

DISASTER RESPONSE

DISASTER RESPONSE GUIDELINES: MIT Libraries

Print
this
page

last updated 4/21/09

Print
quick
reference

last updated 4/21/09

Library Materials [Reporting an Emergency](#) | [Reporting a Problem](#) | [Disaster Response](#) | [Recovery of Collections](#) | [FAQ](#) | [Contact Numbers](#) | [Related MIT Links](#)

[Disaster
Response Kit](#)

[Insects](#)

[Mold](#)

REPORTING AN EMERGENCY:

Dial 100

for emergencies/police/medical/ambulance/ fire/
explosion/bomb threats/laboratory spills

*If calling from a cell phone or other off-campus phone,
dial 617-253-1212*

**Personal safety should be your first concern in any
emergency situation**

REPORTING A PROBLEM:

1. Dial the MIT Operations Center, 617-253-4948, from a safe location. The Center will notify the appropriate Facilities staff to assist with clean-up and remediation of the building.
2. Call the around-the-clock emergency contacts listed on your departmental phone tree.
3. If library collections are affected, contact Jennifer Banks (Head, Collection Management Services), Nancy Schrock (Conservator), or Ann Marie Willer (Preservation Services Librarian). See [Contact Numbers](#).
4. Proceed to [Disaster Response](#).

[back to the top](#)

DISASTER RESPONSE:



Small leak:

i.e., leaky pipe, water cooler, or other clean water slowly accumulating near or over collections. No more than one bay of books (150-200) is affected.

1. Follow the steps for [Reporting a Problem](#).
2. Stop the source of the leak, if possible.
3. Open your facility's React Pak (disaster response kit).
4. Cover the stacks with plastic sheeting to protect collections from further damage. Collect dripping water in trash cans or buckets. See [Supplies](#) below.
5. Cover computer equipment with plastic sheeting.
6. Move books and other library materials to a dry, secure area. Library materials can be fragile and heavy when wet and swollen with water. Use two hands and take only one or two items at a time. Books may appear dry but have water behind or under them, so check carefully.
7. Turn on the air conditioning, as warm temperatures may facilitate mold growth.
8. Use fans and dehumidifiers to reduce humidity, as humid air may accelerate mold growth.

If recovery is to be carried out in-house, Preservation Services will oversee the initial sorting and recovery of library materials. With guidance from Preservation Services, proceed with [Recovery of Collections](#).

Large leak or flood, or if the source of water is contaminated or unknown:

i.e., burst pipe. More than one bay of books (150-200) is affected.

1. Follow the steps for [Reporting a Problem](#).
2. Do not enter the area until facilities and/or emergency personnel have given permission to do so. Be wary of potential electrical hazards.
3. If you know the source of the water, inform Facilities and Preservation personnel. If the water is classified as black or gray water, extra safety precautions are required. Preservation Services (Jennifer, Nancy, or Ann Marie) will advise on the choice of a vendor

to handle the damaged books.

4. If advised by Preservation Services, proceed with [Recovery of Collections](#).

Fire

1. Follow the steps for Reporting an Emergency and "Reporting a Problem."
2. Once the fire marshal declares the affected area safe for reentry, Preservation Services will help assess the damage and determine if a vendor is required to facilitate recovery.
3. During a fire, library materials may suffer from a combination of smoke, soot, burns, and water damage. If recovery will be carried out in-house, Jennifer, Nancy, or Ann Marie will oversee the initial sorting and recovery of library materials.
4. If advised by Preservation Services, proceed with [Recovery of Collections](#).

[back to the top](#)

RECOVERY OF COLLECTIONS

[Supplies](#) | [Books and Paper-Based Materials](#) | [Non-Print Media](#)

Supplies

Recovery supplies are stored in your facility's React Pak. Preservation Services can provide access to additional supplies, fans, and plastic sheeting from its storage area, 14-0315A. (MIT Police can provide access after-hours.) Facilities will provide equipment for large scale drying of rooms.

Books, Journals, Documents and other Paper-Based Materials:

1. Follow these steps when advised by Preservation Services.
2. If more than one bay of books (150-200) is affected, or if books are completely soaked through, wait for a member of Preservation Services to arrive and assist with the next step, which is likely to involve the use of contract services.
3. For less than one bay of books, separate wet from dry items.
4. Separate wet volumes printed on coated, glossy paper (journals, art magazines, etc.) from those printed on matte paper. Wait for a member of Preservation Services to arrive and assist with wet books printed on coated, glossy paper. Wet coated paper can "block" (stick together) if allowed to air dry.

5. Stand partially-wet books with matte paper on end and fan out their pages to facilitate air-drying. Interleave particularly wet pages with unprinted newsprint (available from Preservation Services), placing sheets between groups of pages, to help wick moisture away. Preservation staff will oversee the final stage of drying and flattening.

6. Items that are soaked, have coated paper, or are too fragile to stand upright will need to be dried in the Conservation Lab.

Non-print Media:

1. Follow these steps when advised by Preservation Services.
2. For photographs and negatives, wait for a member of Preservation Services to arrive and assist with the next step.
3. Handle audio-visual material carefully to avoid scratching the surfaces. Do NOT unwind reels or disassemble floppy discs or tape cartridges.
4. Separate paper inserts from audio-visual media and treat as described under [Books](#).
5. If clean water is available, gently rinse media.
6. Lay items flat to dry. Microfiche and slides can also be hung from a line with a plastic clip.
7. The following media items can remain WET for several days, so they are lower priority: microfilm, computer tapes, audio and video tapes, and motion picture film. Place these items in containers with clean water or in plastic bags and notify Preservation staff of their location.

[back to the top](#)

FAQ

For what materials does Preservation Services provide disaster recovery?

- MIT Libraries collections
- MIT Libraries employees' desk files and papers
- Case-by-case basis: MIT employees' office materials

What should I do if a patron returns wet books or spills liquid on books in the library?

During work hours, contact Jennifer Banks (Head, Collection Management Services), Nancy Schrock (Conservator), or Ann Marie Willer (Preservation Services Librarian), or another Preservation Services staff member. See [Contact Numbers](#).

After hours, if there are only a few books, stand partially-wet books with

matte paper on end and fan out their pages to facilitate air-drying. Interleave particularly wet pages with unprinted newsprint (available from Preservation Services), placing sheets between groups of pages, to help wick moisture away. Send an email to Preservation-Team describing what you have done. Preservation staff will oversee the final stage of drying and flattening.

After hours, if there are many books or if the books have coated ("glossy") paper, follow the procedures for [reporting a problem](#).

What is my role in disaster response?

Library staff has responsibility for immediate disaster response. Your role includes following the [guidelines](#) on this web site if library collections are in danger. Especially, contact Preservation Services so that they may respond.

If there is a disaster in my facility, who has primary responsibility for the recovery of collections materials?

Preservation Services has primary responsibility for assessing the situation, determining recovery procedures, and carrying out recovery. Preservation Services may lead library staff in the recovery effort.

What is my role in disaster recovery?

Preservation Services will need your help to identify the collections which are the highest priority for recovery. Library staff also has responsibility for bibliographic control and record-keeping for materials that are shifted or sent to a vendor for salvage.

In a water disaster, response within 48-72 hours is important to minimize mold growth. If a large number of collections are damaged, Preservation Services will need help to recover materials within this critical time frame, so your assistance may be requested. In this situation, Preservation Services staff would show you what to do and would coordinate with supervisors to manage the workflow.

[back to the top](#)

CONTACT NUMBERS

MIT Operations Center

Call Operations at 617-253-4948 to report a problem, to follow up, or to get updates.

Preservation Services and Wunsch Conservation Laboratory

During work hours (M-F, 9-5), 617-253-5282

Jennifer Banks, Head, Collection Management Services W: 617-253-5664

Nancy Schrock, Conservator W: 617-452-4064

Ann Marie Willer, Preservation Services Librarian W: 617-253-5692

For After Hours contact numbers, call the around-the-clock emergency contact person for your facility, who will have access to home phone numbers for Preservation Services staff members.

[back to the top](#)

RELATED MIT LINKS

MIT Safety Office – Emergency Response Guide
<http://web.mit.edu/environment/pdf/MITERG.pdf>

MIT Medical Service – Urgent or Emergency Care
<http://web.mit.edu/medical/services/s-emergency.html>
and <http://web.mit.edu/medical/services/s-urgent.html>

MIT Campus Police Department
<http://web.mit.edu/cp/www/>

Information Security Office
<http://web.mit.edu/ist/topics/security/>

[back to the top](#)

[Image of fire by Tom Adamson](#)

[Image of water by Cayusa](#)

Last updated April 21, 2009