Safeguarding Your Family Records: Planning Ahead before the Hurricane Season - Salvaging them if Disaster Hits

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SAFEGUARDING YOUR FAMILY RECORDS: PLANNING AHEAD BEFORE THE HURRICANE SEASON: SALVAGING THEM IF DISASTER HITS

Papers, Books, Photos, AV, and other Media

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SAFEGUARDING YOUR FAMILY RECORDS

• MAKING PREPARATIONS:
  • FOOD, WATER, EQUIPMENT, NECESSITIES
  • VITAL RECORDS TO TAKE
  • IMPORTANT FAMILY RECORDS

• RECOVERY:
  • PAPERS
  • BOOKS AND MAGAZINES
  • PHOTOGRAPHIC MATERIALS
  • DISKS
  • RECORDINGS
HOME DISASTER PREPAREDNESS PLAN:
PROTECTION OF YOUR OWN LIFE IS PRIMARY!

- MEET AS A FAMILY TO DEVELOP A PLAN AND DO A “DRY RUN”
- MAKE LIST OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ITEMS TO TAKE WITH YOU.

  - Medications and First Aid
  - Food and Water
  - Clothing and Toiletries
  - Pets
  - Legal and Financial Records
  - Cash
  - Extra set of car keys
  - Personal Address Book,
  - Phone/Yellow Pages Directory
  - Cellular Phone and Charger
  - Radio and Batteries
  - Computer CPU – peripherals replaceable
Historical Family Records: Prioritize – Sentimental or Commercial Value?

- Original Documents
- Family Photos (Digital or original)
- Recordings
- Family Bibles
- Family Heirlooms

RUSSIAN PASSPORT, 1904

MY UNCLE ALEX’S WORLD WAR I DRAFT CARD
Papers

• Make Photocopies..
• Use large capacity storage boxes.
• Seal with duct tape and storage tape.
• Use archival page protectors (polyester, polypropylene, or polyethylene, not PVC)
• If odd-sized, use a single box or archival shoe box with acid-free buffered separating sheets.
• Store away from windows, fireplaces and water pipes and from attics, basements and garages.
Books

- Store away from windows, fireplaces and water pipes and from attics, basements and garages.
- If books are in fragile condition, purchase book boxes.
Scrapbooks

- Store scrapbooks in individual boxes, by size.
- Use duplicates of original photos in scrapbooks.
- Use acid-free, lignin-free paper.
- Use page protectors free of PVCs.
- Keep printed copies of your scrapbook layouts.
Photograph Preservation Tips - “Do’s”

• Each photo negative and print should have enclosure.
• Best stored flat in archival boxes.
• Use archival or “acid-neutral” paper envelopes.
• Handle on edge or use cotton gloves.
• Keep in best environment possible.
• And, separate photos so they don’t stick to each other.
Photograph Preservation Tips - “Dont’s” - Don’t Use

• Polyvinyl chloride (PVC)
• Unidentified plastics
• Materials with high acid content
• Glassine envelopes
• Wood pulp products
• Pressure-sensitive tape
• Rubber bands or paperclips
Audio Preservation

• Store vertically in archival boxes.
• Store in cool and dry conditions.
• Do NOT expose to direct sunlight.
• Store tapes away from magnetic fields and sources of vibration.
• Create two copies of each recording.
Video Preservation

- Handle by the edge
- Store flat, in archival containers.
- Don’t put paper or loose material in film storage box.
- Separate nitrate (highly flammable) and acetate (off-gas vinegar odor) films.
- Can convert home movies to videotape, but not a preservation option now - good as “user copies.”
ALWAYS, ALWAYS, ALWAYS:

• Back up files
• Make two backup copies
• Store backup files on CD-ROMs high-capacity zip disks, or portable flash drives.
• Save files in TIF format for preservation and copying; JPEG or GIF for viewing; PDF files for printing.
• Tip: Upgrade your equipment.
• Tip: Transfer files to new media periodically.
ITEMS TO HAVE ON HAND FOR CLEANUP

• Plastic tub
• Clean water
• Rubber gloves
• Rubber boots
• Large plastic storage bags
• Can create your own home disaster response kit from Protext:

http://www.protext.net/products/Products.html
RECOVERY: WET PAPERS

- Try to reduce temperature and humidity
- Circulate air
- Interleave sheets of paper towels
- Freeze all items that cannot be dried
RECOVERY: WET BOOKS AND MAGAZINES

• Act within 48 hours.
• Do not use bleaches, detergents, fungicides, disinfectants, staples or paper clips on wet paper.
• Allow air to circulate.
• Handle carefully.
• Keep book covers on glossy paper apart
• Interleave sheets of white paper towel between pages.
• Keep wet magazines closed tight and freeze dry.
• If some mold or mildew on surface, dry ASAP and use face mask with a carbon filter.
• Outside, remove surface mold with a very soft, clean brush
• If can’t be dried right away, freeze them in a freezer bag, with a piece of wax paper between each book.
Additional Book Recovery Examples

Interleave Coated Pages With Paper Towels ASAP

Use Fan for Air Circulation

Can Stack Nearly Dry Books Under Weights
**RECOVERY: PHOTOS, NEGATIVES, FILMS**

- **DO NOT**: Stack wet photos; touch the surface of the wet photo or let anything touch their surfaces.
- Use fans to circulate the air, dry items within 48 hours, and freeze all items that cannot be dried.
- Save color photos first, followed by black and white prints, slides, negatives.
- Dry them out, or freeze them within 48 hours.
- Rinse off any dirt or mud, put them into ziplock freezer bags, and freeze within 48 hours.
- Photos on plastic coated paper can also be hung to dry.
- For film, get help from a photo lab after they’ve been immersed in cold, clean water. After washing and drying, can be placed in a sandwich bag or other archival material.
- Immerse motion pictures in cold water, but have them rewashed by an experienced film processing lab within 48 hours.
- For microfilm, put film into basin filled with cold (distilled) water.
Recovery: Scrapbooks

• Don’t move them until you’ve found a place has been prepared for them.
• Support large scrapbooks with boards.
• Air dry if small group and are either damp or water damaged around edges. Keep air moving constantly with fans.
• Use dehumidifiers to reduce relative humidity to around 50%.
• Interleave pages with uninked newsprint or blotter, and place books on tables.
• If scrapbook isn’t boxed and binding is loose, wrap in freezer paper, and freeze as quickly as possible.
RECOVERY: FLOPPY DISKS AND CDS

• Water-damaged diskettes should be dried out quickly and evenly, or kept wet until they can be dried properly.
• Dry damp diskettes with a blow dryer on low heat setting.
• If there’s too many, keep them immersed in clean cold water in clean containers, and change the water daily.
Recovering CDs or Records:

• Do not dry in direct sunlight or use hair dryer – will cause warping.
• Wash in clean water and air dry.
• Reproduction recommended if you have important data or family photos stored.
Recovery: Reel to Reel Audiotapes

- Do not unwind tapes or remove from reel.
- Air dry within 48 hours. Use fans to keep air moving.
- Pack vertically into plastic crates or cardboard cartons.
- Since most contamination on outer layers of tape, wash exposed edges with distilled water.
- Air dry by supporting reels vertically or by laying reels on sheets of clean blotter.
- Use portable dehumidifiers to slowly remove moisture from tape, and bring down relative humidity to about 50%.
- Once dry, assess tape for further cleaning and duplication; consult conservator if needed.
Recovering Videotapes

• If damp, try to blow dry them, or
  – Find a video duplicating and transfer service.
  – Ask a film lab that works with movie film to see if they can chemically dry and clean the tape.
Some Useful Resources

- Capitol Area Chapter of the American Red Cross: “Hurricane Biz - A Business Tabletop Exercise.”
  http://www.tallytown.com/redcross/biz/

- American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works

  http://www.heritagepreservation.org/PROGRAMS/tftips.htm

- NEDCC Emergency Management Technical Leaflets

- Conservation OnLine – has a section on disaster planning and recovery
  http://palimpsest.stanford.edu/

- SOLINET (Southeastern Library Network – has list of links on disaster preparedness and recovery sites for individuals and families).
  http://www.solinet.net/
Questions? Comments?