated drive for data transfer.
- Hard drives: bag them up and keep them wet; send to contractor immediately. Have back-ups and inventories in place; recovery is expensive.

Salvage: When to Do It Yourself?

- Best up to several hundred items.
- Low expense; intensive labor & space.
- Distortion during drying.
- **Don't endanger staff health.**

Salvage: When to Call a Contractor?

- Best over several hundred items.
- Exception: contractor may batch items with larger job for savings and efficiency.
- Less distortion during drying.

Photo: http://www.papier-trocknungs-service.de

Mold

- Mold is a fungus that can grow on many archival materials.
- Mold spores are in the air everywhere.
- Mold needs a warm, moist environment to grow.

Avoiding Mold

- Environment is critical.
- 45 – 55% relative humidity, 65 – 72 degrees Fahrenheit.
- In a poor environment, mold will re-grow on cleaned items.

Photo: University of Glasgow Archives

Mold Remediation

- Active mold – feathery, soft. Best removed with a HEPA-filter vacuum.
- Inactive mold – powdery, dry. Can be removed with a soft brush or cloth.
- Mold response: consider amount of materials, active mold, and staff sensitivity.
- ALWAYS WEAR A MASK OR RESPIRATOR!

Insects

- Cockroaches, silverfish, and carpet beetles.
- Can be drawn to adhesives and starches in paper-based materials.
- Can leave disfiguring damage.

Insect photo: controlling-pests.com

Avoiding Insects

- As with mold, environment is key.
- 45 – 55% relative humidity, 65 – 72 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Keep food and drink away from collections.

Responding to Insect Damage

- Physical repair is usually out of scope.
- Look for evidence of pest activity, like shards of paper or droppings.
- Clean regularly.
- Proactive environmental management is more effective than chemical treatments after the fact.

Recovery or Restoration Contract

- Blog article: **bit.ly/slrmblogarticle**
- Comptroller's Centralized Master Bidders List
  - 918-81 – Disaster consulting services, natural: fire, flood, wind, earthquakes
  - 958-82 – Document Management Services
  - 990-29 – Disaster preparedness/emergency planning services
  - 990-30 – Disaster relief services
  - 990-28 – Recovery services, document/film/tapes

Resources

- ARMA International Buyers' Guide
  - bit.ly/armabuyersguide
- Comptroller's Centralized Master Bidders List
  - bit.ly/txcmbl
- NARA – list of some vendors
  - bit.ly/naravendorlist
- General Services Administration website for State & Local Disaster Purchasing
  - bit.ly/gsadisasterpurchase

Recommendations

- Vendor needs to be a specialist
- Consult with your purchasing staff or general/legal counsel

Unable to Salvage?

- Identify destroyed records
- Document damage
- RMD 102 or SLR 105

Aftermath of 1973 fire at the National
Personnel Records Center in St. Louis
(National Archives and
Records Administration)

Summary

- Legal obligation to protect your records
- Potential hazards & risks posed by different disasters and emergencies especially those involving water
- Ways to recover paper, books, photos
- You may also have to deal with mold or insects
- Decide whether or not you can salvage
- Vendor should be a specialist
- Consult with purchasing or legal staff

TSLAC Resources

- E-mail us
  - slrminfo@tsl.texas.gov (Bret) or archinfo@tsl.texas.gov (Sarah)
- Call us
  - (512) 463-7610 or (512) 463-5455
- Website
  - http://www.tsl.texas.gov/slrm
  - https://www.tsl.texas.gov/landing/archives.html
- Blog
  - http://bit.ly/texasrecord

TSLAC Resources

- Planning for Disasters: Panel Discussion
  - https://bit.ly/PanelDiscussionWebinar
- Planning for Disasters: Make a Plan with dPlan
  - https://bit.ly/DPlancourse
- Storage Facilities
  - https://bit.ly/StorageFacilitiesWebinar
- Emergency Preparedness for Government Records
  - http://bit.ly/RecordsManagementTraining

Thank you for attending!

- Take the 5-question quiz: http://bit.ly/WebinarQuiz

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