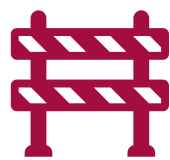


The First 48 Hours: Post-Event

AFTER A DISASTER HAS AFFECTED CULTURAL MATERIAL



The following tips may help you respond to an emergency affecting cultural property. Take the time to plan! It's tempting to "get right to work," but initial organization will keep humans safe, save effort, and perhaps prevent additional loss. Adapt suggestions to your circumstances. Above all, remember that **safety comes first**; don't endanger yourself or your staff on behalf of collections.

Make sure the building is safe before reentry. This may vary by region: contact your local Fire Department for reentry permission. A structural engineer may be necessary to evaluate the building for safety.

Priorities

- **Activate your disaster plan.** Initiate response command structure. Distribute phone tree, command structure, and team designations.
- **Contact insurance vendor.**
- **Secure the site.** Activate site security and establish a secure perimeter. Collaborate with your facilities and security departments, or carpenters, roofers, and others depending on needs.
- **Procure collections recovery support.** Contact collections recovery company/resources if necessary.



Connect to your local [Alliance for Response network](#) and [National Heritage Responders 24/7 hotline](#).
[202-661-8068](tel:202-661-8068)



Designate Personnel for Leadership and Command Roles

- **Incident Commander/Arts & Culture Specialist** to lead recovery, make high-level safety decisions, and coordinate with external emergency manager officials.
- **Emergency Recovery Coordinator** to manage recovery strategy for collections, instruct staff/volunteers, and authorize object movement and treatment.
- **Safety Officer** to identify and mitigate risks, ensure safety of all persons engaged in recovery.
- **Liaison Officer** to be point of contact for external agencies (FEMA) providing resources and support.

Designate Personnel for Operational and Specialized Roles

- **Conservator/Specialists** Works with the Recovery Coordinator to triage collections and determine appropriate, expert treatments for damaged historic or artistic materials.
- **Operations Section Chief** Leads object recovery, salvage, stabilization, and transportation actions.
- **Planning Section Chief** Develops the Incident Action Plan (IAP), gathers information, and keeps records of the recovery process.
- **Logistics Section Chief** Manages resources, including supplies, tools, food for staff, and transportation needs.
- **Finance/Administration Section Chief** Tracks costs, manages grants, and processes reimbursement claims for the recovery efforts.
- **Emergency Registrar** Records essential details, including the tracking of, and movement of, cultural objects during the recovery process.
- **Cultural Arts Task Force Member** A specialized, temporary role focused on specific, time-bound tasks like disaster needs assessment or, in some cases, community art therapy for trauma recovery.



Human Safety. Provide personal protection equipment (PPE) appropriate to the incident.

- **Respiratory protection.** N95 mask or half-face respirators prevent inhalation of mold, soot, and dust.
- **Skin protection.** Nitrile gloves are recommended for object handling and work gloves (on top) as needed. Wear Tyvek suits/aprons/booties and long-sleeved/legged clothing to prevent contamination.
- **Eye protection.** Non-vented goggles protect against splash, debris, and airborne particles.
- **Foot and head protection.** Watertight steel-toed boots and hard hats are necessary for entering flooded or structurally unstable areas.
- **Health.** Ensure that staff and volunteers have current shots (e.g. tetanus). Wash hands frequently or clean with wet wipes, if no running water is available. Be particularly careful when touching water bottles and food to avoid contamination

Perform a *Rapid Walk-Through Assessment*



Assemble a team to enter the site. An assessor, notetaker, photographer, and a phone/radio communicator. For safety, Commander/Arts & Culture Specialist or another assigned team member should stay outside the building to communicate with the team inside.



Provide personal protective equipment (PPE), site maps, flashlights, cameras, phones/radio, and notetaking supplies. People with asthma or other health conditions should not enter the affected building. Discuss mental health/ shock (see Mental Health Tip Sheet) and signs of overwhelm with the recovery team and volunteers.


Enter each area of the site as safety allows. Make a thorough photographic and written record of conditions.

- **Phone/radio communicator** actively describes the team's location to an outside partner for safety.
- **Photograph and/or video record** each room. Include the location/room name and date in photographs for reference.
- **Note-taker** records information/observations from the assessment team.
- **Assess the status** of the "Most Important to Remove" priority collections and records. Be calm and focus on what you can see. Do not dig through items. Report out to the Emergency/Recovery Coordinator to determine next steps.
- **Take breaks.**

After the Rapid Assessment - Plan salvage and recovery activities

- **Consider critical operations.** Equipment, records, and information needed to manage the salvage process and reopen the site.

- **Gather supplies, which may include:**

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|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal protective equipment (PPE) • Salvage materials: plastic sheeting, absorbent pads/sponges, tissue • Documentation: cameras, notepads, pencils • Tools: flashlights, utility knives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special tools (e.g. screwdriver bits for framed art and exhibition cases) • Equipment: tables, drying racks, shelving, carts • Utilities: water, electricity |  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food, restrooms • Other necessities as determined by the incident and collections needs. |
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- **Secure for space and transportation.** Arrange for a secure, off-site staging/work area for salvaged collections. Ensure adequate ventilation and space. Arrange for transport to recovery spaces.
- **Document.** Maintain a thorough photographic and written record of emergency conditions and salvage activities throughout the event.

