

Diocese of St. Petersburg
OFFICE OF ARCHIVES
Preserve & Protect

STORAGE AND DISASTER PREAREDNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

Records, objects or collections of great importance to the Diocese must be identified before the hurricane season. If this is not done, valuable time may be wasted salvaging materials of little value or spent arguing about what should be saved first. Ideally, this step includes a floor plan that clearly states the priority of collections for salvage. This plan with its priorities should be attached to the disaster plan, but the security of this type of information should be considered. It may be wise to allow only designated or upper-level staff access to this part of the plan prior to an actual emergency.

I. **SACRAMENTAL REGISTERS** – (Baptism, Confirmation, Marriage, Death.) An inventory identifying the span of years and the number of books in the parish should be created. In the event of disaster the parish would need to know how many books would need to be evacuated. This inventory is also important in determining if records are missing or lost whether they are evacuated or not.

A. Proper Storage –

- Books should be stored horizontally in a climate controlled environment. Ideally the temperature in records storage areas should be 68° with a relative humidity of 45%.
- Fireproof Water-resistant safes are highly recommended
- Do not store books near overhead water or steam pipes.
- Protect from direct sunlight and excessive artificial light.
- Do not store on the floor. Store on anchored metal shelving at least four inches above the floor and six inches away from walls.
- Records should be secured – Cabinets should be locked. Doors leading to the records closed with only designated authority having access. Consider custom made boxes for the registers such as laminated boxes that repel water on contact.

B. Evacuation –

- Evacuate Registers when the civil authorities call for an evacuation
- Evacuate all Irreplaceable Permanent Historical Records.

II. **PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR PRESERVATION**

- A. Building Maintenance – Repair windows, roof, masonry. Replace elements (e.g. drainpipes, flashings, reattach downspouts).
- B. Climate/Energy Efficiency – Seal windows. (e.g. caulk around panes, add weather-stripping, etc.) Check vents.
- C. Light Control – Keep collections away from direct light.

- D. Pest Control – Prohibit food in storage and research areas. Remove potted plants from building interior. Clean storage areas.
- E. Water Protection – Find source of any leaks. Relocate collections away from known leaks. Relocate from below/adjacent to sinks, restrooms, or other water source hazards.
- F. Fire Protection – Ban or restrict smoking, inspect fire detectors and fire extinguishers.
- G. Security – Install locks on storage areas. Restrict access to collections. Inventory collections.
- H. General Risk Reduction (Emergency preparedness) – Assign responsibility for emergency response. Locate freezer for emergency storage of wet material. Store emergency supplies. Identify salvage priorities.
- I. Books – Replace rubber bands with fabric tape. Measure for and order custom book boxes. Make polyester book jackets (for red rot). Make sure books are fully supported by shelves (add oversize shelves if needed).

Historical permanent documents and files of the parishes should be stored in Archival quality boxes & file folders. Collections of photographs, films, videotapes, etc. should also be stored properly. If your records have been damaged, or you need additional information regarding what to use and how to store your records contact:

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