



**NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF AUSTRALIA**

# **National Disaster Preparedness and Recovery Strategy of Archival Records**

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# National Disaster Preparedness and Recovery Strategy for Archival Records

## Objective

The National Disaster Preparedness and Recovery Strategy (NDPRS) for archival records is a collection of plans that enable staff to prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters that affect archival records (hereafter 'records') held by the National Archives.

A disaster may be a single event that damages records such as a flood. It may also be damage that occurs over a long period of time, such as damage from the use of inappropriate packaging materials.

The NDPRS provides the framework for a consistent standard of care for all records held in the Archives' national and state offices. The strategy contains plans which, when implemented, will prevent damage to the records and lessen the impact of damage if it occurs. The strategy also contains plans that detail how to respond when records are damaged and how to recover damaged records.

These plans have been developed by Operations and Preservation staff so that they may be easily used or adapted for use by all Archives offices.

## Background

The NDPRS is a supporting document in the Archives' Business Continuity Management Plan (BCMP), (June 2008).

The strategy follows a risk management approach to protecting the records from damage by identifying and mitigating risks that affect records. Each plan contained in the strategy mitigates at least one of the identified risks. The strategy focuses on the need for good preparation for a good outcome following a disaster.

Many of the activities described in the plans are currently carried out at individual Archives sites (offices). Most are the same for all records, with some variation at different sites. The strategy provides a framework so that all records held by the Archives have the same standard of care.

Operations and Preservation staff are to provide nationally applicable plans including the basic content, as most of the content will be the same for all sites. It is recognised that there may be special conditions at individual sites and these

variations may be incorporated into the plans. It is also recognised that the staff at individual sites have a great deal of knowledge of their own site. The implementation of the strategy and associated plans will lead to an effective and consistent approach to the care of records in all Archives offices. The strategy contains descriptions of operational plans that are designed to protect records from damage.

The strategy articulates what the plans are meant to achieve and how the plans are to be used in response to damage or risk of damage to records as well as items on loan. All formats including, digital and audiovisual, are covered.

It is recognised that implementing this strategy may require some action by individual sites, but the greater part of the content is expected to be supplied by National Preservation Coordination. The plans will be provided over a period of time in accordance with priorities.

## Overview of Stages and Plans

### Stages

The NDPRS is divided into parts corresponding to three interrelated stages:

1. *Preparedness* or 'What we do beforehand to prevent damage'  
This is the first and largest part as it contains most of the risk mitigation actions that are to be taken to decrease the impact and lessen the likelihood of incidents that damage records occurring. Because the distinction between preventive preservation and preparedness for disaster is not clear, this stage covers general preventive preservation plans and resources as well as those relating more strictly to preparation for disasters (that is, preparing for and responding to damaging incidents).
2. *Response* or 'What we do when damage occurs'  
This part contains guidance on how to respond in a planned manner to incidents that damage records.
3. *Recovery* or 'What we do after damage occurs'  
This part describes actions that are to be taken after damage to records has occurred. It shows how to recover records of various formats from different types of damage. Preservation staff will be available to advise and assist during this stage.

A risk analysis will provide the basis for appropriate avoidance and mitigation of identified risks. National Preservation Coordination will provide a table containing

the greatest risks and most effective mitigating actions. Site specific risks may also be added.

Each stage contains nationally applicable operational plans, which already have the basic information included and may be adapted to the needs of individual sites. They will be developed by National Preservation Coordination.

The plans provide records with a consistent standard of care. They also provide clear guidance on responsibilities in the event of a disaster.

## **Plans**

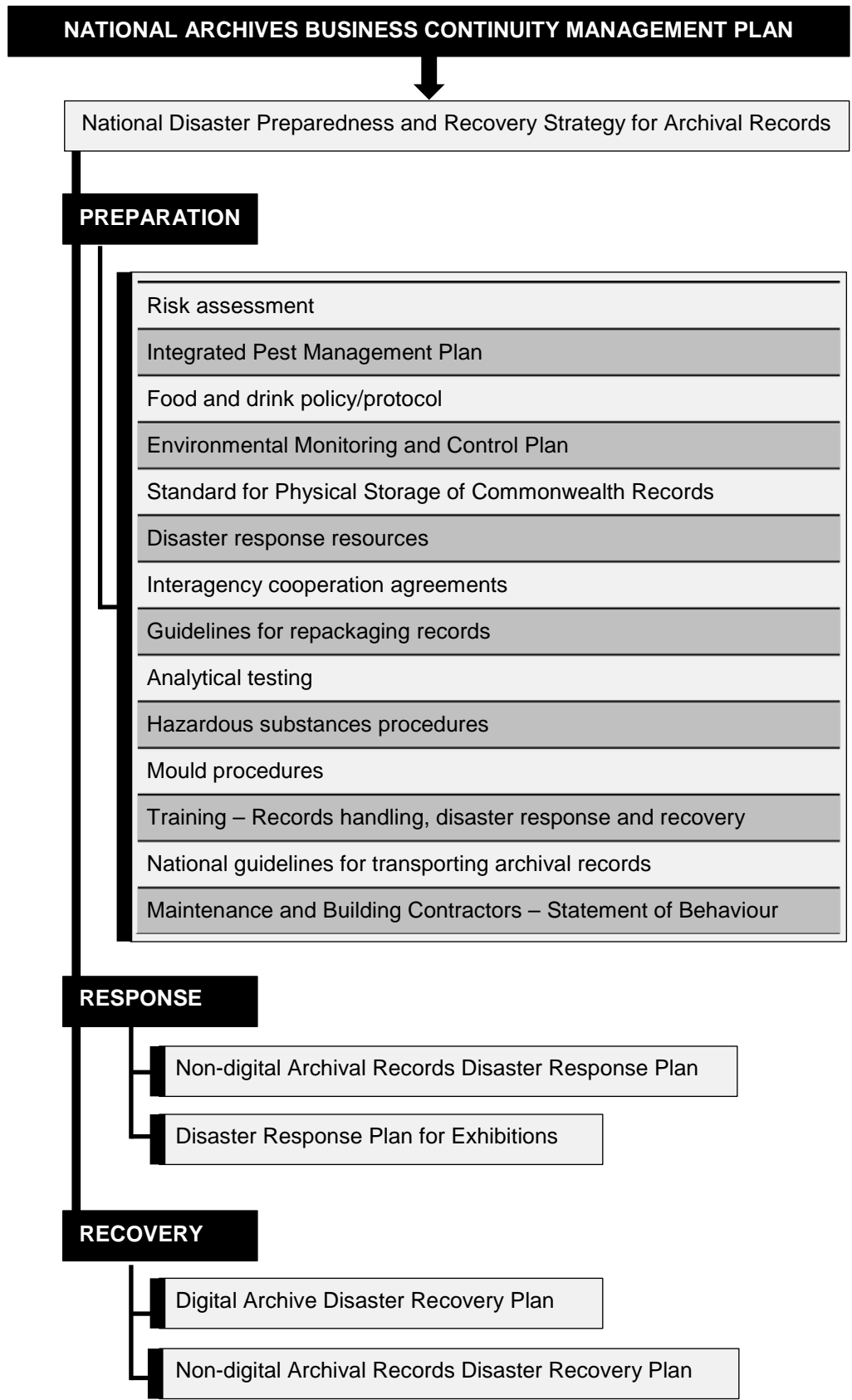
Each plan comprises the following:

- Purpose: What the plan is meant to achieve.
- Application: How, when and / or where the plan is to be used.
- Implementation: Who will create and implement the plan. National Office will provide the nationally applicable plans and basic content. Site coordinators will implement the plans.

The State Directors for all sites outside Canberra and the Director, Records Services and Preservation for Canberra sites are the site coordinators for the purpose of implementing this strategy.

The three stages and the plans that relate to each stage follow. How each plan or procedure is used and who uses it are described. Each plan or procedure is designed to mitigate an identified risk.

### Relation of NDPRS to BCMP and associated plans



## Content of Stages and Plans

### 1. Preparedness stage

Preparedness encompasses activities that are ongoing and are to be carried out as normal business. They are designed to decrease the likelihood of incidents occurring and lessen their impact if they do occur. They act as mitigations to known risks.

The preparedness plans and procedures are listed below. Each of the plans and procedures is generic in nature, the aim is that they are adapted to suit each site's needs.

#### 1.1 Risk assessment

**Purpose:** Risk assessment enables the National Archives to identify events that are likely to damage records and to focus resources on preventing them and lessening their impact if they do occur.

**Application:** Risk assessment is used to identify and prioritise risks, and develop appropriate plans to reduce the risks. There are many risks that are common to archival records for which standard mitigations may be used. Some risks are unique to specific sites.

**Implementation:**

*National Preservation Coordination:* will provide a central risk management plan that specifies core risks. Preservation staff at each site will provide advice and guidance on how to assess risks. Individual sites may add risks that are specific to their sites, for instance the risk of cyclones at the Darwin Office.

*Site coordinators:* will liaise with Preservation staff to create a site-specific risk management plan and will review the risk assessment every three to five years.

#### 1.2 Integrated Pest Management Plan (IPM)

**Purpose:** Pests are identified as a risk to records. The standard IPM plan mitigates this risk. The plan details procedures for preventing pests from harming records. It achieves this by identifying what pests are present, why they are present and options for controlling them.

**Application:** Site-specific additions to the IPM plan are to be in place in all offices and be maintained as part of normal business.

**Implementation:**

*National Preservation Coordination:* will provide a central version of the IPM plan.



*Records Services and Preservation*: will provide advice and guidance that is relevant to each site.

*Site coordinators*: will enact appropriate procedures as detailed under the IPM plan.

### **1.3 Food and drink policy**

**Purpose:** Consumption of food and drink poses risks to records. The standard food and drink policy mitigates these risks by setting out rules for handling food and drink at the Archives, focusing on the protection of records.

**Application:** Site-specific versions of this policy are to be in place in all offices and be maintained as part of normal business.

**Implementation:**

*National Preservation Coordination*: will provide a nationally applicable plan.

*Records Services and Preservation*: will provide additional advice and guidance to each site as required.

*Site coordinators*: will create local plans in accordance with the national strategy.

### **1.4 Environmental Monitoring and Control Plan**

**Purpose:** Storage in inappropriate conditions poses risks to records. This mitigating plan ensures that environmental conditions are monitored and are within the required parameters.

**Application:** Procedures to maintain this standard are to be in place in all sites where records are held.

**Implementation:**

*Records Services and Preservation*: will liaise with Facilities staff to create national monitoring procedures. Preservation will provide advice and guidance as required to ensure parameters are being met and on interpreting standards.

*Site coordinators*: will liaise with Preservation staff and Facilities staff to create a site-specific monitoring program.

#### **1.4.1 National Archives Standard for the Physical Storage of Commonwealth Records** (<http://www.naa.gov.au/records-management/secure-and-store/physical-storage/storage-standard.aspx>)

**Purpose:** Provide standards for controlling the storage environment.

**Application:** To be applied in all locations where archival material is held and storage conditions are monitored using the Environmental Monitoring and Control Plan.

**Implementation:**

*National Preservation Coordination:* will provide the nationally applicable standard and the Environmental Monitoring and Control Plan.

*Records Services and Preservation:* will provide advice and guidance to each site on interpreting and applying the standards.

*Site coordinators:* will ensure their sites comply with the standards using the Environmental Monitoring and Control Plan.

### **1.5 Disaster response supplies / resources**

#### **1.5.1 Disaster preparedness supplies, response bins, response signs and equipment**

**Purpose:** Disaster response supplies, response bins and response signs aid Archives staff to respond to damage or threats of damage to records. These supplies and resources can be used for both the response and recovery stages in a disaster.

Supplies of materials and equipment that will be needed for the protection and recovery of records during an incident are kept in a disaster supply store.

Response bins (also known as disaster bins) contain material that is used during an initial response to prevent or limit the effect of damage on records or property during or after a disaster.

One-page Archival Records Disaster Response signs give step-by-step instructions on how to respond to an incident affecting records.

**Application:** Sites are to undertake a stocktake, including testing of equipment and materials, twice yearly.

Response bins are kept wherever archival records are displayed, used or stored.

Response signs are kept where records are displayed, used or stored, and where disaster response bins are kept.

Implementation:

Supplies

- *National Preservation Coordination*: will advise on appropriate resources, and provide procedures and templates.
- *Preservation supply cell*: will coordinate procurement of disaster response supplies.
- *Site coordinators*: will coordinate acquisition, stocktake and equipment testing as identified in response plans and procedures.

Response bins

- *National Preservation Coordination*:
  - will provide nationally applicable guidelines on procedures for, and content of, disaster response bins.
  - will provide advice and assistance, and maintain a record of location of bins.
- *Preservation supply cell*: will coordinate procurement of disaster response bins and contents, and maintain a record of the locations of bins and supplies.
- *Site coordinators*: will coordinate application of guidelines for disaster response bins, supplies and equipment at each site.

Response signs

- *National Preservation Coordination*:
  - will provide a nationally applicable response sign.
  - will provide advice and guidance.
- *Site coordinators*: will ensure signage is appropriately displayed and updated regularly.

### **1.5.2 Interagency cooperation for disaster preparedness and response**

**Purpose:** It is desirable to have a statement of the level of mutual support agreed between agencies during a disaster. In the past, the agreements were Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs), however in the last few years there has been a move away from MOUs and towards less formal Mutual Aid Agreements (MAAs) or Letters of Intent (LOIs). Either an MAA or LOI may be created with Commonwealth cultural institutions and/or state institutions.

**Application:** The Archives views these cooperative agreements positively and recognises that there are different situations at different sites.

Implementation:

*National Office:* encourages and assists with the establishment of agreements with other agencies.

*Site coordinators:* will liaise with other cultural institutions in their area to establish a suitable understanding regarding mutual aid.

## **1.6 Repackaging guidelines**

Purpose: Records may be damaged by storage in inappropriate packaging. Repackaging records in protective archival quality material mitigates this risk.

Application: Standard guidelines are to be applied in all offices where repackaging takes place.

Implementation:

*National Preservation Coordination:* will provide nationally applicable repackaging guidelines.

*Records Services and Preservation:* will provide advice and guidance for specific repackaging projects and circumstances as needed.

*Site coordinators:* will ensure repackaging at each site meets the guidelines.

## **1.7 Analytical testing – Archival packaging**

Purpose: The use of inappropriate materials for storage, transport or display could harm records. All materials used for these purposes are to be tested. Testing these materials mitigates the risk of using inappropriate materials. Preservation staff test materials and maintain a list of materials that are safe to use.

Application: Analytical testing of materials takes place in the Mitchell, ACT conservation laboratory.

Implementation:

*Conservation staff:* test materials as required and keep a register of results. Materials which have passed testing will be listed on the Archives website. This listing will be maintained by conservation staff.

*Preservation supply cell:* will coordinate procurement of approved materials.

*Site coordinators:* will liaise with conservation staff to ensure materials used at each site have been tested by Archives conservation staff and are safe to use with records.

## **1.8 Hazardous substances (OH&S)**

A hazardous substance is a substance that can harm human health. The management of hazardous substances is covered by the Comcare Occupational Health & Safety (OH&S) Regulations (1994). The Archives OH&S coordinator provides advice on how to deal safely with hazardous substances in records. Preservation provides advice on how to access records with or affected by hazardous substances.

### **1.8.1 Hazardous substance procedures**

**Purpose:** These procedures mitigate the risk of damaging human health and mitigate the risk of records becoming inaccessible. These procedures detail how hazardous substances or suspected hazardous substances in records are to be dealt with.

**Application:** Procedures are to be applied as soon as a hazardous substance in records is identified.

**Implementation:**

*Records Services and Preservation:* will provide advice and procedures on how to access records affected by hazardous substances.

*People and Corporate Support:* will provide procedures along with advice and guidance on how to safely deal with hazardous substances in relation to each site as required.

*Site coordinators:* will ensure staff follow procedures and advice given by Preservation and the OH&S Coordinator.

### **1.8.2 Mould procedures**

**Purpose:** Mould is a hazardous substance that can harm human health. These procedures mitigate the risk of records becoming inaccessible.

**Application:** Procedures to be applied as soon as mould on a record is identified.

**Implementation:**

*Records Services and Preservation:* will provide advice and procedures on how to access and treat affected records as required.

*People and Corporate Support:* will provide guidance and procedures on handling mould-affected records.

*Site coordinators*: will ensure staff follow procedures and any advice given by Preservation and the OH&S Coordinator.

## **1.9 Training**

### **1.9.1 Records handling training**

**Purpose:** Significant damage occurs to records through incorrect handling. Records handling training mitigates the risk of damage by encouraging the correct handling of records.

**Application:** All new staff handling records to undertake this training during induction. Existing staff to undergo refresher training every three to five years.

**Implementation:**

*Records Services and Preservation*: will provide training in all state offices, in coordination with People and Corporate Support and site coordinators.

*Site coordinators*: will ensure all staff undergo training every three to five years and keep a register of trained staff.

### **1.9.2 Disaster recovery training**

**Purpose:** Disaster recovery training mitigates the risk that records will be damaged through untrained staff being unable to respond effectively to a disaster. There are several levels of training dependent on responsibilities.

**Application:** All staff with responsibilities under the Archives' Business Continuity Management Plan and associated NDPRS are to receive training on the theory of disaster planning and practical disaster recovery.

All staff working with records are to receive training on disaster response procedures.

**Implementation:**

- Externally-provided training on the theory of disaster planning and practical disaster recovery will be made available.
- *Records Services and Preservation*: will provide training specified in a guideline on training required by different categories of staff, currently being developed.
- *National Preservation Coordination*: will coordinate the training and attendance of staff at these training events and keep a register of trained staff.

- *Site coordinators*: will identify appropriate staff for attendance at these training sessions.

### **1.10 Maintenance and Building Contractors – Statement of Required Behaviour**

**Purpose:** The behaviour requirements mitigate the risk that maintenance and building contractors through ignorance may cause incidents such as fires that could damage records. The Archives requires that maintenance and building contractors receive written advice of requirements and sign an agreement that they will behave in a way that will not damage records.

**Application:** All contractors must agree to and comply with these requirements.

**Implementation:**

*National Preservation Coordination*: will provide assistance to Facilities staff with developing and drafting written advice for contractors.

*Site coordinators*: will ensure the requirements are in place and that contractors agree to, and comply with, the requirements.

### **1.11 National guidelines for packing and transporting archival records**

**Purpose:** The guidelines mitigate the risk that records may be damaged through transportation.

**Application:** To be followed at all sites in relation to transporting archival material between repositories or external sites.

**Implementation:**

*Records Services and Preservation*: will provide national guidelines and guidance to each site on transporting records.

*Site coordinators*: will impose the guidelines on contractors and ensure they are followed.

## 2. Response stage

Response comprises actions taken at the onset of an incident, in response to damage or risk of damage to records. If records are damaged or at risk of damage, other plans identified in the NDPRS are activated.

### 2.1 *Archival Records Disaster Response Plan*

**Purpose:** This plan mitigates the risk that staff may not know what to do if archival records are damaged or at risk. It details what actions are to be taken. It includes the single-page Archival Records Emergency Response Plan which details the first actions to be taken.

**Application:** Preservation staff to be aware of the plan and implement it if records are damaged or at risk.

All staff who work with records to be aware of the one-page Archival Records Emergency Response Plan. Ideally it is to be kept with disaster response bins.

**Implementation:**

*Preservation:* will provide a template and assistance in shaping the plan to suit individual sites.

*Site coordinators:* will create local plans following the National Office Preservation template and advice.

### 2.2 *Disaster Response Plan for Exhibitions*

**Purpose:** The plan supports staff action in the event of an incident thereby mitigating the risk to records on exhibition.

**Application:** Preservation and exhibition staff to be aware of the plan and implement it if records are damaged or at risk.

**Implementation:**

*Records Services and Preservation:* will produce and update the plan for each exhibition or substantial change of exhibition.

*Site coordinators:* will ensure all relevant staff are trained and familiar with the disaster response plan for their exhibition area.



### 3. Recovery stage

Recovery comprises actions to restore the records to a condition in which they can be accessed.

This stage refers to the recovery of archival material after an incident regardless of the scale of the incident. It deals with the specific format requirements and procedures for each.

#### 3.1 *Digital Archive Disaster Recovery Plan*

**Purpose:** This plan sets out the strategies and processes that would be used to restore services in an appropriate timeframe in the event of an incident affecting the Digital Preservation infrastructure.

**Application:** Digital Preservation staff control the application of this plan.

**Implementation:**

*Digital and AV Preservation:* will produce and update the plan and ensure relevant staff are trained.

*Site coordinators:* will ensure that relevant staff are trained and familiar with recovery actions.

#### 3.2 *Non-digital Archival Records Disaster Recovery Plan*

##### 3.2.1 *Disaster Recovery Manual for Non-digital Records*

**Purpose:** The manual provides guidance on how to handle, transport and recover damaged non-digital records. The manual lists the types of formats in the Archives' custody. The manual details how to handle, transport and recover each type of non-digital record from a range of different types of damage. Quick reference guides are included.

**Application:** To be used as a reference guide when recovering records.

**Implementation:**

*Records Services and Preservation:* will produce and update the manual as required.

*National Preservation Coordination:* will ensure that key listed staff are trained and familiar with the manual.

*Site coordinators:* ensure that appropriate local staff are trained and familiar with the manual.

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Comments</b>
1.1	November 2010	Policy created
1.2	July 2011	Policy endorsed for web publication