

## **EMERGENCY GUIDE FOR HANDLING WET PAPER MATERIALS**

Here are a few suggestions to assist you in preventing further damage until help arrives.

### **Things You Should Do**

#### **Limit the Damage**

- Shut off source of water if possible.
- Shield books and papers from source of water. *If flooding from above*, cover stacks with plastic sheeting or move materials to another location. *If flooding from below*, make a dam barrier (with sandbags or any available material); move materials higher on shelves or move off shelves to another location.

#### **Get Help**

- Call INTERIOR VAULT. Call any available staff to assist. Activate your Disaster Response Plan.
- **Control Temperature and Humidity In Area.** Turn off heat; circulate air (use fans, dehumidifiers, - use outside air or air conditioning only if appropriate).
- Remove standing water (use water vacuum, mop, sponge).

#### **Assess the Damage and Plan for Recovery**

- If there is time, check value of water damaged books and papers and salvage those worth saving.
- Make note of any materials being discarded to facilitate later withdrawal or replacement decisions.
- Segregate 15<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> century books, and all leather, vellum or parchment bindings for special handling.
- Consider separating damp or wet around the edges materials to be dried in low humidity chambers, from fully soaked and coated paper materials that should be frozen and vacuum freeze dried.

#### **Begin Recovery**

- Freeze or dry books and papers within 48 hours (coated paper within 6 hours). Controlled Humidity drying, can be suitable for damp or slightly wet books and documents, however infestation by mold or bacteria must be prevented, and coated paper books must be protected from rapid deterioration. This stabilization method can result in badly distorted bindings and textblocks if not performed properly, so, contact BELFOR technical staff for advice or assistance.
- You may prefer to freeze and stabilize wet paper materials, and delay the decision on drying procedure until all available information relating to condition has been studied.

#### **Pack Wet Books For Transport To Freezers**

## Things You Should NOT Do

- Do not stack books or papers in piles on the floor.
- Do not open wet books and expose wet paper that tears easily.
- Do not press wet books or papers.
- Do not rub surfaces of paper or books, even if soiled.
- Do not remove book covers or folders.
- Do not disturb wet file boxes, prints, drawings or individual photographs.
- Do not separate pages or single sheets of paper unless adequately supported.
- Do not attempt to write on wet paper or books.
- Do not use bleaches, detergents or water-soluble fungicides on books or paper.
- Do not use staples, paper or bulldog clips, adhesive tape or adhesives of any kind on wet paper.
- Do not use coloured blotting paper or coloured paper of any kind to absorb moisture.