
Professional Certificate in Paper and Ink Conservation

Disaster Response and Recovery for Paper-based Collections

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Paper-based collections are valuable resources that require proper care and maintenance. However, they are also vulnerable to disasters such as floods, fires, earthquakes, and hurricanes. Therefore, it is crucial to have a disaster response and recovery plan in place to minimize the damage and ensure the long-term preservation of these collections. This explanation covers key terms and vocabulary related to disaster response and recovery for paper-based collections in the course Professional Certificate in Paper and Ink Conservation.

1. Disaster Response:

Disaster response refers to the immediate actions taken to protect people, collections, and buildings from further damage during and after a disaster. The primary goal of disaster response is to stabilize the situation and prevent any further loss or damage. Some critical terms related to disaster response include:

- a. **Disaster Plan:** A disaster plan is a comprehensive document that outlines the steps to be taken before, during, and after a disaster. It includes emergency contact information, evacuation procedures, and salvage priorities.
- b. **First Responders:** First responders are the individuals who are responsible for taking immediate action during a disaster. They may include security personnel, facilities managers, and conservation professionals.
- c. **Triage:** Triage is the process of prioritizing collections based on their significance, condition, and potential for salvage. This process helps first responders focus their efforts on the most critical items.
- d. **Salvage:** Salvage refers to the actions taken to recover and stabilize collections after a disaster. This may include drying, cleaning, and repairing damaged items.

2. Disaster Recovery:

Disaster recovery refers to the long-term process of restoring collections and buildings to their pre-disaster condition. This process may take several months or even years, depending on the extent of the damage. Some critical terms related to disaster recovery include:

- a. **Damage Assessment:** Damage assessment is the process of evaluating the extent of the damage to collections and buildings. This information is used to develop a recovery plan and estimate the cost of repairs.
- b. **Recovery Plan:** A recovery plan is a detailed document that outlines the steps required to restore

collections and buildings to their pre-disaster condition. It includes a timeline, budget, and resource allocation plan.

c. Conservation Treatment: Conservation treatment is the process of repairing and stabilizing damaged items. This may include cleaning, mending, and reinforcing weakened structures.

d. Environmental Controls: Environmental controls are measures taken to regulate temperature, humidity, and light levels to prevent further damage to collections. This may include the use of air conditioning, dehumidifiers, and light filters.

3. Key Terms and Vocabulary:

a. Salvage Priority: The order in which collections are salvaged based on their significance, condition, and potential for salvage.

b. Drying: The process of removing excess moisture from wet collections. This may include air drying, dehumidification, and freeze-drying.

c. Cleaning: The process of removing dirt, mold, and other contaminants from collections. This may include vacuuming, brushing, and chemical cleaning.

d. Mending: The process of repairing damaged items by reattaching loose or broken parts.

e. Reinforcing: The process of strengthening weakened structures to prevent further damage.

f. Environmental Monitoring: The process of measuring and recording temperature, humidity, and light levels to ensure appropriate conditions for collections.

g. Disaster Supplies: Equipment and materials needed for disaster response and recovery, including gloves, masks, pumps, and dehumidifiers.

h. Training: The process of educating staff and volunteers on disaster response and recovery procedures.

4. Examples and Practical Applications:

a. Developing a Disaster Plan: A disaster plan should include emergency contact information, evacuation procedures, and salvage priorities. It should be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure its relevance and effectiveness.

b. Triage: During a disaster, first responders should prioritize collections based on their significance, condition, and potential for salvage. For example, irreplaceable items such as historical documents should be given higher priority than duplicate copies.

c. Salvage: Wet collections should be dried as soon as possible to prevent mold growth and further damage. This may include air drying, dehumidification, or freeze-drying.

d. Recovery: A recovery plan should include a timeline, budget, and resource allocation plan. It should also

include measures to prevent future disasters, such as installing fire suppression systems or upgrading building infrastructure.

5. Challenges:

- a. Limited Resources: Disaster response and recovery can be expensive, and many institutions may not have the necessary resources to adequately respond to a disaster.
- b. Lack of Training: Staff and volunteers may not be adequately trained in disaster response and recovery procedures, which can lead to further damage to collections.
- c. Time-Consuming: Disaster response and recovery can be time-consuming, taking several months or even years to complete.
- d. Emotional Impact: Disasters can have a significant emotional impact on staff and volunteers, making it difficult to focus on recovery efforts.

In conclusion, disaster response and recovery for paper-based collections is a critical aspect of paper and ink conservation. By understanding key terms and vocabulary, institutions can develop effective disaster plans, respond to emergencies quickly and efficiently, and restore collections to their pre-disaster condition. However, it is important to recognize the challenges associated with disaster response and recovery and to allocate the necessary resources and training to ensure the long-term preservation of collections.