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# NEWS RELEASE

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**Louisiana  
Department of State**



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Secretary of State**

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## **STATE ARCHIVES OFFERS ADVICE FOR SALVAGING FLOODED DOCUMENTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS**

**BATON ROUGE, La.**—The Louisiana State Archives, under the direction of Secretary of State Tom Schedler, is offering advice for citizens trying to recover flooded documents and photographs across south Louisiana. Specific directions for all kinds of records, including photographs, can be found on the homepage of the secretary of state's website at [www.sos.la.gov](http://www.sos.la.gov).

Below are some basic steps to salvage water damaged documents:

- If items have been submerged, leave them submerged until they can be air dried or frozen. Move to clean water if possible.
- Air dry flat in small piles (1/2 inch) or individually if possible. Move into an area where the air is circulating if possible. Use fans if available. Do not direct stream of air onto documents but into the room to keep air moving. Screens can be laid on top to prevent items from blowing around.
- Put wet material on an absorbent layer of blotter material like blank newsprint or paper towels. Change blotting material beneath the materials as it becomes soaked. If small clumps of records are fanned out to dry, they should be turned every few hours to encourage evaporation from both sides.
- If the volume of material is great, freeze those items which cannot be air dried within 48 hours. The material can then be thawed when you have the time and materials to air dry. This can be accomplished with a common household freezer. If items can be left in the freezer for a few months, they will dry themselves through a process called sublimation.

Additionally, the steps below can be used for photographs that have been water logged:

- In general, wet photographs should be air dried or frozen as quickly as possible.
- Separate photographs from their enclosures, frames and from each other. If they are stuck together or adhered to glass, set them aside for freezing.

- Spread photographs out to dry, face up, laying them flat on an absorbent material such as blotters, unprinted newsprint, paper towels or a clean cloth.
- Keep the air around the drying materials moving at all times. Fans will speed up the drying process and minimize the risk of mold growth.
- Negatives should be dried vertically. They can be hung on a line with plastic clips placed at the edges.
- Photos may curl during drying. They can be flattened later.
- Photos that are stuck together can be frozen by wrapping them in wax paper.
- Later, as stacks of photos are thawed, individual photographs can be carefully peeled from the group and placed face up on a clean, absorbent surface to air dry.

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