Protecting Our Cultural Heritage
What is Cultural Heritage?
Cultural Heritage is:

- Our Identity
- Our Memories
- Our History
- Our Symbols
- Our Economy
What are Cultural Heritage Resources?

- Records
- Manuscripts
- Special Collections
- Photographs
- Audio/Visual Material
- Art & Artifacts
- Sculpture & Statuary
- Historic Sites & Buildings
- Parks & Landscapes

Examples:
- Declaration of Intention (Naturalization)
  Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court Archives
- Notes on a court case, John Adams
  Massachusetts Historical Society
- Alphabet tablet, St. Paul's Infant School
  Boston Public Library
- 35mm and 4x5 film negatives
  Massachusetts Archives
- John Singleton Copley portrait of Paul Revere and Revere’s Liberty Bowl, 1768
  Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
- Massachusetts Fallen Firefighter Memorial, Boston
  Old Sturbridge Village
- Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary, Massachusetts
  Audubon Society
Who has custody of Cultural Heritage Resources?

- Public Buildings
- Libraries
- Archives
- Museums
- Historical Societies
- Historic Sites & Buildings
- Cemeteries
- Places of Worship
Why do Cultural Heritage Institutions warrant attention during an emergency?

These institutions can be critical to the recovery efforts of the community.
Why do Cultural Heritage Collections warrant special attention during an emergency?

The collections can be valuable.

vulnerable.

rare.

unique and irreplaceable.

essential.
What threatens Cultural Heritage Collections?

Natural Threats

- Floods
- Fires
- Hurricanes
- Tornadoes
- Blizzards
- Ice Storms
- Lightning

Hurricane Diana, 9/12/1984
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Admin./Department of Commerce

Blizzard, Allston, 1/23/2005

Tornado damage, 1953
Assumption College, Worcester
Courtesy: Massachusetts Historical Society

Flooding, Lawrence 5/19/2006
FEMA/Jocelyn Augustino
What threatens Cultural Heritage Collections?

Manmade Threats

- Damaged pipes
- Roof leaks
- Vandalism
- Theft
- Arson
- Terrorism
What challenges might Emergency Responders encounter?

- People
- Visitors who are reluctant to vacate the premises
- Staff who are reluctant to leave collections and/or structure
- Unfamiliar building layouts and contents
- Vaults and other security systems
- Vulnerable collections
- Hazardous materials in collections
How should Cultural Institutions prepare for emergencies?

• Prepare an institutional emergency response plan
• Work with local Emergency Management Director (EMD)
• Train staff and Emergency Responders in proper response techniques and a shared vocabulary
• Instruct fire, police, and EMDs as to locations of most important collections
• Conduct regular fire drills and tabletop exercises
• Learn how to protect and recover collections
• Establish recovery priorities for collections and facilities
• Stockpile recovery supplies
• Establish contacts with recovery suppliers and contractors
We need to work together.

The cultural community may be able to provide:

- a familiar meeting location for the community
- information resources and internet access
- shelter space
- experience managing crowds of people
- recovery expertise and advice regarding collections
- sites for:
  - Emergency Operations Centers (EOC)
  - Point of Distribution (POD) commodities
  - Disaster Recovery Centers (DRC)
We need to work together.

The emergency management community may be able to help by:

• participating actively in developing a relationship between the two groups before a disaster occurs
• providing assistance with access to our institutions during a disaster
• cooperating with institutional disaster recovery response teams
• understanding the importance of restoring power to an institution (e.g. providing services to community, climate control issues, etc.)
• acknowledging our policy of 0% loss to collections
If we lose our Cultural Heritage Resources…

…we lose the tangible expression of:

• our Identity
• our Memories
• our History