Preservation and Conservation (PAC) Programme
Frequently Asked Questions

In case of disaster...having a disaster plan

Prepared by PAC Japan

This FAQ was prepared based on the IFLA Disaster Preparedness and Planning manual and the expertise acquired by the National Diet Library (NDL) and other libraries.

IFLA Disaster Preparedness and Planning: A Brief Manual

Q: Why is it necessary to prepare for disasters that might not even happen or to have a disaster plan for our own institution?

A: A disaster can strike anywhere at any time. Earthquakes, wildfires, and flooding caused by hurricanes, typhoons, or heavy rains are just a few examples of the kinds of natural disasters that affect institutions around the world. Additionally, there are man-made disasters, such as fire or water damage caused by human error or equipment failure. In the worst cases, sometimes losses are caused by war, armed conflicts, or terrorism.
Very often, disasters cannot be prevented, but the risks can be mitigated if we take adequate measures in advance and exercise good judgment when a disaster strikes.

It is important to identify both the circumstances that are unique to your institution and the measures that can be taken in a variety of situations when planning how to minimize risks from disasters. Additionally, creating a disaster preparedness plan and sharing it with your stakeholders will help to gain their cooperation and understanding when action must be taken.

Q: What steps are needed for proper disaster management?

A: In many guidelines and manuals, disaster management is organized into the following phases: risk assessment, prevention and protection, preparedness, response, and recovery.

- **Risk assessment**: The first thing to do is to identify the risks that your institution faces from disasters and rank them according to their likelihood and potential severity. For many libraries, fire and water damage rank at the top of the kinds of incidents that are most likely to occur. Other risks will depend on the unique circumstance of your library. For example, earthquakes are a major concern in Japan, so the priority is high for aseismic countermeasures.

- **Prevention and Protection**: The IFLA manual states that "prevention is concerned with measures to prevent an event happening" and "protection is concerned with measures to limit the damage to collections if an event does happen." It is important to consider what can be done to minimize damage and implement such measures as much as possible.
- **Preparedness**: There are many aspects of being ready to cope with a disaster, including creating a disaster plan, organizing a disaster response team, preparing the necessary equipment and supplies, and carrying out training sessions in which the necessary actions are simulated.
- **Response**: When a disaster actually strikes, your ability to take prompt and suitable actions in response will depend entirely on how well prepared you are.
- **Recovery**: The recovery phase is not complete until the library's services, facilities, and collections have been returned to their normal condition. The length of time this takes will depend largely on the extent of damage suffered.

Q: What kind of risks and threats should I assess at my institution? Are there any useful references I should check?

A: Both the IFLA Manual and the ICA Guideline (See A12) have lists of the risks you should assess for your institution. Also, the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC) offers a risk prioritization worksheet and walk-through checklist that might be useful.

https://www.culturalheritage.org/resources/emergencies/risk-evaluation-and-planning-program

Many regional or local governments publish information on the types of risks an area faces and which can be referenced when assessing the risk from natural disasters and other external sources. In Japan, many municipal governments publish on their websites hazard maps that show the areas in a city most likely to be affected by a particular hazard and how severe the impact could be.

(Example) Koto City Flood Hazard Map

https://www.city.koto.lg.jp/470601/machizukuri/kasenkoen/kasen/documents/englishmap.pdf

Local historical documents and research publications that record the damage caused by past disasters or the history of land use are also useful sources of information.

Q: How should we prioritize measures for prevention and mitigation of disasters?

A: After completing your risk assessment, prioritize measures for areas that are weak. To protect against fires and floods, inspect all buildings as well as electrical and water distribution facilities regularly, and study the feasibility of installing waterproofing, fire detection, and fire extinguishing equipment. For more information, please see the chapter on *Prevention and Protection* in the IFLA manual and other guidelines.

Other useful measures include identifying external sources of disaster information and alerts and secure storage for your library's most valuable materials. For example, libraries located near rivers or other bodies of water that have identified a high risk of flooding should avoid storing

library materials in lower levels. Remote storage and digitization or other media conversion are also viable options.

Q: What measures can we take to minimize the damage to collections from earthquakes?

A: In addition to the damage to buildings and facilities that they cause directly, earthquakes also cause fires, flooding, tsunamis, and other secondary disasters. Thus, a wide range of measures are necessary. But here are some suggestions for measures to prevent damage to library collections due to the collapse of a building or other damage to facilities. First, check the earthquake resistance of the building, and implement aseismic reinforcement or isolation. Bookshelves can be prevented from collapsing by fastening them to the floor, a wall, or to each other. Large books should be placed on bottom shelves, and fall prevention bars or tape are effective on higher shelves. Just putting books all the way back on the shelf can also make a difference. Storing valuable materials in storage boxes helps reduce damage by water or falling. Applying shatterproof film to window glass and lighting equipment is also an effective approach.

Q: What elements should be included in a disaster plan?

A: Although the answer to this question will vary depending on the size of the institution and the type of disaster, the following elements are often included in disaster plans.

- Establish a disaster management team and define a chain of command, roles for team members, and contact information for both normal business hours and after hours.
- Organize your disaster action procedures by type of disaster and materials. Use a chart or other convenient and easy-to-understand format.
- Create a priority list of materials to be salvaged, including a layout plan of your stacks.
- Create a list of emergency tools, supplies, and their location.
- Train your staff regularly.
- Review and revise your plan regularly.

In addition, keep your emergency information well organized, including how to contact emergency services, external sources of support for relief and restoration of materials, and insurance.

Check the following site to see disaster plans prepared by other library's. See also A. 11 for templates of a disaster plan.

- Disaster Plans. CoOL (Conservation Online)
  http://cool.conservation-us.org/bytopic/disasters/plans/

Q: What other measures can we take to prepare for disasters?

A: We recommend keeping items needed for quick response on hand so that they can be used immediately. Necessary categories include items to protect the safety and health of the salvage team, items for drying materials, items for moving affected materials to a safer place, items for

preventing the spread of the damage, and items for recording the damage and salvage activities. The Annex of the IFLA Manual also contains a list of emergency supplies and equipment in, and there are many other disaster management plans available online.

Training raises awareness of disaster prevention for both staff and contractors and provides experience in how to respond to a disaster.

Preservation Directorate of the Library of Congress provides a good tool to identify scenarios by type and level of disaster.

- Library of Congress. A Preservation Planning Tool: Tabletop Planning Scenarios, Level of Collections Emergency. http://www.loc.gov/preservation/emergprep/plan/scenariosII.pdf

Create a scenario that matches your organization's needs and train for it regularly. Check to be sure that fixed response procedures operate properly and revise them as necessary. Simulating recovery scenarios in advance is another useful approach that will help identify related organizations and sources of funding from which you can request assistance.

Q: What are the highest priorities when attempting to rescue a collection during an actual disaster?

A: Personal safety is always the highest priority. Once it has been confirmed that it is safe to work in and around the buildings, activities to prevent further damage and rescue materials can begin. Wet materials are given the highest priority for rescue. Care is especially necessary after large earthquakes, which are often followed by aftershocks that could cause further damage to buildings and facilities. If feasible, protect collections or move them to a safer place before a typhoon, a flood, or other anticipated disaster arrives. Also, please remember the importance of keeping a record of the disaster situation and the initial response.

Q: What is the most important thing in treatment of water-damaged materials?

A: Wet materials are likely to start to develop mould within 48 hours, so take quick action with that in mind. After measures to prevent further damage are in place, the next priority is to dry the wet materials. Determine priorities according to the size of the disaster and the type of materials. For example, it is sometimes possible to freeze paper documents for a while in order to stabilize their condition and gain time until it is possible to undertake a full-scale repair. Personnel performing the treatment should wear a mask, gloves, and other protective clothing, as necessary.

There is much information available on the Internet regarding the treatment of damaged paper materials as well as non-paper materials. See also A11.

- "What To Do When Collections Get Wet." Preservation Directorate, Library of Congress. http://www.loc.gov/preservation/emergprep/dry.html

Q: What points should be considered during recovery?

A: If your institution has a Business Continuity Plan (BCP), refer to it when deciding which services to restore first. Creating a concrete recovery plan and deciding your recovery procedures and conditions in advance will help ensure that things go smoothly. Estimate costs, consider available resources and external support, and prioritize what to do. Depending on the extent and severity of the damage, it might be difficult to repair all materials. Make decisions according to the value, necessity, and availability of alternative materials. If your institution does not have a conservator, seek advice from outside agencies and experts on the repair of damaged materials.

Q: What other resources about disaster preparedness are available?

A: The IFLA Manual has an extensive bibliography at the end. In addition, the following materials and sites are also useful.

Resources

Disaster management in general

- IFLA Disaster Preparedness and Planning: A Brief Manual
  https://www.ifla.org/publications/node/8068?og=32
- ICA Study n°11: Guidelines on Disaster Prevention and Control in Archives. Author(s):. Committee on Disaster Prevention. Date Added: 1 September 2011.
  https://www.ica.org/en/ica-study-n%C2%B011-guidelines-disaster-prevention-and-control-archives
- NEDCC. *Preservation Leaflet. 3.3: Emergency Planning.*
  https://www.nedcc.org/free-resources/preservation-leaflets/3.-emergency-management/3.3-emergency-planning
- ICCROM. Disaster Resilient Heritage. First Aid to Cultural Heritage. FAC Resources. https://www.iccrom.org/themes/disaster-resilient-heritage/first-aid-cultural-heritage-fac/fac-resources
  ICCROM manuals and links to reference information about emergency measures for cultural properties.

Risk assessment

- AIC(American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works) Risk prioritization worksheet. Walk-through checklist.
  https://www.culturalheritage.org/resources/emergencies/risk-evaluation-and-planning-program

Disaster plan

- Disaster Plans. CoOL (Conservation Online)
  http://cool.conservation-us.org/bytopic/disasters/plans/

- California Preservation Program. “Library Disaster Plan.
  https://calpreservation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/CPTF-Disaster-Plan-Generic-2003.doc

- NEDCC. Preservation Leaflet 3.4: Worksheet for Outlining a Disaster Plan.
  https://www.nedcc.org/free-resources/preservation-leaflets/3.-emergency-management/3.4-worksheet-for-outlining-a-disaster-plan

- Library of Congress. A Preservation Planning Tool: Tabletop Planning Scenarios, Level of Collections Emergency.
  http://www.loc.gov/preservation/emergprep/plan/scenariosII.pdf

Collection rescue manual

- Library of Congress. Preservation Directorate. “What To Do When Collections Get Wet.”
  http://www.loc.gov/preservation/emergprep/dry.html

- National Library of Australia. Collection Disaster Plan. Part 2: Disaster Actions.
  https://www.nla.gov.au/collection-disaster-plan/disaster-actions

  Section 8 is the procedure by disaster and Section 9 is the handling instructions by types of materials.

- NEDCC. Preservation Leaflet.
  https://www.nedcc.org/free-resources/preservation-leaflets/overview

  3.6 Emergency Salvage of Wet Books and Records

  3.7 Emergency Salvage of Wet Photographs

  3.8 Emergency Salvage of Moldy Books and Paper

  3.12 Freezing and Drying Wet Books and Records

- National Diet Library. “Drying wet materials.”
  http://www.ndl.go.jp/en/preservation/pdf/Drying_wet_materials.pdf

- Secretariat Office of the National Task Force for the Cultural Heritage Disaster Mitigation Network. “Manual for Cultural Heritage Disaster Risk Mitigation: Examples for Cleaning Soiled Paper Materials”.
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=55&v=lzmavZS7pu8