

INVENTORY CONTROL

Inventory control is vital in a large disaster, but difficult to visualize and execute, especially if you haven't planned ahead. Keeping track of materials that are sent to locations out of the building (dry storage, freezers, etc.) or separated from associated material (enclosures, frames, etc.) after a disaster can be challenging. Good inventory control is important if salvage and treatment needs to be conducted in a priority order. Knowing approximately where each item is, what is in each box, and where that box is located, is essential for timely and efficient recovery. Listed below are possible methods for inventory control and the process to be used with an Inventory Control List and/or Object Documentation List

For books:

- 1) Mark each box with the call number of the first and last book and the total number of books in the box. Unless it is a very small disaster there won't be time to record each book. If books are off the shelf or not in order, record the base call number, range, section or other identifying information. Ten to twelve average size books will fit into a standard document box (1.5 cubic feet).
- 2) Take the box to the control point and transfer the box information to an Inventory Control List. Assign a Box Control number from the list to the box and mark it on at least 2 consecutive sides of the box. Instead of numbers, a barcode could be assigned to the box and recorded on the Inventory Control List. With barcodes, boxes could be 'checked out' to various locations (freezer, dry storage, etc.)
- 3) Whenever the box is moved, its new location and date are recorded on the Inventory Control List.

Note: If items have barcodes on the outside (always avoid opening wet books!), it is possible to scan each item before putting it into the box; link the item to the box with another barcode or control number.

For objects:

- 1) Often must be done at an item-by-item level of description. Tracking movement can be combined with efforts to record damage. Due to time constraints and quantity of material involved, documentation should be brief but accurate.
- 2) If possible try to capture: accession or catalog number; type of object; type of damage; category of salvage action required; old location; and new location. Record on the Object Documentation List.
- 3) It is not unusual for associated material to be separated from objects such as frames, glazing, backings or enclosures with informational value. Track and label all associated materials.

Depending on your collection types and institutional needs, make multiple blank copies of the Inventory Control List and/or the Object Documentation List and file with your Disaster Plan for ready access.

