

Disaster Relief

Drying Books and Family Papers



1. Dry books and papers slowly.
2. If books and papers are damp, sprinkle cornstarch or talcum powder between pages to absorb moisture. Leave powder on for several hours, and then brush off.
3. Place books with water damage on end with pages separated.
4. When pages are partially dry, pile and press books to keep pages from crumpling.
5. Alternate drying and pressing until books are thoroughly dry. This helps prevent mildew. Use a fan to hasten drying.
6. When books are nearly dry, apply low heat with an electric iron. Separate the pages to prevent musty odors. This is a tedious process that you may want to use only with valuable books.
7. Some chemicals, such as parachlorobenzene, may help stop mold growth. Place books in closed containers with moth crystals to help stop mold growth. Contact your local Extension office for recommendations.
8. When books are thoroughly dry, close them and use C-clamps to help hold their shape.
9. You can freeze books and papers until you have time to work with them. Freezing effectively controls mold growth.
10. Even if books and papers appear to have dried successfully, they may disintegrate because of materials in the floodwater. As a precautionary measure, photocopy important documents or papers, or keep them in a safe deposit box.
11. An excellent source of information is *Procedures for Salvage of Water-Damaged Library Materials* by Peter Waters, available at your local library.

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