

# *Hurricane Damaged Records Recovery Information*

## *Alabama Department of Archives & History (ADAH)*

The Alabama State Archives had indicated that paper documents are susceptible to harmful molds that can begin to grow within 48 hours after the recession of flood waters. Ideally, document owners should immediately enlist the services of a professional documents salvage team. Professional conservation rescuers can cleanse documents on site and freeze dry them in order to stabilize them for future restoration. A list of regionally available records disaster recovery vendors can be obtain online from ADAH at:

<http://www.archives.state.al.us/whatsnew/disastervendors.html> or via phone at (334) 242-4452.

If a rescue team is not immediately available, attempts should be made to salvage the wettest documents first. If the books are soaking wet, pick up each one with both hands and place in a non-paper container (milk crate, wire basket, etc.). Transport books to a safe, dry area and keep them closed during the moving process.

Watch temperature and relative humidity during salvage operations. If your books are in a warm and humid place with little air circulation, they will mold and may be ruined permanently. Cover tables with plastic sheeting and separate books by degrees of wetness. Support books carefully and stand on end on a small stack of paper towels. Replenish paper towels regularly and remove them from the drying room. Once most of the water has been leached from the books, they can be laid flat to continue air drying. Do not use hair dryers, irons, or ovens and do not expose the documents to prolonged sunlight. Use good indoor airflow with fans, open windows, air conditioners, and dehumidifiers.

If documents are fragile and air drying is not an option, saturated documents should be placed in freezer storage temporarily to deter mold growth. Individual books should be wrapped separately in waxed paper and packed snugly, spine down, in a sturdy container. Loose documents can be wrapped in groups, it is preferable to separate them at a later date. These items can be defrosted for air-drying when conditions are more favorable. Further details on proper book drying techniques can be found at:

[http://www.archives.state.al.us/ol\\_pubs/govrec41.html#Drying](http://www.archives.state.al.us/ol_pubs/govrec41.html#Drying) .

A special note on water soaked photographs: photographs should first be gently cleansed with clean water. Air-dry photos on a plastic sheeting or paper towel, or by hanging them by the corner with plastic clothespins. Do not let the images come into contact with other surfaces during the drying process.

Institutions and individuals with damaged documents may wish to call the Archives' Government Records Division of the ADAH for further technical advice. Specialists can be reached at (334) 242-4452.

## *Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC)*

The Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC) offers free telephone assistance to institutions and individuals with damaged paper-based collections. The telephone line is staffed 24 hours a day by conservation specialists who can offer technical assistance and referrals to commercial disaster recovery service providers. Call (978) 470-1010, day or night, seven days a week.

## *Southeastern Library Network, Inc. (SOLINET)*

The Southeastern Library Network, Inc. (SOLINET) is a not-for-profit library cooperative serving the Southeastern United States. SOLINET can offer free telephone assistance on damaged document recovery and also referrals to conservators, specialized consultants, and disaster recovery companies. Please call Tina Mason, Education Officer, at 1-800-999-8558 ext. 4894.

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## *Technical Guidance Available Online*

### *Surviving Your Next Hurricane: How to Protect and Salvage Vital Records*

[http://www.archives.state.al.us/ol\\_pubs/govrec22.html](http://www.archives.state.al.us/ol_pubs/govrec22.html)

### *Emergency Stabilization and Conservation Measures*

<http://palimpsest.stanford.edu/byorg/nps/npsafter.html>

<http://palimpsest.stanford.edu/waac/wn/wn19/wn19-2/wn19-207.html>

[www.heritagepreservation.org/news/SaveTreasRight.htm](http://www.heritagepreservation.org/news/SaveTreasRight.htm)

### *Air-Drying Wet Documents and Books*

[http://www.archives.state.al.us/ol\\_pubs/govrec41.html#Drying](http://www.archives.state.al.us/ol_pubs/govrec41.html#Drying)

[www.solinet.net/preservation/leaflets/leaflets\\_templ.cfm?doc\\_id=120](http://www.solinet.net/preservation/leaflets/leaflets_templ.cfm?doc_id=120)

[www.loc.gov/preserv/emerg/dry.html](http://www.loc.gov/preserv/emerg/dry.html)

<http://www.nedcc.org/plam3/tleaf37.htm>

### *Salvage of Photographs*

<http://user823621.sf1000.registeredsite.com/plam3/manual.pdf>

<http://www.nedcc.org/plam3/tleaf38.htm>

### *Managing Mold Issues*

[www.ccaha.org/pdf/Mold%20Bulletin--SMALL.pdf](http://www.ccaha.org/pdf/Mold%20Bulletin--SMALL.pdf)

<http://www.nedcc.org/plam3/tleaf39.htm>

### *Disaster Recovery Vendors and Conservators*

<http://www.archives.state.al.us/whatsnew/disastervendors.html>

[www.solinet.net/preservation/DisRec\\_vendors.cfm](http://www.solinet.net/preservation/DisRec_vendors.cfm)

[www.aic-faic.org/guide/form.html](http://www.aic-faic.org/guide/form.html)

<http://www.aic-faic.org/guide/form.html>

### *NEDCC Technical Leaflets Online*

<http://www.nedcc.org/plam3/index3.htm>

## *Potential Funding Assistance For Institutions:*

### *National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)*

- The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) is making \$1 million in hurricane relief available for Gulf Coast cultural resources. The emergency grants of up to \$30,000 are being made available through the executive directors of the state humanities councils in Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana and are available to libraries, museums, colleges, universities and other cultural and historical institutions affected by the hurricane. For additional information about the program, visit <http://www.humanities.gov/katrina.html>

### *Southeastern Museum Conference (SEMC)*

- The Southeastern Museum Conference (SEMC) is coordinating efforts with state museum associations in Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana. SEMC is assessing needs of museums in the area, and that assessment will be used to inform recovery and funding efforts from SEMC, AASLH, and others. Contact Richard Waterhouse, SEMC's executive director, at 404-378-3153 or [rwaterhouse@SEMCDirect.net](mailto:rwaterhouse@SEMCDirect.net).

### *Before and After Disasters: Federal Funding for Cultural Institutions from Heritage Preservation (2005)*

[www.heritagepreservation.org/PDFS/Disaster.pdf](http://www.heritagepreservation.org/PDFS/Disaster.pdf)



**FEMA**