



BALBOA ART CONSERVATION CENTER

## Water Emergency Salvage Tips: Photographs




### The Basics of Salvage

- Bring in fans to circulate air in the space (don't point them directly at collections). This can help reduce the chances of mold growth even if no collections are wet.
- Take photos of any collections that got wet or were otherwise impacted. This can help with insurance.
- Assess which collections are wet or damp and separate them from unaffected collections. Note that damp collections may appear dry but will be cool to the touch!
- Remove collections from wet storage materials. Do not pull wet collections out of boxes, frames, or sleeves but rather disassemble the housing to remove it from the object.
- Support any wet collections that you need to move - they will be especially fragile if wet.
- If a large number of items are very wet, consider freeze drying them. This is often a cost-effective option considering the staff time and space needed for air drying and reduces the need for conservation treatment in the future. It can also buy time, as mold growth can begin 48 hours after the water incident.

### CONTACT US

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### Photographs

- Remove photos from wet frames or enclosures. Do not slide them out of their enclosures, rather trim the enclosure on three sides and peel it away from the photo gently. If there is any resistance, stop and leave the photo in place.
- Lay photos flat to dry in a single layer on top of a clean, absorbent material
- Prioritize which photos to dry first based on their value and type. Consider that color prints are typically more susceptible to water damage than black and white prints.
- Do not touch the image surface of a wet photograph until it is completely dry.
- Do not attempt to flatten the photographs until they are completely dry.

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