

From Cornell's Disaster Plan

III. HOW TO DEAL WITH MINOR EMERGENCIES

A. IMMEDIATE STEPS

The following steps should be taken in the event of an emergency that can be handled on the premises and that does not pose a threat to physical safety. This usually involves fewer than 500 volumes.

FIRE:

1. Pull the fire alarm. (Public Safety and Life Safety Services will automatically be alerted.)
2. Follow the emergency evacuation plan for your library. (A copy of the plan should be located in the Safety and Security Manual.)
3. Notify: PUBLIC SAFETY (5-111) and contact individuals on Disaster Phone Tree (pg. 2).

WATER:

DO NOT ENTER AN AREA THAT IS FLOODED UNTIL MAINTENANCE AND SERVICE ELECTRICIANS HAVE DISCONNECTED THE ELECTRICITY--THERE IS EXTREME DANGER OF SHOCK.

1. Notify: _____ and contact individuals on Disaster Phone Tree (pg. 2)
(Building or Facilities Coordinator)
2. Once it is safe to enter the area, cordon it off to prohibit the public from entering.
3. When water is coming from above:
 - § Cover stacks with plastic sheeting located in your unit's emergency supply box:
 - § OR move books off shelves, including adjacent library materials or property that might be damaged to a clean, dry area.
4. When water is coming from below:
 - § Move books off shelves to another location OR
 - § Move books to higher shelves.
5. Contact Customer Services, Maintenance (5-5322) if assistance is required with

building repairs or cleanup of affected stack area. Be sure to give Customer Services the following information: your name, location, and description of the problem. Meet the Customer Services representative at the door and stay with them to find out what action will be taken.

B. PREPARATION FOR AIR DRYING OF MATERIALS.

This section includes preparatory steps to be taken prior to air drying materials on site. The next section provides directions for the air drying of books and other materials. The Annex freezer is available for storage of wet materials if air drying is delayed or more time is needed to make critical decisions.

1. Staff. Gather your Disaster Action Team together (See list on page 2). A general rule is that two staff members, working as a team, can handle and dry up to 100 volumes.

At least one staff member on the Disaster Action Team should be trained in handling and air drying wet library materials. An asterisk indicates which members of the team have received training. For training contact the Conservation Department (5-9440).

2. Space. A clean, dry, secure area with good air circulation, low temperature and humidity is necessary for air drying books. Note: air drying can take from one day up to a week and the area chosen should be available for that time.

In choosing areas for air drying consider:

§ Accessibility (e.g. for wheeled trucks)

§ Path to a loading area in case moving the collection is required

§ Proximity to collection

§ Air circulation and potential for controlling the environment such as, windows, separate air conditioning units, electrical outlets for fans, etc.

§ Availability of open, flat surfaces (reading rooms may be good, but consider the impact on readers if they must be excluded for several days)

§ Security

C. PROCEDURES FOR AIR DRYING BOOKS.

The main objective in the air drying of wet books is to remove water as efficiently as possible and, at the same time, contain structure distortion. Structure distortion (i.e., excessive swelling of the fore-edge area, concavity of the backbone) can be avoided if

proper judgment is used in determining the appropriate point at which the book should be opened. The following procedures assume that the covers are in good condition and still attached to the book. If the covers must be removed (because of delamination, color running out of the binding materials, board swelling and warping, etc.), the book should be stood on edge as described below, but supported by loose pieces of binder's board, blocks of wood, or bookends. (See other cautions at the end of this section.)

NOTE: Depending on the degree of saturation, a book can take from one day up to a week to dry.

1. Books That Are Thoroughly Wet.

Do not attempt to open. Do not attempt to fan leaves. Do not remove covers.

Place book in a closed position (with boards slightly open) on its head on sheets of absorbent paper. To permit water to drain efficiently, place small pieces of binders' board at the fore-edge. Place absorbent sheets of paper between the text block and the binding. Change paper on the table as it becomes wet. Providing that the books are placed in a moving current of air, they should soon dry to the point where they may be opened for the next step.

2. Books That Are Partially Wet.

Books may be carefully opened partially (at a fairly shallow angle) and interleaved with absorbent paper. Paper towels are ideal for this purpose. Begin at the back of the book and interleave every 20 or so leaves. Given good drying conditions, the book may be left flat until the interleaving material has absorbed some of the water, probably after one hour. Change interleaf materials periodically until book is only very slightly damp, then go to step 3.

3. Books That Are Damp.

Books that are damp should be stood on edge, lightly fanned, and allowed to dry in a current of air. If the binding of the book is wetter than the text block, place protective paper between the boards and the book. When almost dry, go to next step.

4. Books That Are Almost Dry.

When almost dry, lay the book flat, push the back and boards gently into position, and place under a light weight, and leave in this position until book is thoroughly dry.

CAUTION:

1. Coated paper (shiny paper used for periodicals and art books and occasional illustrations) requires immediate attention - once the paper starts to dry it fuses together and can rarely be separated. It may be possible to salvage the item by interleaving every sheet with changes of wax paper. If time or staff is not available for this, make arrangement to freeze the book and **KEEP IT WET** until it is placed in the freezer. If there is no help available or the numbers of wet books are too great to give the book the needed attention, you may wish to simply place the book aside as too much attention to a single volume can jeopardize the drying of the entire affected collection.

2. Water soluble inks or media (manuscripts, drawings, water colors)

Rare or unique items

Non paper material (film, disks, oil paintings)

Contact the Conservation Department (5-9440).

3. Manuscripts or books printed or bound in vellum or leather Dry under the direction of a specialist. Contact the Conservation Department (5-9440).