



When Disaster Strikes: Emergency Response and Salvage of Collections Damaged by Water

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Abstract:

When disasters or emergencies strike libraries, archives or museums, losses can be fast and catastrophic. Once the basic personal and community needs of shelter, food and safety are provided, the safeguarding of cultural collections will be the next priority for these institutions. Time is critical for a water-based emergency. Paper-based items cockle and distort almost immediately after becoming wet. Books swell and bulge their covers open. Coated papers begin to stick and block together. An effective response within the first 48 hours after the event can successfully salvage collection items. This workshop explores the techniques and materials required for a timely initial response after a water-based disaster. Participants will gather tips and resources to help build their decision-making skills during a disaster.