



# Secretary of State Records Management Newsletter

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**In response to recent flooding events, here is a summary of published information to work with documents that may have been affected. We have received several calls by different agencies, so wanted to have a resource in one document that may help answer some questions.**

## **Disaster Recovery:**

**Safety First – DO NOT REENTER THE BUILDING until declared safe by security or emergency management officials.**

## **Stabilize the building and environment:**

Reduce temperature and relative humidity at once to prevent mold outbreak. Ideal targets are less than 70 F/ 45% RH.

- a) If warm outside, use coldest air conditioning setting, if possible: cover broken windows with plastic.
- b) In cool, low humidity weather- open windows, use circulating fans.
- c) Do not turn on heat unless required for human comfort.
- d) Remove standing water and empty items containing water; remove wet carpets and furnishings.

## **Documentation:**

- a) Once it is safe to enter the building, make a preliminary tour of all affected area. Wear protective clothing.
- b) Do not move objects or collections without documenting their condition.
- c) Photograph or videotape conditions of structure and contents. Make sure images clearly record damage.

## **Photographs**

- a) Remove from plastic/paper enclosures or frames. Save all information about the photos.
- b) Carefully rinse with cool, clean water as necessary.
- c) Do not touch or blot surfaces.
- d) Air Dry: hang with clips on non-image surfaces or lay flat on absorbent paper. Keep photographs from contact with adjacent surfaces or each other.
- e) If there are too many for immediate attention, either:

- i. Keep photos (except Historic photos) in a container of clean water no more than 48 hours. Air dry.
  - ii. Freeze. If possible, interleave each photos with freezer or waxed paper. If historic photos cannot be air-dried immediately, interleave and freeze.
- f) Do not freeze glass plate negatives.

## **BOOKS AND PAPER**

### **Books:**

- a) If rinsing is necessary, hold book closed.
- b) Partially wet or damp: stand on top or bottom edge with covers opened to 90-degree angle; air dry.
- c) Very wet: lay flat on clean surface; interleave less than 20% of book with absorbent materials; replace interleaving when damp.
- d) If too many books to air dry in 48 hours:
  - i. Wrap in freezer or waxed paper.
  - ii. Pack spine down in sturdy containers.
  - iii. Freeze.

### **Paper:**

- a) Air dry flat as individual sheet or small piles up to ¼". Interleave; replace interleaving when damp.
- b) Do not unfold or separate individual, wet sheets.
- c) If too many items for air drying:
  - i) Interleave (by groups or individually) with freezer or waxed paper.
  - ii) Pack papers or files standing up and supported in sturdy containers; pack containers only 90 % full.
  - iii) Freeze.

### **Additional Resources if needed:**

#### **Freezer/Cold Storage Services:**

Universal Cold Storage	402-474-9500
1601 Pioneer Blvd	Direct 402-419-2161
Lincoln NE 68502	Cell 402-304-0076

#### **Recovery Services**

NCRI- National Catastrophe Restoration	316-636-5700
8447 E 35 <sup>th</sup> St N	800-598-6274
Wichita KS 67226	

#### **Document Preservation Consulting**

Ford Conservation Center	402-595-1180
1326 S 332 <sup>nd</sup> St	
Omaha NE 68105	

#### **Professional Consultants**

NARA – National Archives at Kansas City	816-268-8000
400 West Pershing Rd	
Kansas City MO 64108	

## **Records Management Division – Secretary of State of Nebraska**

General Phone – 402-471-2550

Jeanette Greer – Records Management Division Manager – 402-471-2747

Austin Rhodes – RIM Specialist/DISC Supervisor – 402-471-4184

While some records will disappear because of flooding, others can be saved. The Secretary of State Records Management has knowledgeable staff to help people identify what can be saved.

However, resources may be lost if assessment and restorative action are not taken immediately. These situations may seem discouraging at first, but with careful planning and attention, records management can be achieved.

The following link will take you to the referenced conservation help from NARA which will lead to the Minnesota National Historical society with helpful tips on preservation of documents.

<http://www.mnhs.org/preserve/conservation/emergency.php>

Please also feel free to discuss with us the possibility of digitizing some documents that may have survived the flooding or that may become recoverable using freeze drying. If records are unrecoverable and lost due to flooding, please ensure that a disposition report is filled out and submitted to the Secretary of State's office. Forms are available on the Secretary of State's website:

<http://www.sos.ne.gov/records-management/pdf/records-disposition-report.pdf>

### **Document Scanning and Document Imaging**

Document scanning and document imaging are similar in that they both describe procedures to convert paper documents to digital form. Typically, the staff at Records Management begins by collecting agency documents to be scanned. After removing staples and paper clips, staff scans every document, converting it to JPEG, PDF, TIFF, or whatever format is most convenient to the agency.

Records Management can also OCR (Optical Character Recognition) the documents, which translates hard-copy documents into editable formats. In addition to being able to digitally manipulate and store documents that were previously only available in physical form, OCR also allows digital documents to be searched by key terms.

Indexing, quality control, storage, and shredding are the last steps in the document scanning process.

What does this do for your agency?

1. With electronic backups of your most important files, it is easier to get back online following an emergency. This is an important aspect in your disaster recovery plans.
2. Going paperless is a cost savings to agencies as they reduce the amount of ink and paper required by agencies.  
For example, consider your employee handbook. By simply having this available in digital format, updating and sending out to all employees in your agency becomes a much simpler and more cost effective manner to distribute this valuable document.
3. Having digital copies of documents saves staff time and effort in finding hard copy documents, scanning and sending out for requests.

### **Conversion Services**

**Contact us at the Records Center to discuss options to digitize records from past, present or to discuss future plans to store items electronically.**

The Records Management division is able to convert paper to electronic images, microform (microfilm, microfiche) to electronic, paper to microfilm, electronic image to microfilm, black and white or color slides to digital all at low costs to your agency. We have high-speed conversion capability and can export images/data across the network into your current imaging system: OnBase, PaperVision, PDF, or TIFF.

We also offer daily pickup of records to be converted from Lincoln area offices and strict confidentiality by trained and professional staff. Let our staff help you by providing fast, friendly, and free safe transport of local materials to the Records Center.

### **Micrographic Equipment**

As a reminder to all state agencies, under Statute 84-1222:

**Purchase of microfilm system or equipment; approval; property of administrator.**

No state agency shall purchase any microfilm system or equipment prior to the approval of the administrator. The administrator shall not approve internal microfilm activities of any state agency unless such activities may not be feasibly provided by the central microfilming agency and are necessary to a particular operation within the state agency. Any equipment purchased under this section shall become the property of the administrator.

Please Contact Jeanette Greer at [Jeanette.greer@nebraska.gov](mailto:Jeanette.greer@nebraska.gov) or call 402-471-2747 if micrographic equipment needs to be purchased. This also includes any trade in of equipment as this becomes a fixed asset of the Secretary of State's office.