



FACT SHEET

Emergency Response Action Steps:

The following actions are recommendations that individuals and businesses can take to help recover from the impacts of flooding. Following these recommended actions could possibly help victims recover possessions, furnishings and personal property that they believe have been lost due to impacts of flooding

1. PHOTOGRAPHS

- Remove from plastic/paper enclosures or frames. Save all information about the photos.
- Carefully rinse with cool, clean water as necessary.
- Do not touch or blot surfaces.
- Air dry: hang with clips on non-image areas, or lay flat on absorbent paper. Keep photographs from contact with adjacent surfaces or each other.
- If there are too many for immediate attention, either:
 - Keep photos in a container of clean water no more than 48 hours. Air dry.
 - Freeze. If possible, interleave each photo with freezer or waxed paper.
- Do not freeze glass plate negatives.

2. FRAMED ARTWORK

Paintings:

- Remove from frames in a safe, dry place. Do **NOT** separate paintings from their stretchers.
- Keep wet paintings horizontal and paint-side up with nothing touching the surface. Avoid direct sunlight.

Art on Paper or Photos with Glass Fronts:

- Remove from frames in a safe, dry place unless art is stuck to glass.
- If image sticks to the glass, leave it in the frame; dry glass-side down.
- Otherwise, dry artwork slowly, image side up with nothing touching the surface.

- more -

3. BOOKS AND PAPER

Books:

- If rinsing is necessary, hold book closed.
- Partially wet or damp: stand on top or bottom edge with covers opened to 90° angle; air dry.
- Very wet: lay flat on clean surface; interleave less than 20% of book with absorbent material; replace interleaving when damp.
- If too many books to air dry in 48 hours:
 - Wrap in freezer or waxed paper.
 - Pack spine down in sturdy containers.
 - Freeze.

Paper:

- Air dry flat as individual sheets or small piles up to 1/4". Interleave; replace interleaving when damp.
- Do not unfold or separate individual, wet sheets.
- If too many items for air drying:
 - Interleave (by groups or individually) with freezer or waxed paper.
 - Pack papers or files supported and standing up in sturdy containers; pack containers only 90% full.
 - Freeze.

4. ELECTRONIC RECORDS

Magnetic Media:

- Wear gloves when handling; avoid scratching surfaces.
- Do not use magnetized tools/scissors.
- When copying, clean drive heads frequently to protect equipment.

Tapes:

- The casing may keep tapes clean and dry. However, if the tape itself is damaged:
 - Disassemble case and remove tape.
 - Rinse dirty tapes, still wound on reel, in clean lukewarm water.
 - Support vertically on blotting material to air dry.
 - Reassemble and copy.

Diskettes:

- Remove diskette from casing and bathe in clean distilled water.
- Dry with lint-free towels.
- Insert diskette into new casing and copy.

5. TEXTILES

- Provide adequate physical support when moving heavy textiles.
- Do not unfold delicate wet fabrics. Do not stack wet textiles.
- Rinse, drain and blot items with clean towels/cotton sheets to remove excess water.

- more -

- Block and shape each damp textile to its original form.
- Air dry textiles indoors using air conditioning/fans.
- If items cannot be dried within 48 hours, separate them with freezer or waxed paper to prevent dye transfer. Then pack flat and freeze

6. FURNITURE

Wood Furniture:

- Rinse/sponge surfaces gently to clean. Blot. Air dry slowly.
- Inspect painted surfaces. If paint is blistered or flaking, air dry slowly without removing dirt or moisture.
- Hold veneer in place while drying with weights or clamps; separate weight from veneer with protective layer.
- Finishes may develop white haze; this does not need immediate attention.

Upholstered Furniture:

- Rinse off mud.
- Remove cushions, lift-out seats, and other separate pieces.
- Wrap upholstered materials in cloth (sheet, towels, etc.) to air dry, and replace cloth when damp.
- Blot wood sections and air dry slowly.

7. CERAMICS/STONE/METAL

Ceramics:

- Identify ceramic type and consult a conservator on drying procedures.
- If ceramic is broken, cracked or has mineral deposits or old repairs, place in clean, transparent polyethylene bag until it can be treated. Seal bag and monitor for mold.

Stone:

- If stone object is smooth-surfaced, blot gently. Air dry.
- If object is rough-surfaced or has applied finish, do not blot. Air dry on plastic screen or clean towel.

Metal:

- Use gloves to handle.
- Rinse/sponge and blot metal object.
- Air dry.
- If object has applied finish, do not clean. Air dry; keep flaking surfaces horizontal.

8. ORGANIC MATERIALS

Leather and Rawhide:

- Rinse/sponge with clear water to remove mud.

- more -

- Drain and blot to remove excess water.
- Pad with toweling or unlinked paper to maintain shape.
- Air dry. Manipulate tanned fur skins during drying to keep skins flexible.

Baskets:

- Rinse.
- Drain and blot to remove excess water.
- Stuff with clean paper towels or cotton sheets to retain shape and absorb stains. Cover with clean towels. Air dry slowly.
- Change blotting material regularly.

Bone, Shell and Ivory:

- Rinse.
- Drain and blot to remove excess moisture.
- Place on blotters on non-rusting screens. Air dry slowly.

9. NATURAL HISTORY SPECIMENS

- Use a respirator and protective clothing to handle all collections; they may contain toxic materials.

Animal study skins and taxidermy mounts:

- Avoid direct handling. Air dry slowly or freeze.

Botanical specimens:

- Rinse only if necessary. Interleave and air dry herbarium sheets; use presses if possible.
- Open specimen boxes and air dry slowly.

Fluid-preserved collections:

- Place specimens in sealed polyethylene boxes with a small amount of alcohol.

Geological specimens:

- Rinse; air dry slowly. NOTE: Some specimens should be dried quickly; consult a conservator.

Paleontological specimens:

- Rinse; air dry slowly.
- Fragile specimens and those with old repairs should be held together with ties during drying. Separate ties from specimens with waxed or freezer paper.

[Recovering From and Coping With Flood Damaged Property](#)

© 1997, Heritage Preservation, Inc.

This information is from the Emergency Response and Salvage Wheel, a sliding chart designed for archives, libraries, and museums. It is also a useful tool for home or business and is available in English and Spanish versions. The Wheel was produced by the [Heritage Emergency National Task Force](#), a public-private partnership sponsored by FEMA and [Heritage Preservation](#). For further information or to order the Wheel, please call toll-free 1-888-979-2233.