

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION PRESERVATION PROGRAMS

The information provided below is intended for emergency recovery and response, not general treatment recommendations.

MOTION PICTURE FILM

Priority Action:

- Keep film on cores and deliver to a motion picture film processor within **48** hours.
 - Wet film must be kept wet until it can be rewashed and dried.
- A professional motion picture film processor* should be contacted to rewash and dry motion picture film

Recommendations:

- Do not move items until a place has been prepared to receive them
- Keep film wet by packing reels into a container lined with plastic bags
- Add distilled water to make sure reels remain wet
- Wipe outsides of film cans with sponges before opening
 - Cans that are wet on the outside may contain dry film that should be separated from wet material
- Do not touch film with bare hands – wear plastic gloves and avoid touching the image area
- Do not keep film with mold damage wet – dry as soon as possible
 - The emulsion of film that has had mold damage is soluble in water
- Freeze or air dry deteriorated acetate film as soon as possible
 - The recovery rate for deteriorated acetate film is low
 - To air dry, lay film flat, emulsion side up, on sheets of polyester web over absorbent paper, and change paper as it becomes wet
 - If film is in an early state of deterioration, it may be hung on clotheslines with plastic or rustproof clips to dry, but do not let film strips touch each other

Recommended Supplies:

- Distilled water
- Plastic bags
- Sponges

*Contact information for selected professional motion picture film processing labs:
<http://www.archives.gov/preservation/disaster-response/vendors.html>

The information and links provided by NARA are offered as a service and do not imply endorsement of any company, institution, or person. The scale of the emergency and types of materials affected will determine the specific actions or techniques to be taken and whether in-house salvage is possible or whether external resources and expertise are necessary.