

## Section 2: Disaster Recovery



## Please note . . .

This section is an excerpt from "Vital Records and Business Continuity," an ARMA International online course that is included in the Essentials of RIM Certificate program.

In this format, the audio track will not play and certain interactions may not be functional.



## Section 2 Learning Objectives

Upon completing this section, you will be able to:

1. Summarize the steps in a disaster recovery plan
2. Describe the common salvaging methods



## Disaster Recovery Plan

The second prime component in business continuity is the disaster recovery plan, which is an approved course of action to take after a disaster strikes. It describes how to restore critical business functions and reclaim damaged records.

You cannot realistically prepare your organization for every disaster scenario. Reviewing, refining, and testing the disaster plan will improve your response during the chaos of a real event.

The success of a disaster recovery plan relies largely on how well RIM professionals manage the vital records program before a crisis occurs.

## Five Steps to Disaster Recovery

In *Emergency Management for Records and Information Management Programs*, Jones and Keyes describe in great detail the five steps to disaster recovery for records.

1. Assess the damage
2. Stabilize the situation
3. Begin salvage operations
4. Begin restoration procedures
5. Resume operations



Next, we briefly discuss each step.

## 1. Assess the Damage

There are three points for this step:

1. To begin damage assessment, contact your recovery service promptly.
2. Perform an initial damage assessment of your vital records.
3. Determine the recovery priorities based on your vital records' priorities.

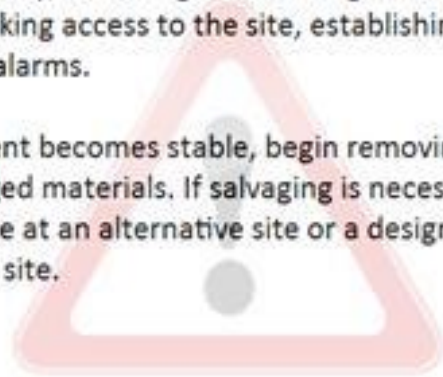
Of course, if your organization already had a vital records program in place, then you could quickly identify priorities in your recovery efforts because you've already identified the mission-critical records. Further, your damage would likely be minimal. Duplicate copies of records would be safe and easily accessed in an offsite location, thereby greatly reducing the need for salvage operations. This is just one example of the cost-effectiveness of having a vital records program.

## 2. Stabilize the Situation

Stabilizing the situation may occur at the same time – or even before – the damage assessment. The key is to make sure personnel are safeguarded.

Some potential measures include turning off gas or water leaks, turning off electricity, removing outstanding water, removing debris that's blocking access to the site, establishing security, and reactivating alarms.

As the environment becomes stable, begin removing and relocating damaged materials. If salvaging is necessary, this usually takes place at an alternative site or a designated disaster recovery site.



### 3. Begin Salvage Operations

If you already had a vital records program in place, your need to salvage materials would be greatly reduced or non-existent.

Nonetheless, Jones and Keyes suggest several common techniques when salvaging vital records is necessary. We take a look at these techniques on the next several screens.



## Vacuum Drying

Vacuum drying wet paper records helps prevent mold or mildew and the swelling of bound volumes. It also prevents further deterioration while recovery and restoration procedures are carried out.

(For books and documents that are saturated, freezing is often the measure taken. We discuss this in a moment.)

## Air Drying

Air drying is effective with a smaller volume of records that have humidity-related damage. Separate the records and spread them out to dry. Complete this within 72 hours.

## Dehumidifying

Dehumidifiers and air movers are also useful, especially with larger quantities that have humidity damage. Leave the documents in their original containers and bring in dehumidifiers and air movers. Depending on the volume, this process can take weeks to complete.



## Freezing

Freezing is helpful when documents have received direct water damage. Usually a restoration specialist places them in special containers in commercial freezers. Depending on the volume, this process often takes months to complete.

While it's usually best to use a specialist to handle water-damaged documents, if you do freeze them in-house, make sure to begin the process within 48 hours to deter mold build-up. Low-temperature blasters result in smaller ice crystals, which makes for a better end product.

## Removing Fire Damage

Fire-damaged records must have soot and smoke deposits removed and any odors neutralized. Charred records may have to be microfilmed or photocopied to retain the information, and the originals destroyed.



## Removing Pest Damage

Paper records damaged by roaches and silverfish can usually be cleaned and microfilmed. Paper records damaged by rodents or termites are usually unsalvageable.



## Removing Hazards



Information on records damaged by hazardous chemicals must be transferred to another media, and the original records destroyed.

## Handling Damaged Materials

Janie Wait, CRM, has special expertise in the topics of disaster recovery and business continuity. On the next few screens we feature her advice for handling damaged materials in-house or preparing them for the recovery specialists.



## Handling Damaged Materials: Docs and Books

- Use cardboard “banker’s box” for packing.
- Handle wet materials carefully to avoid additional damage.
- Rinse off any heavy mud or dirt.
- Pack books with their spines down. Pack them only one width high.
- Pack documents upright in the box.
- When palletizing boxes, stack them only three high to prevent crushing the bottom layer during transport.

## Handling Damaged Materials: Blueprints, Maps

- Do not try to separate the items until they are dry.
- Support individual flat drawings on a cardboard or wood-framed window screen. If the materials are stored in a map case, consider using the drawers for support and moving.
- Support any rolled drawings in sections of PCV pipe or cardboard tubes.
- Place groups of hanging drawings on clean, heavy cardboard and interleave cardboard between each set.



## Handling Damaged Materials: Micrographics

If you can ship the products the same day they get wet, then follow these instructions:

1. Put rubber bands around 35mm film boxes to keep the film reel and its box together to preserve labeling information. (Do not attempt to separate wet fiche.)
2. Place wet film or fiche in a plastic bag, seal it tightly, and keep it cold.
3. Put the bag in a sturdy cardboard box, label it, and ship it by overnight express to a designated recovery center.



## Handling Damaged Materials: Photographics

1. Keep all damaged materials cold and wet. Never let them dry out.
2. Rinse away any mud or particles.
3. Place the wet items in plastic bags. Seal and label the bags and keep them cold.
4. Put the bags in a sturdy box, label the box, and ship it by overnight express to a recovery center.

## Handling Damaged Materials: Tapes

- Do not unwind the tapes or try to dry them.
- Shake off any excess water.
- Place the tapes with their boxes into a plastic bag, seal it tightly, and keep it cool.
- Put the bags in a sturdy box and ship it within 24 hours by overnight express to a recovery center.



## Handling Damaged Materials: Disks and Drives

- Keep the disks and their sleeves together to preserve labeling information.
- Place the wet disks in a plastic bag, seal it tightly, and freeze it.
- Put the bag in a sturdy box and ship it within 24 hours by overnight express to a recovery center.

## 4. Begin Restoration Procedures

If your operating site has suffered severe damage, it must be restored before you can use it.

Listed below are common procedures for restoring your

- Repair or replace damaged file housing, retrieval equipment, and computers.
- Clean and disinfect your HVAC systems, floors, walls ceilings, carpets, furniture, equipment, draperies, and records housing.
- Remove all traces of moisture, soot, smoke damage, chemical residue, and odor.
- Re-label new file folders, microfilm, CDs, etc.
- Duplicate your vital records as needed.



## 5. Resume Operations

After the crisis has been stabilized and recovery procedures completed, you may relocate the records in their normal operation facilities. Implementation actions associated with a return to normal operations include:

- Informing all personnel that the emergency or threat no longer exists, and instructing them on how to resume normal operations
- Supervising an orderly return to the normal facility or a move to a temporary or new permanent facility
- Verifying that the organization can accomplish all essential functions at the new or restored facility
- Conducting an after-action review, identifying areas for improvement, documenting these in your disaster recovery plan, and developing a remedial action plan as soon as possible



## End of the Module

