

Emergency Preparedness Plans

When an emergency situation does arise all aspects of your museum's operations can be thrown in to chaos and staff can be overwhelmed by the task before them. Since the success of mitigating damage rests in the ability of the museum staff to act quickly, having a plan of action and the resources available for recovery are essential. A further benefit to the emergency preparedness planning process is that it requires that the museum consider the types of risks that the museum and the collection face and therefore provides an opportunity to mitigate these risks and prevent a disaster.

Emergency preparedness plans are often referred to as disaster plans and when researching resources these names can be interchangeable. The distinction is that a well executed emergency preparedness plan can turn a disaster into a well managed emergency situation with minimal effect on the museum and the collections.

The success of an emergency preparedness plan rests in having trained staff and an effective, realistic disaster plan. The plan should clear and consistent. During an emergency, when immediate action is required, ambiguity can have detrimental effects on response and recovery efforts. All staff, and any of those that will be assisting in recovery, should be familiar with the plan. It is recommended that practice drills be performed to assist in the training. Each plan is as individual as the institution and should reflect the resources that are available.

Museum emergency preparedness plans should address these areas:

- performing risk assessments and reduction activities
- identifying Risks
- prioritizing response and recovery activities for the museum collection
- outlining and assigning tasks for the disaster response team
- outlining resources and support networks for the museum in an emergency
- creating a step by step disaster response plan
- creating a step by step disaster recovery plan
- staff and volunteer training plans and schedules
- practices plans and schedules
- review schedules for the entire plan

For more information on this topic see:

Guidelines for the Operations of Community Museums in Newfoundland and Labrador
Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Plans – Page 35.

Resources for Disaster Plan Documents

CalPreservation.Org - Disaster Plan Workbook and Template

<http://calpreservation.org/disasters/index.html>

Solinet Disaster Mitigation and Recovery Resources – Contents of a Disaster Plan

<http://www.solinet.net/emplibfile/displan.pdf>

reCollections – Counter Disaster Planning

http://archive.amol.org.au/recollections/4/pdf/counter_disaster.pdf

American Library Association – Disaster Planning for Computers and Networks

<http://www.ala.org/ala/pla/plapubs/technotes/disasterplanning.cfm>

Council of Nova Scotia Archives Generic Emergency Plan

<http://www.councilofnsarchives.ca/resources/tools.htm>

The American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC)
Disaster Response and Recovery

<http://aic.stanford.edu/library/online/disaster/emrgncy.html>

New York University Library Disaster Plan Workbook

<http://library.nyu.edu/preservation/disaster/toc.htm>

Northeast Document Conservation Center Worksheet for Outlining a Disaster Plan

http://www.nedcc.org/resources/leaflets/3Emergency_Management/04DisasterPlanWorksheet.php

Be Prepared – Guidelines for small museum for writing a disaster preparedness plan

http://www.collectionsaustralia.net.au/sector_info_item/2

Solinet Disaster Mitigation and Recovery Resources

http://www.solinet.net/preservation/preservation_templ.cfm?doc_id=71

National Park Service – Primer for Disaster Preparedness, Management and Response

<http://www.nps.gov/history/museum/publications/primer/primintro.html>

National Park Service – Conserv O Grams

http://www.nps.gov/history/museum/publications/conservoogram/cons_toc.html

The American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC)
Disaster Response and Recovery Index

<http://aic.stanford.edu/library/online/disaster/index.html>

Harwell Document Restoration Services – Museum and Disaster Plan Template

<http://www.hdrs.co.uk/disasterplanning.html>