

National Preservation Office

Collection Salvage Guidelines

This document sets out some basic guidelines on what to do and what not to do when salvaging materials that have been damaged by water. It is based on the National Library of New Zealand *Collection Salvage Guidelines*.

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Bound Material

WHAT TO DO	WHAT NOT TO DO
<p>DO assess the degree of wetness and put into individual plastic bags.</p> <p>DO mark a code number on the outside of the bag with a marker pen.</p> <p>DO freeze as soon as possible.</p> <p>DO freeze coated papers as quickly as possible or keep wet.</p> <p>DO pack books into crates spine down.</p> <p>DO air-dry leather/vellum bindings if possible.</p>	<p>DO NOT open or close books.</p> <p>DO NOT attempt to clean wet books.</p> <p>DO NOT pack books tightly into crates.</p> <p>DO NOT carry out repairs.</p>

Works of Art on Paper

WHAT TO DO	WHAT NOT TO DO
<p>DO handle wet paper with extreme care.</p> <p>DO air-dry works with soluble material immediately. If not possible, freeze immediately.</p> <p>DO freeze or air-dry other materials within 48 hours.</p> <p>DO interleave artworks when possible.</p> <p>DO support piles of wet paper from underneath with an auxiliary support.</p> <p>DO sponge standing water from drawers.</p> <p>DO freeze entire drawers and contents if wet contents cannot be removed safely.</p> <p>DO un-frame and un-mat framed wet works.</p>	<p>DO NOT attempt to separate wet sheets.</p> <p>DO NOT blot surfaces with soluble media.</p> <p>DO NOT attempt to clean or remove dirt from wet items.</p> <p>DO NOT attempt to carry wet paper unsupported.</p> <p>DO NOT attempt to empty drawers of wet contents if material is stuck.</p> <p>DO NOT freeze-dry translucent papers.</p>

Manuscripts and Archives: serials, papers, documents

WHAT TO DO	WHAT NOT TO DO
<p>DO handle wet paper with extreme care.</p> <p>DO freeze or air-dry material with soluble media immediately.</p> <p>DO freeze or air-dry other material within 48 hours.</p> <p>DO separate material into manageable bundles and interleave or wrap bundles. If material is in folders, interleave folders. Loosely pack into crates and freeze.</p> <p>DO interleave coated paper immediately, if possible, page by page and allow to dry OR keep wet by wrapping in plastic. Then freeze immediately.</p> <p>DO drain excess water from intact containers/boxes and freeze contents in original container/box.</p> <p>DO remove contents from all sodden enclosures and boxes and put in a dry container.</p> <p>DO transfer all identification information to new containers or wrappings.</p> <p>DO freeze entire drawers with contents if contents are sodden.</p>	<p>DO NOT squeeze out water.</p> <p>DO NOT turn pages.</p> <p>DO NOT pack tightly into crates.</p> <p>DO NOT attempt to clean off dirt.</p> <p>DO NOT carry out repairs.</p> <p>DO NOT attempt to separate wet sheets.</p> <p>DO NOT attempt to sponge/wipe dirt or soluble media from wet documents.</p> <p>DO NOT attempt to remove fasteners</p> <p>DO NOT attempt to empty wet drawers of sodden material.</p> <p>DO NOT freeze-dry gilded or illuminated manuscripts</p>

Newspapers

WHAT TO DO	WHAT NOT TO DO
<p>DO handle with care.</p> <p>DO support piles of newspapers from underneath using an auxiliary support.</p> <p>DO assess the degree of wetness and wrap in plastic film.</p> <p>DO mark a code number on the outside of the plastic with a marker pen.</p> <p>DO freeze as soon as possible.</p>	<p>DO NOT squeeze out water.</p> <p>DO NOT turn pages.</p> <p>DO NOT pack tightly into crates.</p> <p>DO NOT attempt to clean off dirt.</p> <p>DO NOT carry out repairs.</p>

Oversize Items: maps, volumes

WHAT TO DO	WHAT NOT TO DO
<p>DO handle wet paper with extreme care.</p> <p>DO air-dry works with soluble material immediately. If not possible, freeze immediately.</p> <p>DO freeze or air-dry other materials within 48 hours.</p> <p>DO separate material into manageable bundles; wrap or interleave bundles. If material is in folders, wrap or interleave folders.</p> <p>DO support oversize materials from underneath with an auxiliary support.</p> <p>DO interleave coated paper immediately, if possible, page by page and allow to dry OR keep wet by wrapping in plastic. Then, freeze immediately.</p> <p>DO sponge or drain standing water from drawers and freeze entire drawers and contents if wet contents cannot be removed safely.</p>	<p>DO NOT attempt to separate wet sheets</p> <p>DO NOT attempt to carry oversize wet material without an auxiliary support underneath.</p> <p>DO NOT attempt to sponge/wipe dirt or soluble media from wet oversize items.</p> <p>DO NOT attempt to empty drawers of oversize wet material.</p>

Sound Recordings: Grooved Discs

WHAT TO DO	WHAT NOT TO DO
<p>DO separate discs from wet liners and jackets.</p> <p>DO remove excess moisture with a soft cloth.</p> <p>DO mark centre of disc with a grease pencil if labels have come off.</p> <p>DO transfer discs upright, like sizes together, to padded crates. Interleave every 25 discs with foam.</p> <p>DO wash dirty discs and air-dry.</p> <p>DO air-dry or freeze-dry original jackets.</p>	<p>DO NOT expose to direct heat.</p> <p>DO NOT stack discs.</p>

Sound Recordings: Cassettes, Magnetic Tapes, Video Cassettes

WHAT TO DO	WHAT NOT TO DO
<p>DO separate tapes from wet containers and inserts.</p> <p>DO keep wet contaminated polyester-based tapes completely immersed in cold water, but for as short a time as possible.</p> <p>DO air-dry clean tapes.</p> <p>DO air-dry or freeze-dry inserts.</p> <p>DO pack tapes vertically in plastic crates for transport to washing area.</p>	<p>DO NOT expose to direct heat.</p> <p>DO NOT touch with bare hands. Wear gloves.</p> <p>DO NOT attempt to unwind tapes or play on a machine.</p> <p>DO NOT freeze magnetic tape.</p>

Sound Recordings: Floppy Disks

WHAT TO DO	WHAT NOT TO DO
<p>DO remove disks from their jackets later.</p> <p>DO wash in cold water.</p> <p>DO air-dry.</p> <p>DO pack disks upright in containers completely immersed in cold water, if wet.</p>	<p>DO NOT use magnetised scissors.</p> <p>DO NOT wipe with fingers or cloth.</p> <p>DO NOT expose to direct heat.</p>

Sound Recordings: CDs, DVDs

WHAT TO DO	WHAT NOT TO DO
<p>DO keep discs wet in their jewel cases until they can be dried properly.</p> <p>DO wash in cold water and pack in plastic bags.</p> <p>DO air-dry.</p>	<p>DO NOT freeze or freeze-dry.</p> <p>DO NOT wipe with fingers or cloth.</p> <p>DO NOT expose to direct heat.</p>

Photographs

WHAT TO DO	WHAT NOT TO DO
<p>DO air-dry immediately, if possible.</p> <p>DO keep immersion time to a minimum.</p> <p>DO keep wet until separated from enclosures.</p> <p>DO rinse gently in clean, cold water, if dirty.</p> <p>DO air-dry, emulsion side up.</p> <p>DO deal with least stable items first:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Early colour plates will not survive immersion• Collodion glass negatives, cased items (e.g. daguerreotypes, ambrotypes, tintypes) can survive immersion up to 24 hours• Modern colour prints, silver gelatin prints and negatives can survive being wet for up to 48 hours• Albumen prints and collodio-chloride prints can survive being wet up to 3-4 days <p>DO freeze if cannot be air-dried. Seal in plastic bags to freeze.</p> <p>DO freeze-dry if cannot be air-dried or frozen and thawed.</p> <p>For more information see APPENDIX 1</p>	<p>DO NOT allow photographs to dry in contact with anything else. They will stick together permanently.</p> <p>DO NOT freeze-dry collodion glass negatives.</p> <p>DO NOT wash or soak in warm water.</p>

APPENDIX 1

Wet photographs

Mould is commonly present on wet and damp photographic material. Exposure to mould can cause people to experience short term discomfort or can cause long term illnesses. Take care to protect all people handling wet photographs by providing them with protection such as plastic gloves (latex, nitrile, etc) and face masks rated for use with mould. Tyvek body suits may also be required.

The recommended methods of recovery, in order of preference, are:

- 1) air-dry photographs immediately
- 2) freeze, thaw, air-dry
- 3) freeze dry (seek advice before using this option)

Air drying

- If photographs are dirty they can be rinsed gently in clean, cold water. It is very important to keep identifying information with each item to avoid confusion later.
- Air-dry items on clean absorbent paper (e.g. blotting paper, unprinted newsprint, paper towels). The image side must be uppermost during drying.
- Do not touch the image side of wet photographs it will be very soft and vulnerable. Never allow the image side of photographs to dry in contact with anything else, as they will stick together permanently.
- If the image layer on glass negatives is physically sound they can be propped up, image side uppermost, on their long edge to dry. Broken or damaged glass negative should be dried flat on absorbent paper, image side uppermost.
- Film negatives can be carefully hung from a line to dry. Do not allow them to come into contact with each other as they dry. Some film negatives in poor condition may not be able to be saved. If they look damaged or deteriorated dry them flat on absorbent paper, image side uppermost.
- Fans and dehumidifiers will aid drying. Avoid the use of heat as it can cause mould-growth and other problems.

Freeze, thaw, air dry

- You can freeze wet photographs if you can't air-dry them immediately. Place them in easy-to-handle batches inside sealed plastic bags, then freeze. Interleaving the items with greaseproof paper is preferable as they will be easier to separate in the future. These items can stay frozen indefinitely.

- When you are ready to deal with the items defrost only as much as you can handle in one day. Gently separate thawed items taking care not to allow them to dry before they are separated. Dry using method outlined above.

Freeze-drying

- The “freeze-drying” process is not usually recommended for photographs, as it can result in changes to the photographic image quality and can damage the image surface. Seek advice from a conservator about specific freeze-drying ‘does’ and ‘don’ts’ before deciding to freeze-dry photographs. *Never* freeze-dry collodion negatives or cased items as they will be destroyed during the drying process.
- Surprising amount of photographs are salvageable even if they might at first appear not to be. However some photographs may not be able to be saved if they have been immersed in water for a long period of time. If in doubt recover the material as best you can and seek expert advice later.
- Consult a conservator or relevant heritage professional if you have specific situations or material types not covered by these instructions.