



Louisiana State Archives – Records Management
Louisiana Secretary of State
P.O. Box 94125
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9125
recmgt@sos.la.gov

RM-G_DamagedRecords (11/2020)

DAMAGED RECORDS GUIDANCE

State and Local Agencies are required by La. R.S. 44:411 to notify the State Archives in the event their records are damaged or under the threat of being damaged.

This law applies to any damaged records, whether that damage was caused by a large-scale disaster, such as a hurricane, or a small-scale one, such as a leaky pipe. This law also applies to any electronic records that may have been lost or unlawfully altered by computer system failures, cyberattacks or human error.

Notify the State Archives

- For immediate assistance, contact the Archives Manager at 225.922.1218 or the Records Management Section at 225.922.3094.
- Submit **Records Damage Assessment Worksheet (SSARC-980)** to disasters@sos.la.gov.
- Submit **Request for Authority to Dispose of Records Form (SSARC-930)** to disasters@sos.la.gov
 - Use for damaged records that have met their retention period and for damaged records that are unsalvageable.
 - Indicate on the form that these records are damaged.
 - DO NOT dispose of any records before receiving approval from the State Archives.

Salvage and Recovery Procedures

- Document the damage with photos and / or video for FEMA and insurance purposes.
- Prioritize your salvaging efforts according to the “Vital Record Identification Code” on your Records Retention Schedule. (The State Archives has a copy on file.)
 - Salvage the records in this order: 1. Vital; 2. Important; 3. Useful.
 - Vital Records are “any record essential to either or both the resumption or continuation of operations, to verification or re-creation of the legal and financial status of government in the state, or to the protection and fulfillment of obligations to citizens of the state.” (La. R.S. 44:402)
 - Records with Permanent or Long-term retention periods should be prioritized over records with short-term retention periods.
- Safeguard any records containing personally identifiable or confidential information. These records are marked with a “C” or “M” on your records retention schedule. Pay attention to security and privacy requirements before workers begin building repairs around these records.



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Additional Resources

- Council of State Archivists Pocket Response Plan (PReP) Templates
 - Printable template for Emergency Contacts and Emergency Response Checklist
 - <https://www.statearchivists.org/programs/emergency-preparedness/emergency-preparedness-resources/pocket-response-plantm-prep-tm-english-template/>
- National Archives Salvage Procedures
 - Guidelines for Salvaging Archival Documents, Books, Photographs and Video
 - <https://www.archives.gov/preservation/disaster-response/salvage-procedures.html>
- National Archives Essential Record Guide
 - Guide to Identifying and Protecting Essential (Vital) Records
 - <https://www.archives.gov/files/records-mgmt/essential-records/essential-records-guide.pdf>
- Northeast Document Conservation Center Preservation Leaflets
 - Guidelines for Emergency Planning, Disinfecting Collections & Salvage Procedures
 - <https://www.nedcc.org/free-resources/preservation-leaflets/overview>

QUESTIONS?

For any questions, please email disasters@sos.la.gov.