RECORD-KEEPING IN EMERGENCY RESPONSE

DOCUMENTING THE COLLECTIONS

GOAL: Keep accurate track of all collection materials. This may require SLOWING DOWN your “response pace.”

**SUPPLIES** (*most critical*)
- *Inventory (keep hard copy off-site)*
- *Holdings priorities (hard copy)*
- *Blank Paper*
- *Pencils*
- *Camera (film, batteries)*
- *Clipboard*
- *Photographic Log*
- Strong Adhesive Labels
- String Tags
- Blank Inventory Sheet
- Permanent Markers
- Video Camera
- Laptop and Battery Back-up
- Tape Recorder

**RECORDING STEPS: DOCUMENTING THE COLLECTIONS**

*VISUAL DOCUMENTATION*

Visually record damaged area (photographs/video camera/sketch if necessary).
- Capture typical examples of damage.
- Record specific objects by themselves in situ as needed.
- Capture response and recovery activities.

*WRITTEN DOCUMENTATION*

If possible, begin with the highest priority, determined by:
- **Immediate Danger**
- **Proximity** (that which may be closest or most accessible)
- Most valued, appears as a “holdings priority”
- **Most vulnerable** (organic e.g., paper and textiles before inorganic except for iron)
- **Least damaged** (remove objects in pristine condition from a dangerous or compromised setting)
- **Most damaged**
At the **DISASTER SITE:**

**FIRST, Record LOCATION LOCATION LOCATION LOCATION**

1. **Note:**
   - *location* of the object in the space
   - Its *accession/catalog/record group or series number*
   - *Placement in the room/location number*
   - Type of object

If there are *missing* or *unreadable data*, note this on the inventory. If no information is available, *indicate the location of the item when found* and assign a supplemental number for tracking purposes.

*NO item may leave the space until checked against the inventory and recorded. If there is no inventory, a removal inventory must be created.*

2. If the item is *broken*, note the *number of pieces*. Keep pieces together at all times. Tagging and numbering pieces may be helpful.

3. Note if there is *major damage* to an item; otherwise *note general condition* if time permits.

**SECOND, Record MOVEMENT**

Indicate (using a symbol) *which items are being removed* from the site for triage, and their *destination*.

(Be sure to provide a key as to symbol meaning, e.g., 4= Checked; S = Sent to Room X)
At the TRIAGE SITE:

**THIRD.** Record TRACKING AND PACKING

1. Once at the triage site, record the *treatment priority symbol* that the object has been assigned. The *treatment priority symbol* will determine what type of treatment the item will receive, and where the item will be taken.

   For example, H = high priority for freezing, to be packed and sent to freezer; A1 = air dry in High Priority Room 1; A2 = air dry in Medium Priority Room 2.

2. Make note of relevant *condition information* that may not yet have been noted.

3. If the item is to be packed and transported, (e.g., H above) create a *packing list*, so that the item may be checked in when it arrives at its next site. *Label packed boxes* on 3 sides with *treatment priority symbol* and *destination*.

4. **Compile paperwork** after items have left the triage area. Make this data available to the emergency coordinator. Proceed to treatment areas to provide additional assistance, if needed.
RECORDING STEPS: DOCUMENTING THE INCIDENT

Following the incident, as the emergency has been brought under control, it is important for all the participants to meet:

1) Gather complete and accurate information about the incident.

2) Assess aspects of response that worked well and specific areas of response that could benefit from improvement.

3) Help address stress by allowing participants to “unburden” and share their personal reactions to the event.

1. ACTIVITY LOG is useful to outline the event’s CHRONOLOGY. Elements will include:
   - **Information** provided:
   - **Time**:
   - **Individual relating data**:
   - **Communication mode**:
     - (PA System, Radio, Telephone, In-Person):

2. PERSONNEL RECORD
   - **Individuals involved**: (including names, addresses and phone numbers of all staff, volunteers, and external assistance)
   - **Actions/activities**:
   - **Time Spent**:
   - **Injuries/illness related to the incident**:
   - Explore “human factor” (emotional response, adequate rest and sustenance, understanding of what transpired)
3. SUMMARY

Type of incident
Activity Log data
   Who witnessed or discovered problem
   Who was notified
   Actions taken to address event
       (in what order and by whom: internal/external personnel)
Describe relevant conditions: (examples below)
   Weather
   Building conditions
   Equipment involved
   Human elements
   Warnings
Actions required after incident
   Building stabilization
   Response and recovery efforts
Outcome of the event

DOCUMENTATION

Documentation is a crucial step in response and recovery. It may be one of the most difficult tasks in an emergency.

Why We Document

Data will aid in insurance claims.
Data will enable complete record-keeping for items impacted by a disaster.
Data will assist in inventory control.

Important aspect of documentation:
   Witness accounts of the disaster.
   Descriptions of the site.
   Visual depictions of the site (photographs/videotape).
   Visual depictions of objects.
   Notes on object condition.