ARE YOU PREPARED?

A GUIDE TO EMERGENCY PLANNING

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for the
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A Guide To Emergency Planning

The Gerald R. Ford Conservation Center
The Nebraska State Historical Society
The Nebraska Museums Association
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I. INTRODUCTION

This manual has been prepared as an aid in the development of emergency preparedness plans for institutions of various sizes located in the state of Nebraska. This project has been made possible by a grant from the Woods Charitable Fund, Inc. through the Nebraska Museums Association.

The approach to emergency preparedness planning presented in this manual is a synthesis of the concerted work of many other museum professionals who have focused on the need for emergency planning in the museum environment. Many have written excellent plans and shared them; many have prepared manuals and source books brimming with superb lists, charts, and procedures. This manual will present the fundamental underpinnings through which much of the available emergency response-related material can be organized and used.

The size and scope of an emergency plan should be tailored to the size and scope of the institution and the collection it will protect. Smaller institutions can simplify and shorten many sections for their plans; larger institutions may need to do the reverse. However, the basic plan format should be effective in any length and detail and for any size institution.

As we all know, the preparation of an emergency plan is a complex and critically important task for an institution charged with the preservation and protection of cultural resources. It takes time and a great deal of energy to prepare a good and effective plan. It cannot be done in one or two days. Parts of the plan can be implemented and, as time goes by, improvements and additions can be made. A basic plan can be drawn up fairly quickly and can be fleshed out in stages. The sample forms, checklists, and other items in this manual can be copied directly, transformed into institutional formats, or altered for specific needs. They serve as an excellent starting point and save time in the preparation of the emergency plan.

WHAT IS AN EMERGENCY?

An emergency is an event that interrupts normal operations. It is unplanned and unpredictable. An emergency introduces a threat to life, health or property. It requires immediate response and administrative decision-making. Emergencies focus media and public attention on an institution and its collections.

1. Interrupts normal operations
2. Is unplanned and unpredictable
3. Introduces a threat to life, health, or property
4. Requires immediate response and decision-making
5. Focuses media and public attention on an institution

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT WAYS AN EMERGENCY CAN OCCUR?

Emergencies can be of a major scale, as in the case of a tornado, or of a minor scale, as in the case of a leak in a water pipe. They can be generalized, as in the case of an earthquake, or they can be localized to one room or one small area, as in the case of a roof leak or drip pan overflow. Emergencies can come with prior notice, as in the case of a major storm, or they can be completely spontaneous, as in the case of an explosion.

1. Major vs. minor
2. Generalized vs. localized
3. With prior notice vs. spontaneous

WHAT ARE THE MAIN SOURCES OF EMERGENCIES?

Weather is often a primary source of emergencies. Storms, rain, and wind are probably the major sources of damage to collections and structures. Severe weather, such as tornadoes, or hurricanes along the coast, can cause major damage. Snow and ice cause significant damage, as does freezing in the winter months.

Flooding and leaks that result from many causes probably rank second as a source of damage to collections.

Power failure and other causes for the loss of heating and cooling systems are frequent and recurrent sources of problems for the historical society, library, or museum.

Accidents like staff or visitor falls, judgment errors in routine activities, chemical spills, and automobile crashes, cause damage to collections.

Malfunctions of heating, cooling, and ventilating equipment cause water leaks, flooding, fires, gas leaks, explosions, and long-term power failure.

Crimes, including vandalism, theft, terrorism, and civil unrest are also sources of emergencies.

HOW DO PEOPLE RESPOND IN EMERGENCIES?

People react in very predictable ways to the stress of an emergency situation. They sense a feeling of urgency and the need to make decisions and react quickly. They tend to overreact and find that they cannot "think straight." There is a sense of fear and anxiety that can be debilitating. Many people lose the ability to exercise clear and effective judgment.

1. Feeling of urgency
2. Need to make decisions and react quickly
3. Tendency to overreact
4. Feeling that one can't "think straight"
5. Sense of fear and anxiety
6. Loss of the ability to exercise clear and effective judgment

HOW SHOULD PEOPLE RESPOND IN EMERGENCIES?

Ideally, one would like to see a rational and calm response to an emergency situation. The response should be in cooperation with others. It should follow an established plan.

1. With rational and calm actions
2. In cooperation with others
3. Following an established plan

Considering the difference between the way we would prefer to see people behave and the way we are likely to see people behave in an emergency, we must try in every way possible to produce conditions where the best response is achieved with the staff and volunteers available. The best response can only happen when there is an **effective plan**, **well-trained staff**, adequate **supplies and equipment,** and the opportunity to **practice**.

II. BEFORE YOU WRITE YOUR EMERGENCY PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The Emergency Plan should meet a number of important needs. Its objective is **to prevent or minimize loss of life or property and maintain operations** for an institution. A good plan will be realistic, clear, and thorough so that it can address the broadest range of situations and possibilities. The plan should:

-- Establish a **chain of command** for decision-making
-- Establish procedures for **notification of staff** of the presence of an emergency
-- Evaluate and mitigate the effects of **potential risks**
-- Survey and prioritize **assets**
-- Indicate who should **assess emergency response needs** and how
-- Provide mechanisms to **prevent** certain kinds of damages
-- Define **procedures for staff response and recovery**
-- Provide essential, detailed information about **resources**
-- Establish emergency **training** activities and drills
-- Provide for periodic **plan evaluation** and updates
-- Provide mechanisms for the **return of normal operations**

An institutional emergency plan covers all responsibilities and procedures for every division and function, including safety and evacuation of the public and the staff, the protection and recovery of office functions, and the protection and recovery of the collection and other physical assets. As a result, the highest administrative officers of an institution must endorse and participate in developing the emergency plan. Representatives from all areas must be involved in the development and implementation of the plan.

A number of steps must be completed before an effective plan can be written. These include a risk evaluation, a vulnerability evaluation, a physical asset evaluation, and a staffing evaluation. Before a plan can be assembled, important information about the types of dangers possible, the likelihood that they will affect your institution, and the availability of staff to assist in an emergency must be gathered.

THE RISK EVALUATION

A risk evaluation involves listing all the potential types of emergency situations that could affect your collection. The list below illustrates a number of these types.

EMERGENCY TYPES

AVALANCHE
DROUGHT
FLOOD
TROPICAL STORM
SUBSIDENCE
TSUNAMI
WILDFIRE
POWER FAILURE
RADIOLOGIC SPILL
COMPUTER FAILURE
CHEMICAL ACCIDENT
MISSILE ATTACK
CIVIL DISORDER
TERRORISM
THEFT
LEAK
HIGH OR LOW RH
METEOR IMPACT
PHYSICAL ASSAULT
GOPHERS, SNAKES
DAM FAILURE
EARTHQUAKE
HURRICANE
LANDSLIDE
TORNADO
VOLCANO
SEVERE WINTER STORM
RADIOLOGIC ACCIDENT
STRUCTURAL FIRE
TRANSPORT ACCIDENT
CHEMICAL SPILL
CHEM/BIO ATTACK
NUCLEAR ATTACK
VANDALISM
EXPLOSION
VISITOR/STAFF ACCIDENT
HVAC INTERRUPTION
SONIC BOOM
FOREST OR GRASS FIRE
TUMBLEWEED DEPOSITION

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS IN EMERGENCIES

The following list indicates a number of contributing factors that can make an emergency much more serious than it might be otherwise. For example, a serious storm may not be a major threat to a collection housed in a new, purpose-built storage facility, but it would be serious for a collection housed in a temporary

storage location in a trailer or an unsound shed or barn. The following factors influence the relative risk of a potential emergency.

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

BUILDING TYPE
BUILDING CONDITION
SITE LOCATION
SITE LAYOUT
SITE FEATURES
CLIMATIC VARIABILITY
CLIMATIC EXTREMES
STATE OF MAINTENANCE OF THE BUILDING
COLLECTION TYPES
STATE OF CONSERVATION OF COLLECTIONS
SIZE OF STAFF
TRAINING AND PREPARATION OF STAFF

THE VULNERABILITY EVALUATION

A vulnerability evaluation is a tool by which one can rank the list of emergency types for the actual potential for each type to affect your specific institution and collection.

In Nebraska, for example, there is little likelihood that a hurricane poses any real threat. Avalanches are rare, if they occur at all. There is a moderate to severe risk of a drought. There is a moderate risk for the occurrence of an earthquake and very little risk for a landslide. Nebraska is listed as having seven unsafe dams and a small risk of flooding due to the failure of water control systems, but a significant risk of river and creek flooding. Nebraska has one of the highest risks for tornadoes in the United States and no risk of ever being affected by a tsunami! Nebraska has a moderate number of small wildfires each year. There are two nuclear power reactor sites in the state and a minor number of railroad accidents each year.

VULNERABILITY EVALUATION

TYPE OF EMERGENCY	PROBABILITY	IMPACT			RESOURCES		TOTAL
	OCCURRENCE	HUMAN	PROPERTY	INCOME	INTERNAL	EXTERNAL	

RANK 5 AS THE HIGHEST AND 1 AS THE LOWEST. THE LOWER THE SCORE THE LESS THE VULNERABILITY.

In reality, it is probable that the most significant cumulative damages to collections and cultural institutions will be due to minor leaks and floods from mundane problems like plumbing backups, HVAC overflows, roof leaks, and possibly less mundane problems like tornadoes and winter storms.

For Nebraska, the lists of potential emergency types can be reduced to a handful of realistic emergencies that might affect your cultural institution.

THE PHYSICAL ASSET EVALUATION

STRUCTURES

To evaluate the potential risks to a specific building, one must assess the building itself and the collection within. An assessment can be done using the standard facility report format developed by the AAM Registrars Committee. The AAM Standard Facility Report includes the basic information about the type and condition of a structure. With the addition of a facilities conservation assessment or a maintenance review and long-range plan, enough information will be gathered to determine if any aspects of the structure itself will contribute to or mitigate the effects of an emergency. (The AAM Standard Facility Report publication can be acquired by contacting the American Association of Museums, Technical Information Service. A flier that explains how to obtain the publication can be found in the back pocket of the manual for your reference.)

THE CONSERVATION ASSESSMENT

The Conservation Assessment is a tool designed to help institutions learn about their current ability to offer collection care and to meet current professional conservation standards. The assessment offers prioritized recommendations for long and short term collections care and forms the baseline information for the development of a long-term conservation plan.

The assessment is an overall report on the policies, practices, and conditions within an institution that impact collection survival, including the following eight areas:

1. General information about the site and collection
2. Staffing for collection care

3. Sites and structures at the site
4. Climate control and environment at the site
    - Temperature/relative humidity
    - Pollutants and particulates
    - Illumination
    - Pest control
5. Collections and collections policies at the site
6. Exhibitions at the site
7. Storage of collections at the site
8. Emergency preparedness for the site

The assessment is conducted through a pre-visit questionnaire, an on-site visit, and the completion of a written report describing, summarizing, and prioritizing the findings of the investigation. The goal of the assessment is to assist and inform the on-site staff and to recommend priority actions to improve collection care and collection conservation.

These reports on the physical assets of the institution should also include the preparation of floor plans, illustrations of each room in the facility, and illustrations of the building layouts and the site. These floor plans will become an integral part of the Emergency Preparedness Plan where they will be used for planning, for training, and for emergency response. They should include notations for utility shut-off valves, fire extinguisher locations, emergency supply storage areas, and emergency lighting locations. Even the location of outlets and light switches could be helpful. (See the section regarding evacuation in the Appendix for an example of a floor plan.)

COLLECTIONS

The collections, as well as the structures, must be inventoried and prioritized. Most institutions have completed inventories of their collections for insurance purposes. If your institution does not have an inventory, it should be made the **number one institutional priority**.

Once the collections are inventoried, they should be prioritized for rescue in the event of an emergency. This aspect of emergency planning can be controversial. The existence of a list of the more valuable and significant objects in a collection and their location on a floor plan could be the perfect tools for a thief to use to select targets for theft.

Even more dangerous to a collection is the application of colored stickers or other markers to indicate value and significance in a group of objects. The stickers themselves cause irreversible damage to the objects and also serve as beacons, even for a casual burglar who might find his way into your museum.

Collection inventories and prioritized lists of objects in a museum or room are necessary tools for the rescue of objects during and after an emergency. They should be prepared, but distributed only to a restricted group of museum employees. Copies can be made and kept in a secure location until they are needed for distribution to a salvage team, for example.

COLLECTION RESCUE AND SALVAGE FACTORS

The following is a list of factors to consider in establishing priorities for the rescue and salvage of collection materials. Each site must determine which are most important and which should be used for each collection.

Importance (to the collection, museum, region)
Monetary value (by appraisal)
Rarity (ability to be replaced)
Vulnerability: (Most vulnerable to least vulnerable)

- Paper, books, parchment
- Textiles
- Leather, ivory, shell
- Mixed materials
- Paintings
- Wood, furniture
- Photographs, film
- Porous stone and ceramics
- Sound and video recordings
- Glass and non-porous ceramics
- Metals

Ability to Be Protected (size, outdoor)
Popularity (frequency of request)
Condition (least or most damaged)

CAN ANYTHING BE DONE TO PREVENT AN EMERGENCY?

Evaluation of the condition of structures and rooms can indicate areas where improvements to the facility can reduce potential emergency risks. A long-range schedule of improvements can be prepared that will reduce or eliminate potential risks and vulnerabilities of a structure to emergencies.

If it is discovered that the museum structure has an aging and deteriorating roof, for example, then the effects of severe weather, high wind, or extensive rain will be a more serious concern than if the roof were functional and in good condition. Another example might be the need to grade exterior landscaping to divert rain and flood waters away from a structure. These improvements can provide a major reduction in the potential for disaster at a site and should be incorporated into a maintenance schedule as soon as possible and feasible.

Evaluation of the condition and proper storage and display of the collection may suggest improvements in collection management that might help prevent damage and protect objects during emergencies. For example, proper storage housings can keep dust, debris, and sometimes even water from leaks and floods away from the objects. Keeping all objects that are in storage and on exhibition at least four inches off the floor can protect them from water damage from leaks and flood waters.

Once the structures and collections have been evaluated and the major potential sources of risk for your specific site and collection have been established, you can determine which risks can be eliminated through changes or improvements to the structure or the collection circumstances and which risks must be addressed in the emergency planning process. This step can be very effective in limiting the number of emergency types that your plan must cover and in eliminating the risks of some emergency types entirely. The risks that remain to be covered by your plan can be addressed in prevention planning (those things you do before an emergency occurs to protect assets) and in response and recovery planning (those things you do during and after an emergency to protect assets).

PREVENTION AND HAZARD CHECKLIST

The following checklist can be used as a reminder during maintenance, hazard, and prevention analysis of your site. Information about each area can indicate hazards, present maintenance problems, or indicate areas where potential emergencies can be prevented through corrective measures. Also refer to the CCI Note 14/2 inserted into the back pocket of the manual.

THE SITE:
Access: roads, bridges, size, condition, height restrictions
Location: isolated, neighbors, adjacent properties
Grading and waterways: flood plain, near water sources
Walkways: material, loose, driveways, parking areas
Other:

THE BUILDING(S):
Landscaping: plantings, trees, railings, fences
Drainage patterns:
Building type:
Building age and condition:
Foundation type, basement:
Roof type: condition
Chimneys: capped, leaks
Skylights: windows, type of doors
Porches: covered walks
Plumbing type: age, condition
Electrical system type: age, condition
HVAC system: type, age, condition
HVAC monitoring: frequency, type
Fire detection and suppression systems: type, age, inspections
Security system: type, age, inspection
Other:

HOUSEKEEPING:
Level of cleanliness: frequency of cleaning, trash removed daily
Supplies safely stored:
Regular inspection of every room:
Integrated pest management program:
Other:

STORAGE:
Shelving type: braced
Covered storage: open storage
4-6" off floor:
Duplicate sets of records: off site, inventory, insurance records
Proper museum enclosures: housings, boxes
Other:

EXHIBITION:
Covered: enclosed cases
Open exhibits: vignettes, period rooms
Other:

INSURANCE:
Policies: building, site, collections, coverage
Inventory: appraisal
Other:

SAFETY PROGRAMS:
Emergency lighting:
Sirens: audible alarms
First aid supplies:
Cut-off switches: boiler, electrical, water, gas
Training: CPR, fire extinguisher use
Other:

THE STAFFING EVALUATION

The staff at a historical society, library, or museum constitutes the single most significant resource available to prevent, contain, and mitigate the effects of an emergency. In preparing to write a plan, everyone who would be considered appropriate to assist in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from a disaster should be listed. Such individuals may not be limited to staff, but may include volunteers, neighbors, and nearby museum personnel. People listed will need to fulfill specific duties, usually assigned as follows:

EMERGENCY ROLES FOR SMALL INSTITUTIONS FOR **MINOR EVENTS**

1. THE EMERGENCY PLAN ADMINISTRATOR

The Emergency Plan Administrator is the main person responsible for developing, writing, implementing, and updating the Emergency Plan. The Administrator is also responsible for directing all operations before and during an emergency. All efforts should be coordinated through this person. The Administrator is often the person who is second in command at the institution or someone of administrative rank who is completely familiar with the plan.

2. THE TEAM LEADER(S)

The Team Leader(s), in minor-scale events, will assess the emergency and determine the type of response needed; preparation for a pending minor emergency or recovery of objects and functions during and after a minor emergency. If more than one team is involved, the Administrator will coordinate the actions of the teams, with all Team Leaders reporting to the Administrator. The Team Leader is responsible for directing the activities of a specific team assigned to a specific part of the institution, as the team performs its duties in responding to an emergency.

3. TEAM MEMBERS

The Team Members are trained staff, assigned to a specific team, that will respond to events in a particular, predetermined area. Team Members will develop and execute preparation and recovery procedures for specific types of danger and types of materials or objects.

EMERGENCY ROLES FOR LARGER INSTITUTIONS
FOR **MAJOR EMERGENCIES**

1. THE EMERGENCY PLAN ADMINISTRATOR

The Emergency Plan Administrator is the main person responsible for developing, writing, implementing, and updating the Emergency Plan. The Administrator is also responsible for directing all operations before and during an emergency. All efforts should be coordinated through this person. The Administrator is often the person who is second in command at the institution or someone of administrative rank who is completely familiar with the Plan.

2. THE EMERGENCY ASSESSOR

This person is primarily responsible for conducting the assessment of the emergency situation to :

-- gather information about the emergency
-- determine the appropriate type of response
-- to act as the liaison with the insurance companies

This person will be trained to identify and assess the potential threat represented by the emergency and to determine how the institution should respond. The Assessor may appoint a person to record information and take photos and/or videotape of the emergency.

3. THE SAFETY, SECURITY, AND FACILITY MANAGER

This Manager will establish the emergency headquarters, oversee personal safety, security, and the facilities, and act as the liaison with the civil authorities and the fire and police departments. The Manager will ensure first aid, food, and shelter for the response participants.

4. THE MEDIA LIAISON

The Media Liaison is responsible for all incoming and outgoing communications with the print and broadcast media relating to the emergency. All media inquiries and comments will be handled by this person. The Liaison will also provide a "bulletin board" for the exchange of information and messages between work groups.

5. THE COLLECTION(S) COORDINATOR

The Coordinator is responsible for coordinating the activities of the response teams in protecting, salvaging, recovering, and restoring collection items affected by the emergency. This person will report to the Administrator and will work closely with the Assessor, the Security, Safety, and Facility Manager, and the Media Liaison.

6. THE TEAM LEADER(S)

The Team Leader is responsible for directing the activities of a specific team assigned to a specific part of the institution. The Leader will direct the response activities of the team members. The Team Leader(s), in minor emergencies, will assess the emergency and determine the type of response needed, whether that be preparation for a pending minor emergency or recovery of objects and functions during and after a minor emergency. (During a major emergency, this function will be completed by the Assessor.) If more than one team is involved in a minor emergency, the Collections Coordinator will coordinate the actions of the teams with all Team Leaders reporting to the Coordinator.

7. TEAM MEMBERS

The Team Members are trained staff assigned to a specific team that will respond to events in a particular predetermined area. Team Members will develop and execute preparation and recovery procedures for specific types of danger and types of materials or objects.

By comparing the list of people available to assist with the list of duties that need to be performed, it should be possible to assign the duties to specific individuals. Each person should have a backup assigned to perform his/her duties if that person is not present during the emergency. Team Leaders and Team Members can be assigned specific areas determined by studying the floor plans and site maps assembled during the evaluation of physical assets. Often much shuffling and consternation occurs while trying to assign duties and teams.

It is important to remember that most often in an emergency, the people who are present are the ones who will be involved in the response. In major emergencies, the telephone system is usually out of order, making elaborately orchestrated telephone calling trees useless. Cellular phones and two-way radios help alleviate this problem, but the best solution is to train as many people as possible to understand the Emergency Plan and be able to perform a variety of duties.

AVAILABLE EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PERSONNEL

NAME	RELATIONSHIP TO MUSEUM POSITION/TITLE	SPECIALTY	WORK/PHYSICAL RESTRICTIONS	POTENTIAL ROLES

ASSIGNED EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PERSONNEL

NAME	RELATIONSHIP TO MUSEUM POSITION/TITLE	SPECIALTY	ASSIGNED ROLES	DUTIES RESPONSIBILITIES

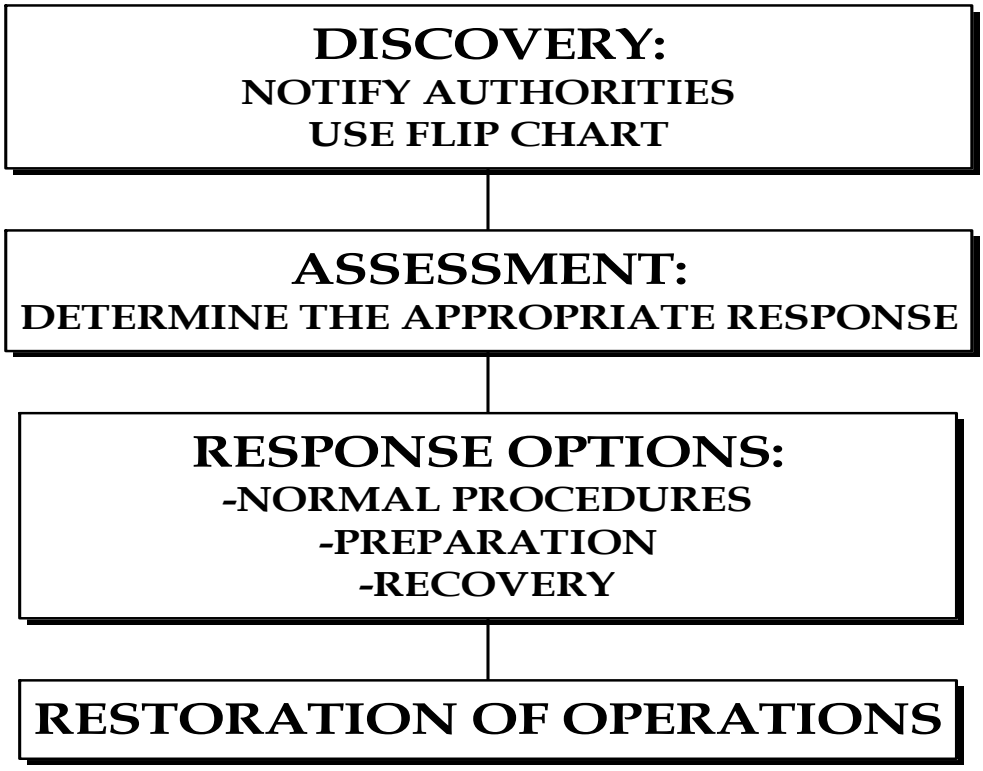
III. WRITING YOUR EMERGENCY PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The plan template can be found below. It describes a sequence of stages and actions that should be carried out from the onset of an emergency through the complete return to normal conditions.

The four stages of the plan will be discussed briefly in the next section.

THE PLAN FORMAT



1. DISCOVERY OF AN EMERGENCY

Anyone can discover the onset of an emergency, even people who are not affiliated with your institution. A tourist driving by a small historical society can discover a emergency and call the police or fire department. A volunteer reporting for work can notice the smell of a natural gas leak. Therefore, clear, readily available instructions about what to do when a potential emergency is discovered must be on hand.

Many institutions have prepared flip charts or spiral bound handouts that explain who to call and what to do if an emergency is found. An example has been included on the following pages. An early, well-designed flip chart packet was prepared by the Getty Museum in California, and many others have been prepared since then for other institutions.

The discovery procedure "tool," or flip chart chosen for your museum, historic house, or library should best reflect your needs and might take several forms. All should include easy-to-locate instructions for what to do in the event of different kinds of emergencies, from bomb threats to the discovery of a fire. Each page of the discovery flip chart should give a clear sequence of instructions, including the telephone numbers, cellular phone numbers, radio dispatch numbers, and beeper numbers of the primary security and safety operators covering your site. The point of contact may be the security office in a large museum or the police department for a small, local library. The pages should also give instructions in the fundamental steps that might be taken in a specific emergency, with personal safety the number one priority. Please review the sample provided and determine how best to adapt it for your institution.

METZGER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Director: Phone:

Police/Fire/Rescue: Phone:

LEAKS, FLOODING, WATER DAMAGE

FIRE

MEDICAL EMERGENCY/ACCIDENT

TORNADO

FLOOR PLAN AND MAP

PHONE NUMBERS

Fire

1. Remain calm.

2. Notify others present in the building of the danger.

3. Call 911.

4. If the fire is small and you have had fire extinguisher training, use a fire extinguisher to put out the fire.

5. Evacuate the building, assemble in a safe location, and await Fire Department staff.

6. Do not reenter the building or attempt to save any material possessions.

FIRE

MEDICAL EMERGENCY/ACCIDENT

TORNADO

FLOOR PLAN AND MAP

PHONE NUMBERS

TORNADO

1. Upon hearing the tornado sirens or a weather report of an tornado warning, go to the central hallway, basement, or interior bathroom for shelter.

2. Remain under a table, counter, or other protective covering until given the “all clear” siren or you are directed to come out by civil authorities.

3. If outdoors or in a vehicle, find the lowest ditch or depression in the ground and lay flat, face down, covering your head with your arms.

TORNADO

FLOOR PLAN AND MAP

PHONE NUMBERS

PHONE NUMBERS

Museum Director:

Museum Maintenance:

Fire Department:

Police Department:

Local Utilities:
- Gas:
- Electric:
- Water:
- Sewer:

Local Newspaper/Reporter:

Museum Staff, Volunteers:

Nearest Neighbor:

Weather:

Medical Emergency Clinic/Doctor:

County Extension Agent:

PHONE NUMBERS

2. ASSESSMENT OF THE EMERGENCY

The assessment phase of an emergency can vary from a few seconds to many weeks or even months. If the emergency is minor, as in the case of a visitor knocking over a table of objects, the assessment may simply involve acknowledgment of the accident and replacement of the table and objects in their proper location. Broken objects may be removed for conservation at a later time. If the emergency is major, as in the case of a large explosion or a major storm, assessment of the emergency may continue for weeks and months until all the effects of the emergency are known.

The most important purpose of the emergency assessment is to determine the type of response needed to deal with the problem. Is it so minor that the staff present can resolve the situation with no losses? Is it more threatening? Does a team leader need to be called? Should an emergency team actually be assembled? Is this a full-fledged emergency requiring the plan administrator and the institutional administration to authorize expenditures and staff response teams?

In order to answer these questions, information must be gathered and assessed. The larger the problem, the more complex and difficult the assessment. The assessor must also be in contact with any insurance carriers that hold insurance policies for the museum. In the event of a minor problem, normal insurance procedures can be followed. In a major emergency, the insurance company may wish you to follow special procedures. Documentation of the events through photography, videotape, written reports, and sketches is essential. Many institutions have learned that backup, duplicate documentation is needed in the event that one set or type of documentation is lost or does not provide the necessary information.

As a result, there are two different mechanisms built into this emergency plan template to deal with this variability in assessment activity. In minor emergencies, many different people can assess the situation (the discoverer, a team leader, other knowledgeable staff, or even local civil authorities). In larger emergencies or in major disasters a trained, authorized assessor is needed. The results of the assessment will be the selection of a course of action to deal with the problem at hand.

ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

The following list offers suggested questions to be answered during the assessment of an emergency. The actual questions used will be determined by the size and extent of a disaster. This checklist should serve as a starting point for developing or conducting an assessment.

PERSONNEL SAFETY NEEDS

Is the safety of any person threatened
Are there potential sources of personal harm
Is the site or location secured from further disaster

TYPE OF EMERGENCY

Type? Fire, water damage, tornado
Major, minor
Regional? Localized
Severity of damage and loss
Duration of emergency conditions
Potential for ongoing damages

SIZE

How many buildings or sites are involved
How many rooms are involved
What percentage of the collection is involved

COLLECTION

How many objects are involved
What kinds of objects are affected
What materials are involved
What is the priority of the objects involved
What levels of vulnerability do the involved objects exhibit
Value of objects involved

RESPONSE FACTORS

Number of people needed for response
Kind and amount of supplies needed
Special equipment needed
Off-site storage or staging needed
Is there someone to document the damage immediately
Is there a camera or a video camera available

3. RESPONSE TO AN EMERGENCY

Response to an emergency can be of three types:

- ♂ FOLLOW NORMAL PROCEDURES
- ♂ PREPARE FOR THE EMERGENCY
- ♂ RECOVER OBJECTS AND OTHER ASSETS

Each emergency will require one or more of these types of response. Each type of response is discussed in the following sections. Where appropriate, sample procedures are included that can be used in developing your own specific plan.

A. NORMAL OPERATING PROCEDURES

Normal operating procedures should be written to address small problems that occur during the work day. They may be as simple as a procedure to notify the director and resolve the problem right away. In a larger institution, the registrar's office, the preservation office, or the conservation office may be notified and their staff may take care of the problem. Each institution will have a different procedure. It is important to write down the proper steps and make sure that staff are familiar with the procedures.

AN EXAMPLE OF NORMAL DAILY PROCEDURES FOR MINOR EMERGENCIES

The following is an example of procedures developed to accommodate a minor emergency discovered during the ordinary work day. Procedures like these, that are already in use, should be integrated into the emergency preparedness plan.

Emergency Procedures

1. The employee or volunteer who discovers a problem should notify the person responsible for security. (Call _____). The responsible person will take immediate appropriate action, if possible (such as shutting off the water supply to a leak) and will then notify the museum director.

2. For circumstances that involve collection objects, the person responsible for security will take immediate action and then notify the curator (Call_____) of the problem. No objects will be handled without the curator's express permission unless absolutely necessary for personal and collection protection.

3. After any event has occurred, an incident report must be completed and filed with the museum director.

Simple procedures like these should suffice for minor emergencies that occur during the normal operation of your museum.

B. PREPARATION FOR AN EMERGENCY

If the emergency comes with prior warning, as in the case of a severe storm or severe winter weather, staff should be instructed to activate their "preparation plans." A preparation plan should be written for every room of the museum or institution and might include some of the following instructions:

Unplug all electrical appliances
Cover computer equipment with plastic covers
Cover every object with plastic
Return all collection material to a safe storage location
Remove fragile objects from table surfaces
Move furniture away from windows
Cover objects on shelving with plastic sheeting
Close all shutters
Fasten plywood over each window
Raise all items at least four inches off the floor
Move objects away from fireplace opening

These preparation plans would be used by specific teams to secure a facility prior to a storm, power outage, or other anticipated problem. Each team leader and all team members can write the preparation plans for their assigned area. Each office in an institution can prepare its own list of preventive measures. Thought should be given to the protection of electronic data and software. Staff can be assigned to back up computers and take the backup disks or tapes to a safe location. All the individual plans should be combined and included as an essential part of the Emergency Preparedness Plan.

SAMPLE PREPARATION PLAN FOR A ROOM IN A HISTORIC HOUSE

WHEN NOTIFIED OF AN IMPENDING EMERGENCY SUCH AS A SEVERE WINTER STORM:

- ♂ NOTIFY ALL STAFF AND CALL IN EXTRA HANDS IF NEEDED
- ♂ INSTALL PLYWOOD COVERS OVER EXTERIOR OF THREE LARGE WINDOWS
- ♂ CLOSE SHUTTERS ON OUTSIDE OF SMALL WINDOW
- ♂ REMOVE SMALL OBJECTS FROM TABLE IN FRONT OF LARGE WINDOW
- ♂ MOVE SOFA AWAY FROM WINDOW AND COVER SOFA WITH PLASTIC SHEETING
- ♂ PLACE SMALL ITEMS ON DRESSER IN LINED TOP DRAWER, PAD WITH TISSUE FROM EMERGENCY SUPPLY BOX
- ♂ LIFT EDGES OF BED LINENS OFF FLOOR AND FOLD, OVER TISSUE, ON TO THE TOP OF THE BED
- ♂ REMOVE ANDIRONS FROM FIREPLACE AND PUT LARGE BUCKET IN FIRE PLACE TO CATCH ANY LEAKS OR DRIPS FROM THE CHIMNEY
- ♂ UNPLUG ALL ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT SUCH AS LAMPS, RECORDER, AND COMPUTER
- ♂ COVER THE AUDIO EQUIPMENT WITH PLASTIC SHEETING
- ♂ CALL NEIGHBOR AND DETERMINE IF HE WILL BE HOME DURING THE PERIOD OF SEVERE WEATHER. ASK HIM TO INFORM YOU OF ANY APPARENT DAMAGE
- ♂ LEAVE NAMES AND PHONE NUMBERS OF MUSEUM PERSONNEL ON EXTERIOR OF FRONT AND REAR DOORS
- ♂ GO HOME AND PREPARE YOUR OWN HOME FOR THE SEVERE WEATHER

C. RECOVERY OF OBJECTS AND OTHER ASSETS

If the emergency is serious or causes significant damage to the institution, the assessor for the emergency should call out the team leaders and teams to recover items. The team leaders and members should have clear instructions for how to salvage or rescue objects of different materials that have been damaged by different types of emergencies.

There are many versions of recovery procedures. Some are presented as tables or charts, some as flip-charts, and some are written in text form with labeled dividers. You can review the available materials from a number of sources to assist you in developing your own procedures. You should have a conservator review your procedures before you adopt them. The following two pages of response charts can be used as the basis for your procedures. It might help to laminate a copy in plastic for ready reference in an emergency. The procedures in the chart are an assemblage of instructions that have been written by many conservators with experience in other institutions during many disasters, large and small.

Procedures may need to be altered or edited to fit the size of your institution and the abilities and expertise of your staff. It would be a good idea to have the procedures you select reviewed by a conservator before your plan is finalized. It would be advisable to have the entire plan reviewed by a conservator and another specialist in emergency response activity.

MOLD

The presence of active or inactive mold in a museum collection is a serious matter. Mold can cause weakening and staining of collection materials and can cause significant health problems for users of the collection and museum staff.

Mold spores are present in the air at all times. They require certain environmental conditions to germinate or grow on an object surface. They metabolize many organic materials such as protein and cellulose-based glues,

cellulose fibers in paper and textiles, and dust. Mold will grow on these materials when ¬ the relative humidity is above 60-65%, - the air is still, and ® the area is dark. If these conditions are met, mold will actively grow on collection materials. The growths will consume nutrients from the collection and surrounding materials and will often discolor them with purple, black and other colored staining.

Equally important, the mold can be a serious health threat to people. Some molds can cause illness and even death. Therefore, a mycologist should be consulted to determine the type of molds present and their toxicity. Your local university or extension agent can help you find a mycologist. After the mold type is known, you can take suitable precautions to protect yourself. Gloves, lab coats, and respirators can be used. An excellent resource about mold in your collection and how to get rid of it is Technical Series No. 1 "Mold: Managing a Mold Invasion: Guidelines for Disaster Response" published by the CCAHA in Philadelphia. This technical bulletin is a must for anyone with active, inactive or potential mold problems. A copy of this bulletin has been inserted into the back pocket of this manual.

RECOVERY PROCEDURES FOR WET COLLECTIONS

MATERIAL	FIRE RELATED DAMAGE	SALT WATER DAMAGE	FRESH WATER DAMAGE	MOLD [$]
TEXTILES	Do not attempt to clean. Handle as little as possible. Air or freeze dry.	Rinse to remove salts and sand and grit. Air or freeze dry.	Rinse to remove mud and debris. Air or freeze dry.	Air or freeze dry. Arrange for vacuuming through a screen as soon as dry. May need to use a soft brush to dislodge mold.
PAINTINGS	Air dry.	If saturated, rinse. Air dry.	Air dry.	Air dry and vacuum without contacting surface with attachments.
NON-POROUS CERAMICS, GLASS, STONE	Consult a conservator to see if cleaning with ethanol is an option. Air dry.	Rinse to remove salts, sand and grit. Handle as little as possible. Air dry.	Rinse to remove mud and debris. Air dry.	After dry, vacuum and wipe with a soft cloth.
POROUS STONE CERAMICS	If saturated, contact a conservator and keep wet. Otherwise, air dry.	Rinse to remove salts and sand. Air dry.	Rinse to remove mud and debris. Air dry.	Air dry, vacuum and wipe with a soft cloth. Use a soft brush to dislodge mold.
IRON	*Check for a coating. Air dry as soon as possible.	*Check for a coating. Air dry as soon as possible.	*Check for a coating. Air dry as soon as possible.	*Check for a coating. Air dry and vacuum. Wipe with a soft cloth. Use a soft brush to dislodge mold.
METALS	*Check for a coating. Consult a conservator to see if cleaning with ethanol is an option. Air dry as soon as possible.	*Check for a coating. Rinse to remove salts and sand. Air dry as soon as possible.	*Check for a coating. Rinse to remove mud and debris. Air dry as soon as possible.	*Check for a coating. Air dry and vacuum. Wipe with a soft cloth. Use a soft brush to dislodge mold.
BONE, HORN, IVORY	Air dry slowly.	Rinse to remove salt and sand. Air dry slowly.	Rinse to remove mud and debris. Air dry slowly.	Air dry. Vacuum. Use a soft brush to dislodge mold.
LEATHER	Pad into shape. Air dry slowly.	Rinse to remove salt and sand. Pad into shape. Air dry slowly.	Rinse to remove mud and debris. Pad into shape. Air dry slowly.	Air dry. Vacuum. Use a soft brush to dislodge mold.
BASKETRY	Pad into shape. Air dry slowly.	Rinse to remove salt and sand. Pad into shape. Air dry slowly	Rinse to remove mud and debris. Pad to shape. Air dry slowly.	Air dry. Vacuum. Use a soft brush to dislodge mold.

Beware of repairs that may be weakened.
*If the metal is coated, air dry, and consult a conservator as soon as practical for treatment.
[$]Read instructions for safe mold mitigation. Wear protective equipment and clothing. Consult with a conservator before, during, and after recovery process.

RECOVERY PROCEDURES FOR WET COLLECTIONS

MATERIAL	FIRE RELATED DAMAGE	SALT WATER DAMAGE	FRESH WATER DAMAGE	MOLD *
PAINTED WOOD, LEATHER	Air dry slowly.	Air dry slowly.	Air dry slowly.	Consult a conservator.
FURNITURE	Leave object assembled. Air dry slowly.	Rinse to remove salt and sand. Leave assembled and air dry slowly.	Rinse to remove mud and debris. Leave assembled and air dry slowly.	Air dry. Vacuum. Wipe with a soft cloth or brush.
UPHOLSTERED FURNITURE	Remove separate cushions and parts. Air dry slowly.	Rinse to remove salt and sand. Remove separate cushions and parts and air dry slowly.	Rinse to remove mud and debris. Remove separate cushions and parts and air dry slowly.	Air dry. Vacuum through a screen. May need to use a soft cloth on wood or a brush on the fabric to dislodge mold.
PAINTED METAL	Air dry as soon as possible.	Air dry as soon as possible.	Air dry as soon as possible.	Consult a conservator.
BOOKS	Do not open. Air or freeze dry.	For soaked books: hold closed, rinse, and freeze dry. For damp books: stand on end, fan pages, close and weight when almost air dry.	For soaked books: hold closed, rinse, and freeze dry. For damp books: stand on end, fan pages, close and weight when almost air dry.	After dry, vacuum and brush all external surfaces.
PHOTOGRAPHS	Leave face-up and air dry.	Leave face-up and air dry.	Leave face-up and air dry.	Leave face-up and air dry. Contact a conservator to remove dry mold.
PAPERHH	Air or freeze dry.	Air or freeze dry.	Air of Freeze dry.	Air or freeze dry. Vacuum through screen. Use a soft brush to dislodge mold.
FILM, OTHER PLASTIC MEDIA	Air dry. May need to be re-washed.	Rinse to remove salt and sand. Air dry.	Rinse to remove sand and debris. Air dry.	Consult a conservator.

Beware of repairs that may be weakened.

*Read instructions included in manual for safe mold mitigation. Wear protective equipment and clothing. Consult with a conservator before, during, and after recovery process.

HHOther than pastels, charcoal and other friable media.

RECOVERY PROCEDURES FOR DRY COLLECTIONS

MATERIAL	FIRE RELATED PARTICULATES	BREAKAGE PHYSICAL DAMAGE	VANDALISM	MOLD *
TEXTILES	Vacuum through a screen. Consult a conservator.	Save as many parts as possible – even tiny fragments.	Minimize handling. Contact a conservator immediately. Do not attempt to clean the object.	Vacuum through a screen. May need to use a soft brush to dislodge mold.
PAINTINGS	Vacuum without touching any surfaces with vacuum attachment. Consult a conservator.	Lay face up. Save as many parts as possible – even tiny fragments and slivers.	Contact a conservator immediately. Do not attempt to clean the object.	Vacuum without contacting canvas or painting surface with vacuum attachments.
NON-POROUS CERAMICS, GLASS, STONE	Consult a conservator to see if cleaning with ethanol is an option. Otherwise, vacuum.	Save as many parts as possible – even tiny fragments and slivers.	Contact a conservator immediately. Do not attempt to clean the object.	Vacuum, wipe with a soft cloth.
POROUS STONE CERAMICS	Vacuum, consult with a conservator to see if cleaning with ethanol is an option.	Save as many parts as possible – even tiny fragments and slivers.	Contact a conservator immediately. Do not attempt to clean the object.	Vacuum, wipe with a soft cloth. Use a soft brush to dislodge mold.
IRON	Vacuum. Consult a conservator.	Save as many parts as possible – even tiny fragments.	Contact a conservator immediately. Do not attempt to clean the object.	Vacuum. Use a soft brush to dislodge mold.
METALS	Vacuum. Consult a conservator.	Save as many parts as possible – even tiny fragments.	Contact a conservator immediately. Do not attempt to clean the object.	Vacuum. Wipe with a soft cloth. Use a soft brush to dislodge mold.
BONE, HORN, IVORY	Vacuum. Consult a conservator.	Save as many parts as possible – even tiny fragments and slivers.	Contact a conservator immediately. Do not attempt to clean the object.	Vacuum, use a soft brush to dislodge mold.
LEATHER	Vacuum. Consult a conservator.	Save as many parts as possible – even tiny fragments.	Contact a conservator immediately. Do not attempt to clean the object.	Vacuum, use a soft brush to dislodge mold.
BASKETRY	Vacuum. Consult a conservator.	Save as many parts as possible – even tiny fragments.	Contact a conservator immediately. Do not attempt to clean the object.	Vacuum, use a soft brush to dislodge mold.

Beware of repairs that may be weakened.

*Read instructions for safe mold mitigation. Wear protective equipment and clothing. Consult with a conservator before, during and after recovery process.

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RECOVERY PROCEDURES FOR DRY COLLECTIONS

MATERIAL	FIRE RELATED PARTICULATES	BREAKAGE PHYSICAL DAMAGE	VANDALISM	MOLD *
PAINTED WOOD, PAINTED LEATHER	Put aside until a conservator can be contacted to examine the object. Do not dust or brush.	Watch for flaking. Save as many parts as possible – even tiny fragments and slivers.	Contact a conservator immediately. Do not attempt to clean the object.	Consult a conservator.
FURNITURE	Vacuum, use soft brush in nooks and crannies. Consult a conservator.	Save as many parts as possible – even tiny fragments and slivers.	Contact a conservator immediately. Do not attempt to clean the object.	Vacuum, wipe with a soft cloth or brush.
UPHOLSTERED FURNITURE	Vacuum. Consult a conservator.	Save as many parts as possible – even tiny fragments and slivers.	Contact a conservator immediately. Do not attempt to clean the object.	Vacuum through a screen. May need to use a soft cloth on wood or a brush on the fabric to dislodge mold.
PAINTED METAL	Put aside until a conservator can be contacted to examine the object. Do not attempt to clean the object.	Watch for flaking. Save as many parts as possible – even tiny fragments and slivers.	Contact a conservator immediately. Do not attempt to clean the object.	Consult a conservator.
BOOKS	Do not open. Vacuum exterior of book. Consult a conservator.	Save as many parts as possible – even tiny fragments and slivers.	Do not open books. Contact a conservator immediately. Do not attempt to clean the object.	Do not open books. Vacuum all exterior surfaces using a soft brush to dislodge mold.
PHOTOGRAPHS	Put aside until a conservator can be contacted to examine the objects.	Save as many parts as possible – even tiny fragments and slivers.	Contact a conservator immediately. Do not attempt to clean the object.	Consult a conservator.
PAPER	Put aside until a conservator can be contacted to examine the objects.	Save as many parts as possible – even tiny fragments and slivers.	Contact a conservator immediately. Do not attempt to clean the object.	Vacuum through a screen. May need to use a soft brush to dislodge mold.
FILM, OTHER PLASTIC MEDIA	Put objects aside until a conservator can be contacted to examine the objects.	Save as many parts as possible – even tiny fragments and slivers.	Contact a conservator immediately. Do not attempt to clean the object.	Consult a conservator.

Beware of repairs that may be weakened.
*Read instructions for safe mold mitigation. Wear protective equipment and clothing. Consult with a conservator before, during, and after the recovery process.
Other than pastels, charcoal, or other friable media.

4. THE RESTORATION OF NORMAL OPERATIONS

The final stage in emergency response involves the return of the institution to normal operating conditions. This stage may involve discussion with insurance carriers to determine the estimates of damage and the costs to replace, repair, or conserve items that have been damaged.

The restoration phase is usually the primary responsibility of the plan administrator, who will need the help and input of many other people. The conservator may need to estimate the costs to conserve collection objects. The facilities staff may need to estimate costs to repair damaged structures or utilities. The education or docent staffs may need to replace teaching materials and reschedule tours. The curators may need to replace or reinstall exhibitions. These activities can take months and may require bids, estimates, and the insurance carrier's involvement.

Meetings should be scheduled to debrief staff that participated in emergency response so that you can gather suggestions concerning parts of the plan that were effective and the parts that need to be altered or improved. Participants may suggest additional or different supplies or equipment that are needed. The Emergency Preparedness Plan should be revised and improved based on the debriefing.

Supply and equipment stocks should be refilled and replenished. Equipment must be cleaned and prepared for storage in emergency storage areas.

Finally, a report should be prepared to detail and summarize what happened and how the situation was handled. Final figures for staff time, materials costs and usage, and damage can be presented. A sample report format follows.

SAMPLE OUTLINE FOR AN EMERGENCY REPORT

I. Introduction: Describe the emergency, preparation, response, recovery, and restoration of normal operations in two succinct paragraphs.

II. The Event: Describe the emergency and include time of occurrence, duration, local or regional extent, and severity of effect. Include copies of news articles, photographs, and video footage, if available.

III. The Response: Include detailed descriptions of all responses to the emergency including staff and volunteer time expended, supplies and resources expended, equipment borrowed, purchased, and rented, and all other expenses for food, transportation, consultation, etc.

IV. The Damage: Include detailed accounts of all damage including personal injury and loss, collection and non-collection property damage, loss of business revenue, etc.

V. The Insurance: Include details of the insurance policy in effect at the time of the occurrence and the procedures requested by the insurance company for claims and documentation.

VI. The Restoration of Normal Operations: Include detailed information about all activities necessary to restore normal operations including recovery costs for collection treatment, replacement of losses to physical property, where possible, and any press or public relations costs.

VII. Evaluation of the Emergency Response: Include discussions and suggestions from all people involved in the response and recovery.

VIII. Evaluation of the Emergency Plan: List and implement all recommended changes and deletions or additions to the emergency plan and include a training schedule to incorporate the changes into the active plan.

IX. Tally of Total Costs: Prepare a simple tally of the costs of the emergency to the institution.

X. Conclusions: Include a summary of the event, response, recovery, and current status.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Preparation of your museum, library, historic house or collection for emergencies can be one of the most significant means by which to protect and preserve the cultural heritage of our country. A simple effective emergency plan, although complex and perhaps time consuming to produce, can provide the greatest single means to protect your unique and invaluable collections. We hope this manual will help you on your way to writing you own plan. The Nebraska Museums Association, the Nebraska State Historical Society, and the Gerald R. Ford Conservation Center remain committed to helping each of you prepare and implement your own emergency preparedness plans.

V. APPENDIX

The following sections contain samples and copies of forms, formats, and reference lists that have been assembled from many excellent references and sources addressing emergency planning and preparedness. These materials are included in the hopes that they can be modified for use at your institution.

- Emergency Phone Number and Address List
- Emergency Supply List
- Evacuation Preparation and Procedures
- Locational Guides
- Press Releases
- Incident Forms
- Maintenance Checklist
- Bibliography of Emergency Preparedness References

EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBER AND ADDRESS LIST

MUSEUM DIRECTOR

MUSEUM STAFF

MUSEUM VOLUNTEERS

NEIGHBORS

POLICE

FIRE DEPARTMENT

PUBLIC UTILITIES:
GAS
WATER
SEWER
ELECTRICITY
OTHER

DEPARTMENT OF ROADS

INSURANCE COMPANY, AGENT, AND POLICY NUMBER

NEAREST MEDICAL FACILITY

REPORTER/ NEWSPAPER/ RADIO

ANIMAL RESCUE

CONTRACTORS:
ROOFER
CARPENTER
PLUMBER
ELECTRICIAN
HVAC COMPANY

CONSERVATORS:
Gerald R. Ford Conservation Center
1326 South 32nd Street
Omaha, NE 68105
PHONE: 402.595.1180, FAX: 402.595.1178
E-Mail: grfcc@radiks.net

EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBER AND ADDRESS LIST (con.)

FEMA HEADQUARTERS

Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street, S. W.
Washington, D. C. 20472
202.646.2500

Regional Office
Region VIII Denver
303.235.1813

CIVIL DEFENSE

Nebraska Civil Defense Agency
National Guard Center
1300 Military Road
Lincoln, NE 68508-1090
402.473.1410

ARCHITECT

ENGINEER

EMERGENCY SUPPLY LIST

Supply caches for emergency use can be as extensive as you can allow. Most institutions do not have the resources to keep everything on hand, but it will help to know where to find these materials. Keep in mind that an emergency may affect your whole community and you may not get the supplies you need before they are sold out or have been given to others. Most materials needed can be purchased from local hardware stores, art stores, or grocery stores. The following list will get you started.

cellular phone
batteries
first aid kit
mops
plastic bags
paper towels
wet/dry vacuum
fans
rubber gloves
utility knife and blades
ladder
waterproof marking pens
staple gun and staples
rubber boots
camera and batteries
un-printed newsprint paper
clothes pins
emergency food and water
flashlights
radio
buckets/tubs
brooms
plastic sheeting
rags/towels
sump pump
sponges
hammer and nails
saw
rope/string
“plastic” paper
tapes
pencils
film
clothesline
scissors

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The Nebraska Museums Association

The mission of the Nebraska Museums Association is to create, foster, and promote interest in, advancement of, and appreciation of museums throughout Nebraska. Further, the Nebraska Museums Association is organized to increase and disseminate knowledge about the museum field and to encourage cooperation among museums and those interested in them.

To fulfill these obligations, the Nebraska Museums Association dedicates itself and its members to the following goals:

a) to improve and maintain communications among museums throughout Nebraska.
b) to promote professional standards and development for museums and their staffs.
c) to serve as a advocate to local, state, federal governmental, and other decision-making authorities on issues relating to Nebraska museums.
d) to promote the sharing of museum resources to benefit all Nebraskans.
e) to promote the understanding of Nebraska history, culture, and natural history through public education.
f) to promote joint marketing of Nebraska museums to enhance their image as family and travel attractions.
g) to disseminate information of importance to museums through production of a newsletter, holding of annual meetings, and other educational activities.
h) to cooperate with other professional organizations and associations both within and outside of the State of Nebraska.
i) to solicit and receive grants, contributions, and other property, to enter into contracts, to engage needed personnel and services, and to transfer, hold, and invest such real property as may be required to carry out the purposes of this association.

The membership of the Association is composed of individuals who are actively engaged in museum work on a professional or volunteer basis at non-profit institutions and educational agencies or who are interested in the fundamental functioning of museums.

The Emergency Preparedness Planning Project, underwritten by a grant from the Woods Charitable Fund, Inc., has involved a survey of emergency preparedness planning by Nebraska Museums, development of a emergency preparedness planning workbook which offers step-by-step instructions for creating a useable emergency plan, and a series of workshops offered in each region of the state. Every member of the association will receive a printed copy of the soon to be published planning guide, authored by Julie Reilly, Associate Director, Conservation Division, Nebraska State Historical Society. Future activities will include follow-up workshops related to specific emergency response and the development of regional repositories of supplies and materials available for use by museums when disaster strikes.

The Gerald R. Ford Conservation Center

The Gerald R. Ford Conservation Center, founded in 1995, is the newest division of the Nebraska State Historical Society. The center's mission is to conserve the historical, cultural, and educational collections in the State of Nebraska and surrounding areas through preservation activities and the conservation treatment of objects.

The Ford Center provides conservation services for historical, cultural, educational, private and corporate collections in Nebraska and the region. These services include consultation, assessment of collection condition and needs, education, training, and conservation treatment of collection materials.

The preservation of physical objects is crucial to the appreciation, study, and understanding of the history and cultures of the peoples who have lived in Nebraska and the region for more than 10,000 years. The Ford Center encourages and supports all efforts to safeguard these resources for future generations. Conservation practices at the center meet the highest professional standards, including those of the American Institute for Conservation's Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Practice.

The staff of the Gerald R. Ford Conservation Center brings to its work many years of professional training, study, and experience at cultural institutions in the United States and abroad. The staff keeps abreast of the latest research and innovations in conservation practice and is active in regional and national conservation organizations.

State of the art laboratories at the Ford Center provide for the care of objects, works of art on paper, archival materials, and textiles. A library of reference works on collections care and conservation, a microscopy laboratory, storage, and receiving areas support the center's work. Public spaces include an exhibit on President Gerald R. Ford, a temporary exhibition space, and a public reception area adjacent to the Ford Birthsite Gardens.

CONSULTATION: The conservators at the Ford Center can answer questions about collection care and conservation. Advice is available on topics such as storage techniques, exhibition materials, and object housings.

EXAMINATION: Objects requiring varying levels of technical study will be accepted at the Ford Center. Examinations may be requested as a prelude to conservation treatment or as an individual research project. The conservators can assist in locating specialized testing apparatus and in sampling and interpreting instrumental data produced by chemical or physical analysis.

TREATMENT: Treatment services are available for a wide range of object types including works of art on paper, archival collections, photographs, ceramics, glass, metals, leather, organic materials, textiles, and other composite objects. Contractual work can be arranged through the center for the treatment of other types of objects, as needed. Treatment services vary from simple preventative stabilization to complete treatment and cosmetic reintegration.

ASSESSMENTS: Conservation assessments of institutions that hold collections are available through the Ford Center. Conservators will provide a written overview of the institution and its efforts at collection preservation including evaluation of storage areas, exhibition techniques, pest control, housekeeping, and many other factors affecting collection care.

SURVEYS: Surveys to document the condition of individual objects in a collection can be conducted by Ford Center staff. A specific report detailing the condition, priority, and conservation needs for each object can be prepared with an overall review provided as a planning tool in the long-term conservation of a collection.

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND TRAINING: The Ford Center provides lectures and workshops on a variety of topics for many audiences. Lectures and clinics are available to the public; workshops and programs are offered for the museum and collecting community, and specialized sessions are available for conservation professionals.

COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIONS: Assistance is available for those faced with making decisions about crate construction, mount design, material selection, storage techniques, housing materials, framing, matting, and many other issues relating to collection use and care. The Ford Center conservators can provide up-to-date technical information for collectors and cultural institutions.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS: The Ford Center staff can assist organizations and institutions with the preparation of emergency preparedness plans, training, and drills. The staff is available in the event of an emergency, and can provide on-site response, as well as long-term collection treatment.