



# Records Emergency Preparedness, Response and Recovery

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# Prepare

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**Prepare** in advance to prevent and/or limit damage to records.

- Assess Risks
- Develop a plan
- Assess Risks
- Risk Mitigation
  - records off the floor
  - maintain history and check for building leaks
  - weather system awareness, etc.
- Identify vital records



# Prepare

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- Plan the response for different risk scenarios
- Ascertain potential resource needs: on site availability and options during an event
  - Expertise
  - Personnel
  - Contractors
- Communication systems and contact lists
  - 24/7 contacts
  - During an event – what will work



# Prepare

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- Train and practice
- Incident Command System awareness
  - Used by fire and police departments)
  - <http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/Is/is100.asp>
  - Meet and tour site with local fire department to build understanding and awareness of records issues
- Keep the plan up to date and close by
  - home, work, car
- Take action to provide protection if there is advance warning of a possible event



# Respond

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**Respond** as soon as it is safe to enter the area after an emergency.

- Human Safety Comes First!
- Observe, listen and collect information
- What is the impact on the records?
- Determine what record formats, schedules and retention considerations, response goals
- Determine resource needs for the event-staffing, supplies, equipment, expertise



# Respond

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- In the majority of cases records can be recovered from water damage
- Document situation and records involved
- Develop a plan for response
- For federal records, contact NARA Records Management liaison regarding damage and information on records response and recovery
- Calm and communication
- One representative to speak to press



# Respond – Mitigate damage

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- Stabilize condition- for paper records: drying for smaller quantities; freezing for larger quantities
- Actions need to be appropriate to specific record format type
- Will provide time for developing recovery plan
- Consider environmental, security, and other special issues
- Protect health- use appropriate protective gear



# Respond

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- Sustain the Response
- Everyone needs to keep up mental and physical health – breaks, food, family
- Review progress periodically and evaluate need for revising action plan
- Mold can develop within 48 hours
- Document response activities - photographs and written- often needed later





# Recover

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**Recover** records or cultural property damaged by the emergency

- Determine recovery actions once records are stabilized – often can wait until immediate emergency situation has been addressed (*e.g.*, if records are frozen)
- Appropriate strategy will depend on funding options, records retention and disposition, record use, damage sustained, record formats, available expertise and resources



# Recover

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- Appropriate solution will vary depending on records and situation.
- Options for paper records may include (depending on specific situation and records):
  - long term freezing until records are needed; isolation of moldy vacuum freeze dried records
  - reformatting
  - vacuum freeze drying and mold removal
  - air drying in smaller portions, etc



# Resources

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- National Archives and Records Administration - Records Emergency Preparedness, Response, Recovery and Training:  
<http://www.archives.gov/preservation/records-emergency/>
- NARA Records Management Training Learn Center  
<https://nara.learn.com/learncenter.asp?id=178413&sessionid=3-8F11B9E0-2EA6-488C-939E-1E90A771996C>
- Heritage Emergency National Task Force/ Heritage Preservation:  
<http://www.heritagepreservation.org/PROGRAMS/TASKFER.HTM>
- Council of State Archivists (COSA):  
<http://www.statearchivists.org/prepare/index.htm>
- American Institute for Conservation  
<http://aic.stanford.edu/library/online/disaster/>
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)