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Disaster Planning Resources

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The growing awareness in Library Land of the necessity for disaster planning is reflected in the many excellent books and other resources that have been published in the past decade or so. While hardly complete, the resources listed in the annotated bibliography below will give any library a good foundation with which to build or improve their disaster plan.

Selected Print Resources



Alire, C. (Ed.). (2000). *Library Disaster Planning and Recovery Handbook*. New York: Neal Schuman Publishers, Inc. (ISBN: 1-55570-373-9).

In 1997, a flash flood roared through Colorado State University in Fort Collins and swamped the entire lower floor of the Morgan Library. Over half a million books and the entire bound serials collection were affected. Alire and her fellow Morgan Library staffers have written a comprehensive book that illustrates the complexity of a major disaster based on their on-the-ground (in-the-water?) experiences. Sections include management, public services, technical services, gifts and donations, restoration, and resource sharing. The authors skillfully address the gap between theory and reality by reviewing the literature specific to each section, and comparing what the experts write with what really happened. While *Library Disaster Planning and Recovery Handbook* is not meant to be a “ready reference” during

an actual emergency, it is an invaluable book for helping you to think through, and prepare for, the myriad details a robust response needs.



Dorge, V. & Jones, S. L., comps. (1999). *Building an Emergency Plan: A Guide for Museums and Other Cultural Institutions*. Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute. (ISBN: 0-89236-529-3)

There are many excellent books available for libraries, but far fewer for cultural institutions whose collections focus less on text and more on physical objects. Dorge and Jones have filled in this important gap with *Building an Emergency Plan*, based on documents from many experts in the museum field, including the Getty Conservation Institute. The book is exceptionally well-organized, first identifying critical roles, such as the director, the emergency preparedness manager, and team leaders. The authors then break down tasks according to these roles. Exercises and “Questions to Consider” support writing a plan and developing effective responses. A very detailed, precise, and comprehensive resource.

Halsted, D. D., Jasper, R. P. & Little, F. M. (2004). *Disaster Planning: A How-To-Do-It Manual for Librarians with Planning Templates on CD-ROM*. New York: Neal Schuman Publishers, Inc. (ISBN: 1-55570-486-7)



The authors of *Disaster Planning: A How-To-Do-It Manual* have been there, done that, and know whereof they write, having survived one of Houston's more devastating storms in 2001. From their experience, they have written this comprehensive, step-by-step, planning guide. Sections cover creating a response team, writing a plan, identifying unique attributes of particular types of disasters (such as earthquakes, floods, terrorism, etc.), finances, drills, and much more. The accompanying CD-ROM includes everything you need to customize a plan for your library.



Heritage Preservation (2006). *Field Guide to Emergency Response*. Washington, D.C.: Heritage Preservation. (ISBN: 0838984266)

This slim book is one of the best resources available for those libraries which do not have the staff or time to devote to in-depth disaster planning. The book is organized in four tabbed sections that cover what to do first, how to gather a team together, common disaster problems and how to deal with them, and a listing of online resources. The *Field Guide* includes blank worksheets, so you can customize the book and use it as your actual disaster plan. An added bonus is the accompanying DVD that provides step-by-step instructions on how to salvage materials affected by water, mud, mold, pests, and other hazards. If you only have one disaster resource in your collection, this should be it.



Heritage Preservation (2005). *Emergency Response and Salvage Wheel*. Washington, D.C.: Heritage Preservation.

This handy tool is not a book, but too useful not to include as a print resource. Heritage Preservation has developed a user-friendly slide wheel that provides clear, succinct instructions for responding to a disaster. Side One covers action steps, such as stabilizing the environment, assessing the disaster, and identifying salvage priorities. Side Two outlines salvage techniques for a wide variety of materials, from paper and textiles to photographs and electronic media. The wheel is an excellent supplement to the *Field Guide* (see below), also published by Heritage Preservation.





Kahn, M. B. (2003). *Disaster Response and Planning for Libraries* 2nd Ed. Chicago: American Library Association. (ISBN: 0-8389-0837-3)

Miriam Kahn has been involved in preservation and recovery of library materials for almost twenty years. Her expertise informs every aspect of this excellent guide to disaster planning. The book is well-organized and covers each step of the planning process, including assessment, prevention, emergency response, and recovery of materials and services. Case studies, multiple checklists and forms, and an extensive resource directory add to this publication's value. Highly recommended.

Kahn, M. B. (2004). *Protecting Your Library's Digital Sources: The Essential Guide to Planning and Preservation*. Chicago: American Library Association. (ISBN: 0-8389-0873-X)

Another Kahn book! With this book, the focus turns from the usual hazards of fire, floods, and earthquakes to the unique aspects of computers and digital collections, such as vulnerability to hackers and system crashes. The first section discusses preventing or recovering from short-term losses, while the second section examines long term preservation concerns, such as changes in format and access. *Protecting Your Library's Digital Sources* includes a large

number of forms, including a basic disaster response action plan checklist, inventories, business recovery steps, computer configuration worksheets, and decision-making criteria. An in-depth bibliography is also included.



Thenell, J. (2004). *The Library's Crisis Communication Planner: A PR guide for Handling Every Emergency*. Chicago: American Library Association. (ISBN: 0-8389-0870-5)

Jan Thenell (former Public Relations Manager for Multnomah County Library) has written a clear, practical, and comprehensive guide to managing communications during a disaster. She walks you through every step, from setting up your communications plan and developing relationships with the media, to immediate steps to take during a disaster and how to follow up once the disaster is over. *The Library's Crisis Communication Planner* includes many worksheets, tips, and sample news releases. This book is a valuable resource for all libraries, no matter the size.



Wellheiser, J. & Scott, J. (2002). *An Ounce of Prevention: Integrated Disaster Planning for Archives, Libraries and Record Centres* 2nd Ed. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, Inc. (ISBN: 0-8108-4176-2)

Wellheiser and Scott have updated their 1985 classic to include electronic media, IT and advances in disaster planning based on hard-won experience. The authors cover every aspect of disaster planning in great detail: prevention; protection; preparedness; response; recovery; rehabilitation; and post-disaster planning. The book includes probably the best indexed resource directories on an international scale currently available (with particular emphasis on Canadian resources).

Selected Web Resources

Conservation Center for Art and Historical Artifacts at <http://www.ccaha.org>.

Disaster Recovery publications address salvaging books, art on paper, photograph collections and managing a mold invasion.

CoOL Conservation Online at <http://palimpsest.stanford.edu/>

A comprehensive site with a rich array of resources and links, including many institutional disaster plans.

dPlan at <http://www.dplan.org>.

A free online disaster plan template that provides step-by-step guidance to customizing your own plan. The data is securely stored in an “undisclosed location” somewhere in the Midwest, so no

matter where you are, if you have on-line access, you can pull up your plan.

Northeast Document and Conservation Center at <http://www.nedcc.org>.

Leaflets addressing disaster planning, preservation planning, environmental monitoring, emergency management, storage and handling, reformatting and conservation procedures.

NWCentral at <http://www.nwcentral.org/>.

A great site for continuing education and other resources geared toward Pacific Northwest libraries.

Oregon Library Association Preservation Roundtable at <http://www.olaweb.org/mc/page.do?sitePageId=63278>.

The site includes a disaster plan template, worksheets and disaster recovery information links.

Regional Alliance for Preservation at <http://www.rap-arcc.org/>.

Members include service networks such as Amigos, Solinet and conservation agencies that have emergency planning resources on their Web sites.

WESTPAS at <http://westpas.org/>.

A new service for the western regions of the United States and Territories offers free training on disaster preparedness and response as well as 24/7 professional disaster response support.

