



The University System of Georgia Records Management Policy

Records Management Disaster Preparedness Plan

Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of this plan is to provide guidance with regard to the recovery and restoration of mission critical documents and information that may be damaged or lost in a mishap or disaster. "Mission critical" is defined as documents and/or information necessary for the successful day-to-day operation of the institution. For the purposes of this plan, mission critical documents and information will be referred to as "records."

Activation of the Plan

Implementation of the provisions of this plan will depend largely on the nature of the cause of damage to records.

Causes such as a leaking roof or a broken water line usually result in localized damage which is limited to an office, office suite or floor of a building. In cases of such localized damage, the manager(s) of the affected unit(s) will be responsible for implementing the recovery process.

Causes such as fire or severe weather often result in more widespread damage. In such cases, it is possible that the USG Emergency Protocol and Safety Plan will be activated. The provisions of the Emergency Protocol and Safety Plan take precedence over the Records Management Disaster Preparedness Plan. When the Emergency Protocol and Safety Plan is in effect, the Records Management Disaster Preparedness Plan is to be activated only when clearance to enter the affected building(s) and begin assessing damage to records has been given.

In all situations, the safety of students, faculty and staff is of the utmost importance. Fire or severe weather may cause structural damage that renders a building unsafe for occupancy. In the case of flooding, the possibility of electrical shock exists even when there is no structural damage. Personnel should not enter a damaged building until it has been inspected and deemed safe for occupancy.

Types of Records

Electronic Data: In this case, records are maintained in an electronic format and are stored on network servers. These records include, but are not limited to, admissions files, academic transcripts, financial records, human resource records, e-mail, and web page files.

Paper Files: Even with the use of electronic data storage, there remains a significant amount of paper records that are mission critical. These records include but are not limited to, admissions files, academic transcripts, financial records, human resource records and various communications and directives that were created before the advent of the widespread use of electronic data storage. Additionally, there exist many paper records of an archival nature that, while not necessarily mission critical, are of great historical value to the institution.

Prevention of Loss or Damage

Electronic Data: The prevention of the loss of electronic data depends on routine backing-up of server files. The Department of Information and Instructional Technology performs a back-up of mission critical electronic data once every 24 hours during the work week. This includes all BANNER data, PeopleSoft data, E-mail files, web server images, and application server images. The back-up tapes are stored in a fire and water-proof cabinet in Dunlap Hall.

Paper Files: Most but not all mission critical paper format academic records are stored in a fireproof vault when not being used. Additionally, all but the oldest academic transcripts created prior to the advent of electronic data storage have been put on micro-film and are stored in a bank vault offsite.

Some of the mission critical paper administrative records (Financial, human resources, etc.) are stored in fireproof vaults and cabinets, but the voluminous nature of these records prevents storing all of them in such facilities.

Disaster Recovery

Given that the institution's electronic records are properly backed up and stored on a daily basis, the remainder of this plan will focus on the recovery and restoration of paper records and will deal with the most probable causes of damage; water and fire.

Units within the institution should approach disaster recovery for mission critical records in the following manner:

- The unit manager(s) of the affected unit(s) should contact Plant Operations for assistance with any necessary post-disaster clean-

- up.
- Unit managers and unit records managers will be responsible for the initial assessment of the nature, extent, and severity of the damage to records in their respective units. Since successful recovery depends on quick action, this initial assessment should be conducted as soon as possible after discovery of damage.
 - Once the initial assessment has been completed, the unit manager should contact the Director of Stewart Library. The director or his/her designee will conduct a more detailed assessment of the damage and advise as to what steps should be taken to increase the likelihood of successfully recovering the damaged documents.
 - Actions necessary to recover documents can range from simply air drying damp records to hiring restoration specialists for severely damaged records.

Typical Steps for Restoration from Water Damage

- Use air conditioning, fans and dehumidifiers to reduce humidity.
- Label and separate dry, damp and saturated records.
- On the advisement of the Director of Stewart Library or a restoration specialist, saturated records may need to be frozen in preparation of freeze drying. Depending on the volume of records involved, the Dining Facility freezer may be used for this purpose until suitable offsite freezer storage can be located.

Restoration Methods for Water Damage

There are two types of water damage. Direct damage occurs when documents are completely saturated. Secondary damage occurs when documents are damp due to high humidity related to flooding, etc.

Methods for restoration include the following:

- **Air Drying:** This process is quick and effective with smaller quantities of records with secondary damage. In this process, records are separated and spread out in a cool, dry location. Fans and air conditioning are used to circulate dry air over the documents. This process is usually complete within 72 hours.
- **Dehumidifiers and Air Movers:** This method is used with larger quantities of records that have received secondary damage. In this process, the documents are often left in their original containers and dehumidifiers and air movers are brought into the facility. Depending on the volume of records involved, this process can take weeks to complete. Because there is the possibility of residual damage if this process is not done properly, this process should be used only after consultation with a restoration specialist and only if dehumidifiers and air movers are available in sufficient quantity

- and capacity.
- Freezing: Freezing is appropriate when documents have received direct damage. Usually done by a restoration specialist, this process involves separating records and placing them in special containers in commercial freezers. Depending on the volume of records involved, this process can often require several months to complete.

Restoration Methods for Fire Damage

The full recovery of records damaged due to fire is less probable than records damaged by water. For this reason, duplication and offsite storage of mission critical records is vital.

- Documents damaged by fire that are recoverable will have a permanent smoke odor. In cases where it is necessary, a process called "dry cleaning" may remove most, if not all of the smoke odor. This process is usually done by a restoration specialist and requires treating each page of the affected records with a special solvent and allowing them to dry.