

NO BOUNDARIES IN PRESERVATION

SMALL ACTIONS, BIG RESULTS: Preventing water disasters in libraries and archives



THE UNIVERSITY of NORTH CAROLINA
GREENSBORO
University Libraries

DO YOU KNOW ABOUT PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION?

These two words can cause confusion when we talk about the maintenance of books and documents in libraries and archives. They are often used interchangeably with reference to the care and treatment of these items and, as a consequence, leave room for misunderstanding with many people. Through the years and with the development of different study spheres in this area, the concept of preservation and conservation retained two distinct values in the library and archives fields, leading to these two basic definitions:

PRESERVATION

CONSERVATION

Is the safeguard of the holdings in a library or archive to prevent the decay of the materials from external and internal causes, including both physical collections and digital data. It defines actions which involve the control of the environment, storage, manipulation, security, between other broad degradation factors that could impact the integrity of the holdings.

The act of a physical intervention on a book, or document, using specific archival materials and techniques. They go from simple procedures, such as cleaning, to more complex methodologies aiming at the object's stability. Restoration tries to bring the appearance of the object to its original period time frame and goes beyond the limits established for conservation treatment.

WATER

A few simple solutions can help to prevent a major disaster!

- Water is considered one of the biggest causes of damage and loss in books and paper documents all over the world.
- Storing your collection on shelves at least twelve inches above the floor will minimize the risk of water damage.
- If you are not able to keep the collection room in a stable temperature and controlled humidity, store your collection in a well ventilated and dry room of your building.
- Control the relative humidity and keep it between 35 – 60% and the Temperature between 60 - 68°F.

Mold occurs with a combination of temperatures above 70°F and relative humidity above 65%.

EMERGENCY KIT - LIST OF MATERIALS

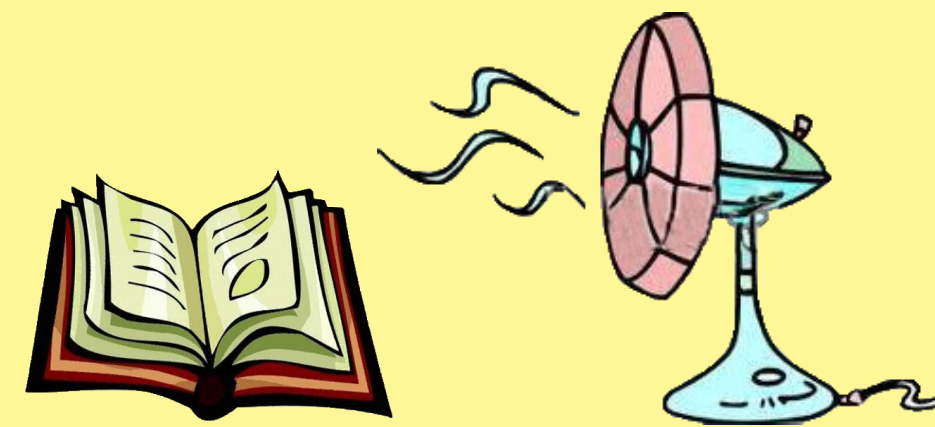
- Large container on wheels.
- A copy of Collection Priority List.
- A copy of the emergency plan.
- A list of employees and their telephone numbers.
- List of emergency contacts like Police and Fire Department.
- First Aid Kit.
- Latex or nitrile gloves in different sizes.
- Scissors.
- Cellulose sponges to help absorb liquids.
- Paper towels.
- Towels.
- Absorbent mat pad.
- Flashlight and batteries (stored out of flashlight to avoid oxidation).
- Buckets.
- Roll of plastic sheeting.
- Adhesive tape for packing.
- Protective suit in case of mold environment.
- Masks for filtering airborne spores and dust reducing exposure, in case of mold.



Download the **Pocket Response Plan** (©PREP™ COSA) :
<http://library.uncg.edu/preserve/>

WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE WET BOOKS?

- Books and documents that are partially water damaged can be fanned open or spread out in front of an air circulating source (e.g. oscillating fan) in order to expedite drying. The paper fibers will distort but this measure will prevent mold from developing.
- If these items cannot be immediately dealt with, they should be frozen. This reduces the opportunity for water to continue further soaking into the materials.
- Before freezing, wrap each book with wax paper.
- Do not try to separate the pages of a book if they are stuck together.



Always contact a conservator to receive advice on how to proceed.

MOLD

- Before you begin working with mold infestation, use Personal Protective Equipment (masks, disposable clothes, gloves).
- Do not move infested books or paper that are not covered with a plastic bag.
- Not covering the moldy books will cause cross contamination with other items in your collection.
- Treat them locally as much as possible, so the mold will not spread.
- Dry the affected area as quickly as possible using dehumidifiers.
- Only treat mold after it has dried.
- Use a HEPA filter vacuum to clean the affected area and items.
- All materials used need to be discarded or cleaned with water and soap.
- Use 70% Isopropyl Alcohol to finish the cleaning of brushes and vacuum parts.
- After finishing, clean the area.

If you have an extensive infestation, contact the local health department to receive advice and, if possible, contact a book or paper conservator.

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www.icon.org.uk
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All the information provided are only suggestions on how to deal with basic water disasters at your library and archive, they do not intend to substitute the advice of a professional conservator.



MAIN DISASTER CAUSES

WATER



FIRE



TEMPERATURE



HUMIDITY



PESTS



PRESERVATION SERVICES

Special Collections and University Archives

UNCG

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Website:

<http://library.uncg.edu/preserve/>

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