

Save Your Damaged Family Treasures

Some of the most valuable possessions damaged during a disaster are not the ones with a high dollar value, but rather the things that have an emotional value: photos, collectibles, heirlooms and many others. Don't write them off because of flood damage, many can be salvaged with a little work and determination.

Photographs

- Do not try to separate photos and negatives that are stuck together as they might tear apart. Place them in a tub filled with clean water and let them soak for up to 48 hours until you can slowly peel them apart or they separate on their own.
- After they have separated, rinse them and either place them on a towel (printed side up) or hang them to dry.
- Never touch wet photos on the printed side as you might damage them.

Clothing or textiles

- Gather two tubs, place them side by side on a table and fill them with clean water. Place your clothing item or textile in the first tub and gently begin moving it around to loosen up the accumulated dirt and debris.
- Remove it and gently squeeze out the excess water (don't wring it!) and place it in the second receptacle. Repeat this process; move it around, remove it and gently squeeze. Finally, place the item over a towel and let it dry.

Books

- Books that are muddy, rusty or were exposed to salt water must be rinsed in a bucket of distilled water. Hold the book closed tightly as you dip it. Remove it and let the excess water drip off, but don't squeeze the book.
- Use a dry rag or paper towel to gently wipe down the cover.
- Place the books on a table covered with paper towels. Place the book upright to dry and fan out the pages so they can thoroughly dry.
- Place paper towel sheets or rags between pages every quarter inch or so to absorb water. Replace the paper towels as they soak with water.
- Leave the book sitting in place, upright for as long as necessary to dry completely.

Other items

- Clean wooden objects with a damp sponge, blot and let dry inside the house, not under the sun.
- Rinse metal objects with clean water and blot dry immediately with a clean, soft cloth.
- Broken pottery or ceramics should not be glued together if they are still damp. Put all the pieces in an open container and mark what it is. Glue the pieces together when they are dry.



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For additional information on saving family treasures, visit the Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative, [Resources for the Public and Historic Property Owners](#). Their website includes detailed information on saving [photographs](#), [books](#), as well as [documents and important paperwork](#).

To speak with a Mitigation Specialist call 833-FEMA-4-US or 833-336-2487. To review mitigation publications and find information on repair, retrofit, or rebuild safer and stronger visit <https://fema.connectsolutions.com/lamit> or <https://fema.connectsolutions.com/la-es-mit> for Spanish.

For the latest information on Hurricane Ida visit fema.gov/disaster/4611. Follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/FEMARegion6 and like us on Facebook at facebook.com/FEMARegion6/.

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