

Tips for Recovering Water-Damaged Photographs

1. Wash the photograph in clean water (if necessary) and be careful to not touch the surface of the photograph, only the corners.
2. Dry the photograph face up in a single layer and avoid placing them in direct sunlight
3. If a freezer is available, freeze the photos immediately after rinsing them. Put the photos in Ziploc-type bags, if possible place wax paper between each photo, and place them in the freezer.

Tips for Recovering Other Water-Damaged Valuables:

1. If the object is still wet, rinse with clear, clean water or a fine hose spray. Clean off dry silt and debris with a soft brush or dab with a damp cloth. Be careful not to grind debris into the object.
2. Air-dry objects indoors if possible. Sunlight and heat may dry certain materials too quickly, causing splits, warping and buckling.
3. Inhibit the growth of mold and mildew by reducing the level of humidity. Increase airflow with fans, open windows, air conditioners and dehumidifiers.
4. Remove heavy deposits of mold growth from walls, baseboards, floors and other household surfaces with commercially available disinfectants. Avoid using disinfectants on historic wallpapers.
5. If objects are broken or begin to fall apart, place all broken pieces, bits of veneer and detached parts in clearly labeled open containers. Do not attempt to repair objects until completely dry or, in the case of important materials, until you have consulted with a professional conservator.
6. Documents, books, photographs, and works of art on paper may be extremely fragile when wet; be careful when handling them. Free the edges of prints and paper objects in mats and frames, if possible.
These should be allowed to air dry. Soaked books and papers should also be air dried, or may be kept in a refrigerator or freezer until a professional conservator can treat them. Textiles, leather, and other "organic" materials will also be severely affected by exposure to water and should be allowed to air dry.
7. Remove wet paintings from the frame but not from the stretcher. Air dry, face up, away from direct sunlight.
8. Furniture finishes and painting surfaces may develop a white haze or bloom from contact with water and humidity. These problems do not require immediate attention. Consult a professional conservator for treatment.
9. Rinse metal objects exposed to flood waters, mud, or silt with clear water and dry immediately with a clean, soft cloth. Allow heavy mud deposits on large metal objects, such as sculpture, to dry. Caked mud can be removed later. Consult a professional conservator for further treatment.