

HERITAGE BULLETIN

Tips, Ideas & More to Help Preserve Oregon's Heritage

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DISASTER PLANNING AND RESPONSE

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Disaster strikes when we least expect it. Good stewardship involves planning for disasters. While a disaster plan contains policies and procedures that prevent or minimize damage resulting from disasters, it also serves as a living reference manual that changes over time. This Bulletin offers steps your organization can take to prepare a disaster plan and a response manual.

- **Oregon Heritage MentorCorps** is a great resource to get you started. Trained in collections care and emergency management, MentorCorps is a network of volunteers who work directly with Oregon museums, libraries and archives to improve the care of cultural artifacts and prepare for emergencies. All nonprofit and government archives, libraries and museums may access this free service.
- **Conduct a hazard analysis:** This two-step process defines what could go wrong and steps you can take to prevent the problems.
 - Become familiar with internal and external risks to your buildings and collections. Looking at disasters that have taken place at other organizations in your region might help to define these risks, their possible duration and resulting damage. Once you've identified the risks, rank them from greatest to least likely to cause a disaster.
 - Define steps to reduce or remove the risk.
- **Activate the Plan:**
 - Download the **PREP document** from the MentorCorps website and fill it out. This two-sided, revisable document includes names and contact information of first responders, disaster and recovery teams, building utilities, institutional contacts and more. It also contains Immediate Response and Collections Recovery checklists. Small organizations can easily maintain the document and share it with staff and volunteers as a printed document, or by posting it online for access from any location.
 - Alternatively, organizations can use a more detailed plan, such as that prepared by the Architectural Heritage Center: **Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan Development Guide**.



Strapping shelves is one method used to limit collection damage during an earthquake. Photo courtesy Architectural Heritage Center, Portland.



- **Activate the Plan (continued):**

- Get to know local first responders and emergency managers (city and county). Become familiar with national systems such as NIMS (National Incident Management System) and ICS (Incident Command System).
- Acquire supplies and equipment for mitigation and response preparation.
- Document the storage locations and the purpose of each item in the recovery manual.
- Train staff and volunteers based on the roles and responsibilities defined in the PReP document.
- Encourage staff and volunteers to communicate with each other, especially regarding changes in contact information.



Trained in emergency management, Oregon Heritage Mentors work directly with museums, libraries and archives to prepare for emergencies.

- **Implement the plan:**

- Once written, distribute the plan and response manual widely through your organization. This can be as simple as distributing the PReP, which references the locations of complete disaster plans and recovery manuals.
- Hold regular drills to prepare for a variety of disasters.
- Create a “disaster” based upon your hazard analysis and have staff and volunteers respond based upon their defined roles.
- Think of your disaster plan as a living document and update it annually, or as you become aware of needed updates or changes.
- Update your plan and response manual on a regular basis

Further information:

- Oregon Heritage MentorCorps
<http://mindyourcollections.org>
- Oregon Heritage Emergency Planning and Recovery website
http://www.oregon.gov/oprd/HCD/OHC/pages/disaster_list.aspx
- Local Emergency Managers by county
http://www.oregon.gov/OMD/OEM/docs/plan_train/locals_list.pdf

