

DISASTER PLANNING:

SALVAGE PRIORITIES

In the event of a large scale emergency, your decision to salvage certain materials before others will be critical. Wet materials only have 48 hours before mold growth begins, doing irreparable harm. Other limitations to your salvage efforts could include time restrictions by fire department officials, space limitations in available freezers, or quantity limitations because of a large amount of damage to collections. A pre-planned list of salvage priorities will help ensure that your efforts in the critical first hours after a disaster will be directed toward saving your most valuable collections and records, instead of replaceable, low-value materials.

Compile a list of salvage priorities for each department, area and/or office. Priorities should be based on the following for collections, record groups, or valuable items:

- a) Is it critical for the ongoing operations of the institution?
- b) Is it available in another collection?
- c) Can it be replaced?
- d) Would the replacement cost be more/less than the cost of restoration?
- e) Does it have a high or low collection value or priority?
- f) Would it require immediate salvage attention because of its composition?

