

Documentation of Damage to Collections at the Disaster Site

After the broad stroke assessment is complete and an initial action plan has been adopted, detailed condition records should be made for each collection object or group of objects.

Be flexible: if it is necessary to perform mitigation operations to save objects, documentation may have to wait until after relocation.

Be patient: documentation may slow down your “response pace,” but it is important to keep accurate records of the condition and location of all collection materials involved in an emergency incident.

As conditions allow, document objects in the following order:

- Objects that are in immediate danger
- Objects that are closest or most accessible to you
- Most valued objects (i.e., objects on the “priority” object list)
- Most vulnerable objects (generally organic materials)
- Most damaged objects
- Least damaged objects

A. Photographic Documentation

Visually record damaged area with a still or video camera. Capture both typical examples of damage and specific objects by themselves *in situ*. Photograph also the response and recovery operations.

B. Written Documentation

Prepare Damage Assessment Forms suited to your collections in advance of an emergency incident to record:

1. Accession, catalogue, group or series number (If number is missing or unreadable, assign a supplemental number for tracking purposes.)
2. Type of object
3. Location in the room
4. Condition
 - If object is broken, note number of pieces
 - If there is major damage, note type

Note: Depending on the extent and the nature of the incident, these records may be completed at the incident site, or may take place at the triage site.