



## RESCUE YOUR TREASURES

If your personal property has been damaged, the Midwest Regional Conservation Guild (MRCG) would like to help you preserve your valued possessions. This handout provides basic information to get you started, with a focus on materials common in heirlooms and art.

### THE BASICS

- **Safety first!** Your health and well being are the top priority. Follow the instructions of emergency responders and don't enter your home until given the okay.
- Don't despair if your cherished items are damaged. "Damaged" is not the same as "destroyed", and often things you save can be fixed later.
- As you sort through your items, think about which ones are most important to you.
- Try to find a safe place to store your most important items. A good place is protected from wind and rain.

### GENERAL TIPS

1. For dry items, move them to a safe place.
2. How to dry wet items: Don't seal wet items in a plastic bag or mold might grow. Wet items should be removed from frames and dried with nothing touching the surface. If the item is stuck to the glass, leave it in the frame and let it dry glass-side down. For metal items, see reverse.
3. If the glass in a frame is broken, remove the item from the frame to prevent additional damage. Don't cut yourself.
4. If you find a broken item, save the pieces and pad or wrap them so they don't break or scratch each other.
5. Wadded paper or any kind of cloth (rags, clothes, sheets) makes good padding.
6. Look for flat, rigid supports (plywood, cardboard, door, etc.) to store things on. Plastic tarps can protect items from rain.

### Photographs and Paper

- **Photographic negatives:**
  - Save negatives BEFORE you save printed photos.
  - Remove wet negatives from paper sleeves.
  - Freeze wet negatives if possible. If freezing is not an option, simply allow the negatives to dry.

- **Photo albums:**

Fan pages open slightly so that photos and pages do not touch. Allow to dry. Once dry, remove photos for storage.

- **Framed photos or paper:**

If wet, remove from frame and allow to dry. The item is now unprotected, so make sure you have a safe place to store it.

**See reverse for paintings and other materials.**



## About MRCG

The Midwest Regional Conservation Guild (MRCG) is a professional conservation association in the Midwestern United States.

Conservators are professionals devoted to preserving cultural heritage. Learn more about MRCG at: [themrcg.wordpress.com/](http://themrcg.wordpress.com/)

## Paintings

- If wet, lay flat (painting side up) with nothing touching the surface. Also see tips #2 and #3.
- Focus on safe storage to avoid tears or further damage. A rigid support, slightly larger than the painting (like cardboard), can be placed at the front and back to prevent accidents.

## Furniture

- If wet, allow to air dry. If necessary, rinse off any mud prior to drying.

## Textiles

- If wet, place on a rigid support (see tip #6) to avoid stretching or flexing.
- If the wet textile isn't too fragile, unfold to allow slow air-drying. Once dry, the textile may be folded or rolled for storage.

## Glass, Ceramic, or Stone

- Collect fragments so they can be put back together.
- Place dry fragments in a box with padding (see tip #5) to prevent additional breaks.

## Metals

- If wet, dry as quickly as possible to avoid corrosion. Blot, don't rub, especially if the surface is painted or coated.

## Animal and Plant

### Materials (WOOD, LEATHER, IVORY, BASKETRY, ETC.):

- For wet items, see tip #2.
- Wrap each item in absorbent material (see tip #5) and contain the object with supports if necessary as it will likely be fragile.

## For more information

Visit the website of the American Institute for Conservation

[conservation-us.org/](http://conservation-us.org/)

The "Resource Center" on this website has information on how to care for your treasures and on how to find and choose a conservator.