



Brief Guide to Flood Response

In light of recent events, MAS would like to present its members some quick information in regards to flood response for museums.

If you have been able to anticipate that your museum will be in a flood zone, you should turn gas, power, and water utilities off. Secure delicate or high priority items. Move all other objects off and away from the floor or to higher floors. Wrap shelves and cabinets in heavy plastic sheeting and secure with waterproof tape. If directed by the local authorities, sandbag the museum's perimeter. Take all museum information with you when you leave. Store electronics in safe spot.

Human safety is always the first priority. If it is not safe to enter your building, **do not** go in. Return to your museum when directed by the local authorities, as they will let you know when it is safe. Ensure that all gas, power and water utilities are turned off and that the building has been declared safe.

Designate one person as the focal point of communications. This will help to mobilize and organize the salvage team as well as communicate with the local authorities. Collect supplies, such as: heavy plastic sheeting, fans, tables, clean water, masks (or respirators if warranted), plastic gloves, tape, Ziplock bags, boxes, mops, shovels, sponges, wet/dry Shop Vacuums, towels, large garbage bags, blotting paper and/or unprinted newsprint. Most of these should be found in a hardware store and will come in handy.

Document the status of your museum for insurance purposes; take photos if able.

Try to reduce the humidity of the building as quickly as possible to prevent mould growth. This could involve pumping out water (as directed by the local authorities), using dehumidifiers or fans, opening windows and doors and/or using air conditioning or heat. If mould is already present, do not use fans in order to prevent it from spreading. Once the museum has gotten to a dry state, it will still need to be cleaned.

Always ensure that you are using the required Personal Protective Equipment, such as respirators. **Human safety is of the utmost importance.** Ensure that all workers do not get exhausted and receive breaks.

Salvaging of objects will take some time; be patient, there is still a long journey of recovery ahead. Determine what objects are of salvage priority, this might include vital institutional information, loaned objects, or objects most prone to continued damage unless treated right away. Generally, the wettest objects are salvaged right away, then the damp all the way down to the driest. Document what went where. Place objects into water proof boxes (or line cardboard boxes with garbage bags) and transport

objects to a salvage centre, such as a school gym or community centre. From there objects can be further assessed and recovered. Depending on the material type, they should be treated differently. Attached is the link to *Salvage at a Glance* by Betty Walsh.
(http://www.cdncouncilarchives.ca/salvage_en.pdf)

If you have questions or need assistance of any sort, please contact the Museums Association of Saskatchewan at 306-780-9279 or toll-free at 1-866-568-7386. MAS has numerous resources to assist its members regarding this topic.

Numbers to call:

- SK Provincial Disaster Assistance Program (PDAP): 1-866-636-4033
- SaskEnergy: 1-888-700-0427
- SaskPower Flood Information Line: 1-877-585-3395
- Water Security Agency Hotline: 1-866-727-5420