

# Protecting Our Cultural Heritage

# What is Cultural Heritage?

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# Cultural Heritage is:

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- Our Identity
- Our Memories
- Our History
- Our Symbols
- Our Economy



Shawmut Library, State House, Boston



Massachusetts 1780 State Constitution

Courtesy: Michael Comeau  
Massachusetts Archives

# What are Cultural Heritage Resources?

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



A Old Sturbridge  
35  
Boston, Massachusetts

John Singleton Conley portrait of Paul Revere  
C.D. Sullivan Iron Bay window, Salutaris, Massachusetts  
and Revere's Liberty Bowl, 1768  
Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court Archives  
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

# Who has custody of Cultural Heritage Resources?

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- Public Buildings
- Libraries
- Archives
- Museums
- Historical Societies
- Historic Sites & Buildings
- Cemeteries
- Places of Worship



Fred  
Basketball H  
Fenway Park, Boston



Worcester Historical Society  
Quabbin Cemetery, Belcher town  
Provincetown Public Library

Why do Cultural Heritage  
*Institutions*  
warrant attention  
during an emergency?

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These institutions can be critical  
to the recovery efforts of the community.



# Why do Cultural Heritage *Collections* warrant special attention during an emergency?

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The collections can be valuable.

vulnerable.

rare.

unique and irreplaceable.

essential.

# What threatens Cultural Heritage Collections?

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## Natural Threats

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



Flooding, Lawrence 5/19/2006  
FEMA/Jocelyn Augustino



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



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



Blizzard, Allston, 1/23/2005



# What threatens Cultural Heritage Collections?

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## Manmade Threats

- Damaged pipes
- Roof leaks
- Vandalism
- Theft
- Arson
- Terrorism



New Marlborough Public Library after arson  
Courtesy: New Marlborough Town Library



NYC, September 11, 2001  
FEMA/Andrea Booher



Roof leak  
Massachusetts Archives

# What challenges might Emergency Responders encounter?

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- 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?

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- 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.

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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.

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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...

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...we lose the tangible expression of:

- our Identity
- our Memories
- our History





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*Photographs by Jennifer Fauxsmith unless otherwise noted*