

Quick Help -- Drying Records:

Following a water disaster, large or small, it is possible to salvage most wet documents, books, and photographs. After the water recedes, high temperatures will cause mold to begin to grow on wet paper within 48 hours or less. The sooner drying can begin, the better. Lay records out on newspapers on tables and run fans on low. Separate photographs and lay out to dry. Loss of power makes it more difficult, but if records cannot be air-dried due to the amount of material involved or due to the lack of facilities, freezing will stop mold growth and buy you time to deal with the situation at a later date. Wrap individual books so they will be easier to thaw. Wrap groups of documents and groups of photographs rather than trying to separate them.

A major disaster will bring disaster recovery vendors into the area as soon as the water recedes. In addition to performing vacuum or vacuum freeze drying for businesses and government agencies, they do work for private citizens. [For additional information, contact the Archives' Government Records Division at 334 242-4452.]