



**EMERGENCY PLAN FOR BRITISH VIRGIN  
ISLANDS GOVERNMENT RECORDS AND  
ARCHIVES IN THE CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION  
COMPLEX, THE OLD ADMINISTRATION  
BUILDING, VARIOUS GOVERNMENT OFFICES  
AND OFF-SITES**

Archives and Records Management Unit  
Deputy Governor's Office  
Road Town, Tortola  
British Virgin Islands  
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## **INTRODUCTION**

No organization is totally immune from emergencies or disasters, either from natural causes or human action. Hurricanes, earthquakes, floods and fires take place frequently. Civil unrest, power failures or electrical faults, leaks or drainage problems, or mishandling and human error can lead to an emergency. Offices and records can suffer in an emergency; even an event as seemingly insignificant as a leaking pipe, a broken dehumidifier or a shut down in temperature controls.

This plan seeks to establish procedures to protect Records and Archives and to ensure that in the event of an emergency, action is taken immediately to reduce the damage incurred and institute recovery procedures right away. Establishing guidelines and procedures to deal with various types of disasters is a major step toward preparing the institution and its staff in the event of a catastrophe. This step helps to focus attention on procedures necessary to respond quickly and efficiently in limiting injury or trauma to staff and researchers; damage and further deterioration to any collections involved and have repairs and conservation done as soon as possible. Although simply having such a plan is no guarantee it would be implemented smoothly in the event of a disaster, it serves as an invaluable tool to pinpoint any inherent weakness or oversights which may come to light during a catastrophe and which could be avoided the next time. As such, a Disaster Preparedness Plan is not set in stone but serves as a grid to continuously build upon as new information and insight become available.

## **PURPOSE OF THE PLAN**

The purpose of this plan is six fold.

1. To ensure that the historical, literary and cultural heritage of the people of The Virgin Islands are protected from any form of disaster. For example
  - (I) Mould
  - (ii) Mildew
  - (iii) Insects and rodents
  - (iv) Human beings
  - (v) Water damage
  - (vi) Fire damage
2. To ensure that measures are put in place so that the physical structure/building would be adequately protected if or when disaster strikes.
3. To ensure that there is no loss of life under any circumstance.
4. To provide a plan for the removal of the records should any damage to the physical structure.
5. To ensure that conservation measures be put in place in case of disaster.
6. To ensure that staff members are familiar with and are able to execute the disaster plan.

## **ARCHIVES AND RECORDS UNIT**

### **The Environment**

The lack of a main Archives Repository and a Records Centre in the Territory means that the records and archives of the BVI Government are housed in various places in and around Road Town as follows:

A) The Old Administration Building , Main Street, Road Town houses –

- i. The Archives,- General older archives from 17000s-1970s (Top Floor)
- ii. High Court Registry - Records from 1885-1990s (Top Floor)
- iii. Post Office- Records from (Ground floor)

B) The Central Administration Complex Building (Basement) houses intermediate records and records more than 30 years old of several government departments. Records range form 1950 to 2000s. This storage being on the ground floor over which utility pipes run, is not ideal and the records are at risk.

C) Off-site stores. The following Departments have rented storage space.

- i. The BVI Electricity Corporation – Pockwood Pond
- ii. The Audit Department – Fish Bay
- iii. The BVI Tourist Board- Fish Bay
- iv. BVI Customs- Port Purcell
- v. High Court Registry- Port Purcell
- vi. Water & Sewerage Department-

## **THE BUILDINGS**

The Old Administration Building also known as the Old Post Office was built in 1866. The National Archives occupy a fire-proof strong room built in the 1960s and an adjoining ante room. Both rooms were renovated, lighted and air- conditioned in 2004. A fire-detection system was also installed.

Access to the Archives is up the stairs leading from the Post Office, into the main electronic door of the High Court Registry, then right, through a lock- and- key-door.

The High Court Registry, also situated on the top floor was renovated after a fire in 2002. There is a temperature controlled vault for inactive records in that Department.

## **CONCERNS**

There are a number of concerns about the building:

- i. The building was completed in 1899. Major additions came later:- A second floor, in 1925; two wings on the second storey later; the rear on the western side for the Treasury in the 1960s and rooms at the top and back ( in the 1980s) which now house the Environmental and Solid Waste Departments. There was a fire on the second floor (The High Court Registry) in 2002 and although it was recently renovated there are leaks throughout the roof including the ceiling of the Archives.
- ii. There are constant black-outs sometimes several times a day. This affects the air-conditioning units and the fluctuation in temperature is detrimental to the Archives.
- iii. The Archives Strong Room is already too full and there is no space to receive new archives which should have been transferred from the intermediate stores several years ago.
- iv. The Fire Detection system should be upgraded as recommended by the Fire Department.

## **THE INTERMEDIATE RECORDS STORAGE**

### **Basement of The Central Administration Complex (CAC)Building**

#### **Environment.**

The basement of the Central Administration Building is a poor substitute for a Records Centre. The rooms allocated as storage space for various departments can be accessed through the security doors of the East and West wings. Stairs lead down to the various storage sections which are clearly labeled.

#### **Concerns:**

1. Built in the 1990s, and occupied in 1994, the building suffers from problems surrounding poor circulation of air. There is an aggressive mould growth
2. With no air-conditioning, the storage is stuffy, mouldy and not conducive to a healthy environment for neither records nor staff.
3. In several instances storage space for records is shared with other types of goods some of which could be combustible and dangerous.
4. Although some Departments have steel shelving and even mobile shelving, there are still too many records sitting on the floor.
5. There are no fire extinguishers or smoke detectors installed.
6. There is no staff assigned to manage the store

## **Off-site Stores**

This storage arrangement is unsatisfactory and conditions are similar to that of the Central Administration Basement storage. Additionally, Departments are faced with high monthly bills for renting storage space.

## **Emergency Response Team**

Mrs. Verna Penn Moll-Chief Records Management Officer and CAP- Controller of  
Emergency Operations  
Althea, Richardson Crandall, Min. of Finance  
Kendrick Cline, Human Resources Dept.

## **Buildings Concerns**

Mr Ariel Donavon  
Mr. Roy Frett- Facilities Dept

## **Collections**

Mrs. Joy Greenaway /or Janice Blyden- Public Library

## **Media**

Mrs Geraldine Ritter, Director GIS, Media Manager  
Permanent Secretary/Assistant Secretary, DGO

## **Other Personnel**

Jennifer Flemming /Henry  
Myrna Lennard

## **Records Stores**

See response person for each Department in Appendix A (Attached)

### **PRIORITIES LIST**

In the event that there is a disaster the following archival collections should be retrieved in the order of priority listed below. As there are several places of deposit, the Committee will be divided up accordingly in the event that a disaster affects both main buildings and off-sites. Should there be a disaster which damages the records, the Response and Records Officers with guidance from the Archives Unit will spearhead the recovery efforts.

### **Non - Replaceable Records**

#### **Location (in Brackets below)**

#### **Priority #1**

1. Manuscript Laws of The British Virgin Islands
2. Registrar General Collection (Civil Registry)
3. Colonial Secretary Papers (The Archives- Old Admin Building)
4. General Court Minutes (High Court Registry)
5. Supreme Court Minutes (High Court Registry)
6. Magistrate Court Minutes (Magistrate Court)
7. Slave Registers (Civil Registry)
8. Wills (Civil Registry)
9. Land Records (Land Registry)
10. All rare books on BVI history (Public Library)
11. Social Security Records (Social Security Department)

#### **Priority #2**

#### **Location: (in Brackets below)**

1. Maps and Plans (Survey Dept and Public Works)
2. Survey Reports (Survey Dept and Public Works)
3. Photographic Collection (Government Information Service- CAC)
4. Audio/Visual Collection (Government Information Service- CAC)
5. House of Assembly Records (Legislative Council Office)
7. Legislative Council Minutes (Legislative Council Office)

- |                                     |                                  |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 8. Executive Council Minutes        | (Governor's Office)              |
| 9. Governor's Office Records        | (Governor's Office)              |
| 10. Governor in Council Proceedings | ( Governor's Office)             |
| 11. Labour Records                  | (Labour Department )             |
| 12. Immigration Records             | (Immigration Department Records) |

**Priority #3**

1. Board of Education Records
2. Colonial Secretary Letter Books
4. Blue Books

**Replaceable Records**

**Location (in Brackets below)**

- |                              |                                  |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Governors Despatches      | (Archives)                       |
| 2. Contemporary Newspapers   | (Public Library)                 |
| 3. Microfilm Collection      | (Public Library & Archives Unit) |
| 4. Reference Book Collection | (Public Library)                 |
| 5. Encyclopaedias            | (Public Library)                 |

## **PROTECTIVE AND PREVENTATIVE MEASURES**

### **I. FIRE**

1. The fire alarms, escapes and exits are to be checked daily by Buildings Concerns Manager.
2. All fire exits should be properly identified and kept clear at all times.
3. The fire extinguishers are to be checked twice a year. All the extinguishers should be easily accessible. The built in fire alarm must be checked twice monthly. (The Department of Archives is investigating the feasibility and cost of having the powder extinguishers replaced with water sprinklers. Water damage could be corrected through freeze-drying but we are unaware of the chemical composition of the halon extinguishers and the damage which can be accrued.)
4. Fire drills should be held once a month. All staff members are expected to cooperate.
5. All staff members should be taught how to use the fire extinguishers.
6. No smoking is allowed in the records and Archives storage
7. All electrical equipment must be turned off daily before leaving the compound.
8. The necessary supplies such as additional fire extinguishers should be purchased by the Supplies Officer.
9. The compound must be readily accessible. **ABSOLUTELY NO ONE SHOULD BLOCK THE DRIVEWAY.**
10. If there is a fire, the Fire Department will be notified by either the Buildings Concerns Manager or whoever discovers that there is a fire first.

## II. FLOODING

Preventative measures are as follows:

1. Ensure that records are always elevated. No archival material should be left on the floor.
  2. The Pump room should be inspected monthly by Buildings Concerns Manager.
  3. The Buildings Concerns Manager should check sand bags periodically and ensure that they are in good condition and ready and available for use.
- 11-
4. Ensure that water taps are turned off after use. In the case of a power outage special care must be taken to ensure that all faucets have been turned off. **(We must ensure that the Public library follows these protective and preventative measures as well.)**
  5. A large supply of plastic should be kept in stock in case of flooding
  6. Any equipment such as duct tapes, extra mops, sponges, buckets etc should be purchased and kept in stock for usage in the event of a disaster.
  7. If there is a persistent leakage with any of the faucets please inform Mr. Roy Frett, the Building Concerns Manager
  8. The drains on the roof of both buildings should be cleaned periodically to ensure that there is no blockage in the event of heavy rains. Thus a disaster could be prevented.
  9. Ensure that the relevant keys for security cages have been sorted and labeled and easily accessible. \*
  10. Ensure that an adequate supply of blotting paper is available for immediate use. \*

### **III. HURRICANES**

The BVI has a sub-tropical climate which is hurricane prone. Therefore protective measures must always be in place in case a hurricane strikes during the hurricane season of 1<sup>st</sup> June – 30<sup>th</sup> November.

1. The hurricane shutters should be checked prior to the beginning of the hurricane season to see if they are in good condition. If they are damaged they should be replaced or repaired as soon as possible.
2. Sandbags should be bought prior to the season to ensure that they are in good condition and readily available for packing.
3. All trees covering any roof under which records are stored should be trimmed.
5. The roof should be checked periodically to ensure that there is no possibility of leakage.
6. The necessary equipment such as ladders, lanterns, batteries, fire extinguishers, plastic safety helmets, facemasks, rubber boots etc. should be purchased before the season begins.

### **IV. MOULD, MILDEW AND INSECTS**

1. Ensure that the temperature of the repository is kept at 68°F.
2. Maintain the relative humidity at 55°F.
3. Ensure that all documents deposited into the Archives are fumigated and dusted before entry into the repository.
4. Ensure that documents are placed in acid free boxes, folders or papers.
5. The Buildings are fumigated inside regularly i.e. every three months.
- 6.

## **V. VANDALISM**

Preventative measures to guard against vandalism of the property and records are as follows:

1. During office hours the security guard must police the grounds and ensure that no strange persons (vandals) are on the office compound.
2. All security bars must be locked when leaving the compound.
3. The pump room and other rooms holding equipment of any kind must be kept locked at all times.

## **VI. THEFT**

Theft of any sort must be guarded against by all means. As a result, the following preventative measures must be taken with regards to:

### **A. ARCHIVAL DOCUMENTS (When the Archives Repository is functional)**

1. The Research Room must be properly supervised at all times by 2 or 3 staff members.
2. Researchers must be apprised of the Research Room rules and regulations.
3. Research staff must ensure that all researchers sign the register and fill out the necessary forms, especially the document call slip which can be used in tracing documents should they be stolen.
4. Anyone failing to comply with the Rules and Regulations of the Research Room will be evicted.

### **B. OTHER AREAS**

1. Staff members should wear their identification badges at all times.
2. Every visitor who enters the Archives must sign the visitor's book.

3. Staff members must be informed when they have visitors.
4. No unauthorized person is allowed is 'staff only' unless escorted by a staff member.

## **DISASTER RESPONSE INSTRUCTIONS**

### **THE COMMITTEE'S RESPONSIBILITY**

**A. The Emergency Control Officer** will in the event of a disaster:

1. Summon the Committee and the other staff members.
2. Ensure that the Disaster Plan is implemented.
3. Assess the damage done along with the Deputy, the Buildings Concerns Manager, the Finance Officer, and others.
4. Ensure that the necessary supplies are ordered and made available.
5. Work out the logistics of the recovery effort.
6. Establish a priority schedule re: salvage.
7. Inform the Deputy Governor of the situation.
8. Relay the final decision after consultation with the Deputy Governor.
9. Set up an operations area from which he/she will operate.

**B. Finance Officer/Supplies and Equipment Officer** will in the event of a disaster:

1. Ensure that the building and vehicle insurance policies are up to date.
2. Distribute the necessary supplies.
3. Contact technicians such as the electricians, plumbers, Ministry of Works, Water and Sewage, BVI .Electricity .Corp. etc.
4. Assess the damage done and indicate the equipment needed.

5. Ensure that in the event that the records or artifacts should need to be evacuated, that transportation is available and a safe place in which to store them is procured.

**C. Research Room Supervisor and Supervisor of Museums** will in the event of a disaster:

1. Assess the damage done to records/artifacts.
2. Prioritize as to which collection or items will be dealt with first.
3. Keep track of documents or artifacts sent for conservation.

**D. Conservator/Photographic Specialist (When there is one in place)**

1. Decide what type of conservation measures are necessary.
2. Implement the said measures.

**E. Media Manager**

1. Deal with Press releases, news stories etc.
2. Ensure that the appropriate statements are made.

**F. Personnel Manager**

1. Conduct a roll call in the event of a fire to ensure that all persons are accounted for.

## **LIST OF SUPPLIES**

Aluminum shutters for all windows,  
Shutter for Front door  
Ladders (large and small)  
Radio with batteries  
Batteries  
Blotting Paper  
Surgical, Rubber and Cotton Gloves  
Tool Set  
Hurricane Tracking Map  
Flash Lights  
Fire Extinguishers  
First Aid Kit  
Plastic Trash Bags  
Crowbar  
Sledge Hammer  
Saw/ Hammer and Nails  
Duct Tape  
Sand Bags  
Mops, sponges, buckets, brushes, etc.  
Brooms/Paper towels  
Wheel bins  
Dehumidifiers  
Plastic Safety Helmets  
Rubber Boots  
Plastic Aprons  
Face Masks  
Water Spray Bottles  
Various size Plastic Bags  
Scissors  
Plastic Crates  
Wax Paper  
Folding Tables  
Heaters  
Fans  
Plastic trash cans  
Formeldehyde solution

Wire line

Fiberglass screening

## **THE DISASTER PLAN**

### **IN THE EVENT OF A HURRICANE THESE STEPS SHOULD BE TAKEN.**

1. Pay close attention to news items.
2. When a hurricane warning is dispatched begin to secure the buildings. Put up the hurricane shutters.
3. Put sand bags in place wherever necessary.
4. Move display cases as far from the door as possible.
5. Secure documents in their proper places and place them as high as possible on shelves.
6. Ensure that doors leading to the repository and collections are protected with sandbags
7. Secure all electrical equipment.
8. Make sure that all electricity and water supplies are turned off.

### **RECOVERY EFFORTS**

1. An assessment should be taken immediately should any damage occur.
2. Should there be glass damage all glass should be replaced as soon as possible.
3. If the roof is damaged, isolate the damaged area and remove any equipment, documents etc.
4. Should the building collapse, remove debris, evacuate the records and take them to a secure location (to be identified) to assess the damage.
5. Make sure that the building is repaired as soon as possible or re- locate permanent storage for records.
6. Should any documents be damaged by water please follow the procedures outlined in

the flooding recovery section.

## **IN EVENT OF FIRE THESE STEPS SHOULD BE TAKEN**

### **(IN THE CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION BUILDING)**

1. The Building Concerns Manager should notify the Fire department immediately.
2. The Building Concerns Manager must activate the alarm system and notify all sections in the building and the location of fire should be made known.
3. The BVI Electricity Corporation must be called immediately by the Buildings Controls Manager or his deputy.
4. Everyone must evacuate the Building immediately the alarm is sounded.
5. Staff should be advised to gather in a location away from the building.
6. The Security guards will check all sections including the bathrooms and lunchroom to ascertain that everyone has left the building.
7. The Security guards and personnel Manager will ensure that all staff members and researchers are accounted for. This could be done by roll call.
8. The electricity should be turned off.
9. Should the fire be a small one all portable fire extinguishers are to be utilized.
10. Try to contain the fire as much as safety would allow until the firemen arrive.

### **RECOVERY EFFORTS**

1. Once fire has been controlled or extinguished a thorough assessment of the damage must be made.
2. Once the Archivists, other Staff and the Buildings Concerns Manager assess the damage completely, a clean-up campaign spearheaded by the Buildings Concerns Manager should be conducted.

3. Retrieve documents from the affected area and place in a safe location whether on or off the compound.
4. In the case of water damage follow the same procedures which would be used in the event of a flood.
5. Should any document be slightly burned, consult the archivist or conservator.

### **IN EVENT OF FLOODING THESE STEPS SHOULD BE TAKEN**

1. Documents or records should be removed from lower shelves to a higher location and wherever possible, have documents removed from the room.
2. Documents should be covered with plastic immediately in the case of a broken pipe.
3. In case of flooding, water should be pumped out immediately.
4. In case of broken pipe(s) the water should be turned off and the pipes repaired.

### **RECOVERY EFFORTS**

1. Act quickly.
2. Assess the extent of the damage.
3. Consult the Archivist and Conservator and work closely with him or her.
4. Prioritize the damaged documents with regards to restoration.
5. Damaged documents should be removed immediately and placed in an open area to dry.
6. Wherever possible freeze-dry the documents in 3-10 hours. Depending on the extent of the damage this may be the only safest way to restore the documents. If facilities cannot be found in The British Virgin Islands the nearest place outside the country should be approached.

7. On completion of the disaster recovery, plastic should be removed, and documents returned to shelves and replaced in new containers or boxes.
8. If a freeze dryer is unavailable, use commercial fans to dry the documents.
9. Another method of drying which can be employed is blotting paper.
10. When packing the wet documents, be extremely careful how they are handled. They would be very fragile at this time.
11. Pack the wet documents in plastic crates, fill the crates three quarters of the way full and then mark with identification labels.
12. Single sheets of paper should not be separated but interleave the folders every two inches with freezer paper.
13. Water colours, maps and manuscripts with soluble media should not be blotted.
14. Do not open or close wet books or remove wet book covers.
15. If the water is dirty; wash the books before freezing.
16. Do not wash open books. Books should be washed closed in tubs of running water and dabbed. Do not rub.
17. Pack books with the spine down.
18. Leather, parchment and vellum bindings are immediate priority because they distort and disintegrate in water.
19. After all the methods of salvaging have been completed and books and documents dried, repairing of documents and rebinding of books can take place.

**SHOULD MOULD AND MILDEW OCCUR BECAUSE OF ANY TYPE OF FLOODING OR OTHER CONDITIONS THE FOLLOWING STEPS MUST BE TAKEN:**

1. Wear a filter respirator.
2. Mould kills, it is toxic therefore all cleaning of books or documents with mould should be done outside in the open air and not in doors.
3. Thymol should not be used in cleaning mould from documents. It has been found to be a health hazard.
4. Storage conditions should be checked and corrected to prevent further mould outbreak. Ensure that the temperature and humidity are at the right level as mould thrives on dampness and still air.

**MAGNETIC MEDIA**

Computer equipment

In the event of damage to computer equipment the following steps should be taken:

1. Retrieve the equipment and disks no matter what condition they are in as information may be rescued from the hard drive or floppy disks.
2. The Equipment Officer should notify ISU immediately re: the type and the extent of the damage accrued to the equipment.
3. Do not plug in any damaged electrical equipment.

**Audio/Video tapes**

1. Wash the exposed edges of the tapes with clean cold water.
2. Manually dry the damaged surfaces.
3. Set tapes out and continue drying with forced cold air.

4. When dry remove, the tape from the damaged cartridge and place into a new cassette or video cartridge and re-title.
5. Record the salvaged tape on to a new cassette or cartridge and label it.
6. Clean the head of the recorder after running the salvaged tape.

**IN EVENT OF CIVIL DISTURBANCES DURING OFFICE HOURS IN THE AREA OF THE ARCHIVES OR RECORDS THE FOLLOWING STEPS SHOULD BE TAKEN**

1. Staff members should stay on the compound which should be secured until police reports indicate that it is safe to leave.

**IN EVENT OF THEFT THE FOLLOWING STEPS SHOULD BE TAKEN**

1. Identify the stolen document/artifact.
2. Endeavour to Identify the thief
3. Inform the Director/Deputy Director.
4. Call the police and have the document retrieved if possible.
5. Prepare a report of the event.

**RECOVERY EFFORTS**

1. If the document has been damaged by either water or insect it must be sent immediately to a conservation lab upon its return.

2. If the document can not be repaired by the Department's conservation lab because of the availability of resources, the Archivist then consults with another archival institution.
3. The thief shall be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law for theft of a government document.

**IN EVENT OF VANDALISM THE FOLLOWING STEPS SHOULD BE TAKEN**

1. Call the Police immediately.
2. Secure the vandalized area.
3. Ensure that staff members do not touch any item which has been vandalized in order to secure the finger prints of the culprits.
4. After the Police have done their investigations assess the damage done to the building and the records.
5. Take inventory of the records and see what is missing.
6. Clean up the mess and restore documents to their original order.
7. Prepare a report.

**IN EVENT OF BOMB THREAT OR AN EXPLOSION THESE STEPS SHOULD BE TAKEN**

1. Evacuate the building.
2. Notify the bomb squad (police) immediately.
3. Prepare a report.

## **DISASTER PLAN FOR MICROFILM AND PHOTOGRAPHY**

### **PREVENTATIVE AND PROTECTIVE MEASURES**

To prevent floods or minimize their effects the following should be noted:

1. Avoid storing photographic materials in basements or areas where water could collect.
2. Store items at least six inches above the floor to protect against damage from water pipes and sprinkler systems.
3. All photographic materials should be stored in closed metal filing cabinets.
4. In the event that photographic material gets wet, do not leave them to dry while stuck to their containers or each other. As soon as it is possible to reach the site, start salvage procedures.

### **SALVAGE PROCEDURES IN CASE OF WATER DAMAGE**

#### **PHOTOGRAPHS**

The two major problems are with wet photographic materials are:

1. They will dry too soon and stick together
2. If they stay wet too long the emulsion will disintegrate

Photographs affected by water should be immersed in a plastic container of clean cold water at 65 degrees or below, to which a solution of formaldehyde has been added in proportion of 15ml per litre. The chemical and cold water will help to prevent the gelatin in the emulsion from swelling and softening.

#### **NEGATIVES**

As quickly as possible, remove the negatives and prints from their envelopes and wash them in cold running water for 15 minutes. Air-dry them in a dust free area, hung from wire lines with clips or on fiberglass screens. Every effort must be made to save and transfer negatives, print numbers and other information.

## **SLIDES AND TRANSPARENCIES**

After washing, slides and transparencies should be rinsed one minute in Kodak Stabilizer process E3 or E4.

## **PROFESSIONAL HELP**

If confronted with too large a number of wet photographs, professional help should be sought. The photographic material should be transported to the Lab immersed in cold water with formaldehyde solution in plastic garbage cans within twenty-four hours. In the event this is not possible, the entire collection should be stored in a refrigerated truck to be frozen and eventually thawed out, dried and archived. However, freezing may cause some damage to the emulsion as ice crystals form. This method should only be used as a last resort.

It is estimated that modern black and white photographs could last up to three days in cold water and formaldehyde solution before the emulsion separates from the base. Forty-eight hours is the estimated limit for colour film.

Water damage is among the most devastating misfortunes that can befall a photographic collection. Such prints which have been damaged should and must receive the most urgent attention. If left under water for too long they will physically disintegrate; if left to dry unattended, stacks of prints and the enclosures will weld together into a solid mass and mold and mildew will grow prolifically.

## **SALVAGE PROCEDURES IN CASE OF FIRE DAMAGE**

Photographic materials are highly flammable and as such fire, prevention is always the ultimate goal. However in case of a fire all efforts must be made to minimize the devastating effects that water and other fire-fighting chemicals can have on prints and negatives. Storage areas should be equipped with smoke and heat detectors which would automatically trigger the release of a fire suppressing substance. Sprinkler systems and carbon dioxide release systems are not recommended for archival storage. Halon is recommended as it does not leave a residue or deposit. Photographic materials should be stored in closed metal filing cabinets, which would make it less likely for them to be

damaged by fire. Photographic materials which have suffered smoke and fire damage will require the services of a photographic conservator.

### **OTHER CALAMITIES**

In case of other calamities such as tornadoes and explosions, a sound plan of action and a quick response to recovery will lessen the damage already done.