Records Emergency Planning

Emergency recovery is needed to restore University records operations after a lapse due to an emergency. The incident could be an electrical outage, fire, flood, or other natural or human caused disaster. The effects may be reduced or avoided if you have planned ahead to respond appropriately to the incident.

Having an effective Records Emergency Action Plan (REAP) in place before an incident occurs is key to improving the odds for a successful recovery of records after an emergency.

**WHAT IS A REAP?**

- A written, approved, implemented, and periodically tested program that includes all actions to be taken to reduce the risk to records should an emergency arise.
- The plan needs to be integrated into the routine operating procedures of the department.
- Serves as a vital organizational tool in the event of an emergency or disaster.

**BENEFITS OF DEVELOPING A REAP**

- Rapid resumption of operations
- Appropriate and effective response
- Increased appreciation of the importance of good records management practices

According to the National Archives, Organizations with a tested REAP in place are likely to experience less impact during or following an emergency, allowing for a more rapid resumption of operations.

**PREPARING FOR THE REAP**

Perform a risk analysis and assessment of your records. The steps are:

- Identify potential risks to records
- Analyze the risks
- Prioritize the impact on records
- Determine appropriate mitigation and preparedness strategies

Contact the Records Manager, Monte Asche, at 282-3045 for more information on developing a departmental REAP.

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**Identifying Damage to Records**

There are a number of questions that need to be answered immediately to assess the nature and severity of the damage.

**Develop a Response Plan**

A meeting will need to be held to review the damage assessment. Using the information gathered evaluate the magnitude of the incident and the impact on the records.
Identifying Damaged Records

In order to properly document the damage, you will need to identify which records have been damaged, and estimate the number of each record type damaged and the nature of the damage.

- **Identify** the record types—The Record Custodian will need to provide important information including:
  - Record type and series number
  - Record classification or privacy protection
  - Vital, essential, or archival record
  - Any other information related to the record
- **Finding Aids or Database**—The finding aids essential to the use of the records will need to be identified and located
- **Easily Replaced Records**—Can records be easily and more cost-effectively replaced from copies or back-ups held elsewhere or are the records unique and irreplaceable?
- **Formats**—Need to document the formats to determine the preservation expertise required for recovery. Are they boxed, in file cabinets, on a server or hard drive, films, photos, etc.?
- **Damage Type**
  - Damp, wet, or saturated (box or entire contents)
  - Burned edges or completely charred
  - Contamination or surfaced soiled
  - Mold (do not handle)
  - Clean water, gray water, or black water

Recovery Tips

**MOLD**

Quarantine moldy records from unaffected records. According to the N.E. Document Preservation Center, a mycologist should be consulted to insure that no toxic mold species are present. If the wet or damp materials do contain toxic mold, your work is done.

Employees sent into these areas need to wear a protective air filter.

SOURCE: naidonline.org/forms/whitepaper/457_Moldy-records.pdf

**DRYING METHODS**

- Air Drying—Traditional method of drying
- Freezer Drying—Very slow, takes months
- Dehumidification Drying—Good for damp, not wet material
- Vacuum Freeze Drying—For records in boxes
- Vacuum Thermal Drying—Cost effective for low value records
- Cryogenic Drying—More expensive than freeze drying

**RECOVERY VENDORS**

- BELFOR PROPERTY RESTORATION
  - www.belfor.com/en/us
  - 800-856-3333
- POLYGON
  - 800-422-6379
- SERVPRO
  - http://www.servproidahofalls.com/
  - 208-523-5365
Records Response Plan

Identify individuals who need to be present, and not everyone involved needs to be at the meeting but should be available by mobile phone, teleconference or videoconference.

**DECISIONS TO BE MADE ON**
- Priorities for response
- Recovery techniques to be used for each type of record
- Resources to be used, including staff, contracted labor, space, time, and contractors

**RESPONSE TEAM PLANNING WILL DETERMINE**
- The staffing
- Location of command center for communications
- The supply chain
- Location of staging area and recovery areas needed
- Any contractor contacts
- Priorities for response

Once a response plan is agreed upon by all decision-makers, including senior management, the Response Coordinators normally carries out the plan to meet the objectives.

**RESPONSE TEAM DUTIES**
- Separate records by type of recovery
- Moves records or supervises contracted labor
- Packs records for shipment to another facility (if needed)
- Dries material
- Maintain record tracking system
- Labels records that have been lost/destroyed
- Labels or re-labels boxes for shipment
- Maintain tracking records of the pack-out, including inventories of records

**RESPONSE COORDINATOR**
- Organizes and manages the response recovery process
- Sets priorities based on the assessment of the Assessment Team
- Assigns Response Team members and monitors work
- Instructs the Response Team on the response plan
- Provides the team with health and safety precautions and instructions
- Monitors progress of team members
- Reports on progress, actions taken, problems encountered, and future possible risks

**RESPONSE RECORDER**
- Documents progress
- Keeps records of all documentation (photos, maps, communications, and decisions) related to incident
- Records and tracks all purchases and orders placed
- Coordinates requests for materials, information, and other assistance

For more information on records emergency planning and response contact the University Records Manager, Monte G. Asche, aschmont@isu.edu

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**FAST FACTS***

In Washington D.C. NARA houses records totaling approximately 10 billion pieces of paper and 25 million still pictures and graphics; 300,000 reels of motion picture film and 400,000 sound and video recordings; 12 million maps, charts, and architectural and engineering plans; and 24 million aerial photographs.

80%

In 2010, almost 80% of agencies (government) were at moderate to high risk of improper disposition of records. This was attributed to a lack of training. **

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**RESOURCES**

National Archives: Emergency Planning and Response

The National Archives website has training videos, tools, and information to with record emergency planning and response: http://www.archives.gov/preservation/records-emergency/

FEMA

Federal Emergency Management Agency

FEMA also has valuable information for essential records management. Here is a link to their most recent .PDF pamphlet http://goo.gl/s3akUh and here is a helpful .PPT for vital records https://goo.gl/wHnrHf

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**WHAT? YOU HAVE FLOODED RECORDS**

**GO TO THE RECORDS RESPONSE PLAN**

Photos on page 1 from the National Archives Catalog https://catalog.archives.gov