



BALBOA ART CONSERVATION CENTER

## Water Emergency Salvage Tips: Books and Papers




### 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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### Books and Papers

- Identify a clean space for collections to dry and reduce the humidity as much as possible. Use fans to circulate the air to reduce the chances of mold growth (don't point them directly at collections).
- Unbound paper can be laid horizontally on any flat surface to air dry. Place a clean paper towel below.
- If the book is damp or only slightly wet, the book can stand upright with the pages fanned to dry. Once books are near dry, lay the book horizontally with a board and weight on top to prevent warping.
- If the book is more wet, lay it horizontally, gently reshape, and interleave a paper towel after every 20 pages or so (too many can warp the binding). Change out paper towels with new, dry ones regularly during the drying process.
- Works with water-sensitive inks or colorants and works on coated or shiny paper are most likely to be damaged by water or incorrect drying. Consult with a professional who can assist with freeze drying these types of collections.

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