

Short Guide

Collections Incident Response and Salvage Planning



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Short Guide 16: Collections Incident Response and Salvage Planning

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Figure 1. Fire is one of the most devastating incidents which could affect a historic building. This image shows a firefighter during the aftermath of the 2014 fire at Glasgow School of Art.

Part 1: Creating Salvage Plans for Collections

1. Introduction: We hope for the best, but plan for the worst

1.1 What is a salvage plan?

When we think of incidents at heritage sites, the image of a burning building usually comes to mind. Fires at well-known visitor attractions such as Notre-Dame Cathedral, Hampton Court Palace and Windsor Castle made headlines around the world and led to much scrutiny on how the incidents were handled and the collections retrieved. However, fire is not the only risk to collections, and other events such as floods, pest infestation and a variety of building failures can also cause considerable damage. So, what can **organisations** do to prepare for such events? What actions can be taken in advance to help prevent them?

There are many ways to reduce the risk of incidents occurring, such as maintaining buildings and alarms, monitoring environmental conditions, and encouraging correct handling and packing procedures. However, there is no way to eliminate the risks entirely. To help combat the risks presented to people and buildings during an incident, it is a requirement for heritage sites to have overarching incident response plans.

These plans usually outline the correct procedures to follow in the case of a range of threats from fire, flood or terrorist attack and ensure the safe evacuation of staff and visitors. However, these plans do not always address the issue of what should happen to the collections that remain in the buildings, or indeed any historic interior, fixed, or unmovable item. This is where a **salvage plan** comes in.

A salvage plan is a document that focuses on what to do with collections affected by an incident and should follow on from the primary incident response plans.

A salvage plan should hold essential information that will guide teams through the recovery of collections and include details like:

- contact numbers for staff and contractors;
- health and safety procedures;
- locations of collections and how to access them; and
- priorities when removing objects.

No matter the size of an incident, there will always be potential for complications to arise throughout the salvage process. This may lead to staff feeling pressured and unsure how to respond. To help manage this, it is a good idea to have a clear and concise salvage plan that outlines all the major procedures and other essential information. This can help ensure staff can respond with confidence and the recovery process is quick and effective. This will also help reduce the chance of further damage to the collection.

For this guide we will use the term ‘salvage plan’ as we will be looking exclusively at the recovery of collections after an incident. However, not every organisation uses the term ‘salvage plan’ so you may come across references to incident response, emergency or disaster plans elsewhere.

Although we refer to ‘staff’ throughout this guide, some museums may be run either partially or entirely by volunteers. Within the context of this guide, the term staff can refer to any person who works at or contributes to the running of a museum or heritage organisation.

Glossary terms in this guide appear in **bold font** on first mention and further reading on specific topics can be found in the bibliography.

1.2 What is not included in a salvage plan?

Salvage plans are separate from documents such as:

- Risk Assessments
- Risk Assessment and Method Statements (RAMS)
- Incident response procedures

All of these document types might be included in the collections incident response and salvage procedures, but they are separate from a salvage plan as they do not focus solely on the removal of collections.

Risk Assessments

A risk assessment is a document which lists and assesses hazards which may be present during a specific work-related activity. It calculates the associated risk

depending on the severity of the hazards, the likelihood they will occur, and how they will be mitigated. It is a dynamic document which should be modified as work progresses to accommodate newly identified hazards. You should ensure that all staff responding to an incident are kept up to date of any changes to the risk assessment as they will need to be reactive to new situations.

Staff can contribute by providing input into risk assessments at any time before and during incident responses.

Risk assessments are not just used for salvage operations. They are also used for other day to day work activities. Table 2 is an example of a risk assessment for a work-related activity, using the associated scoring matrix in Table 1.

Risk Assessment and Method Statements (RAMS)

A RAMS contains both a risk assessment (Tables 1 and 2) and a method statement. A method statement provides clear step by step instructions on how a task should be carried out. These include set procedures, specific equipment and materials and any health and safety legislation that must be complied with.

A RAMS may be used for the removal of large historic items like sculptures or paintings. For example, it will be used when lifting equipment is required which has a specific load capacity; or for the use of scaffolding towers; or for moving objects which contain hazardous materials such as asbestos.

You may already have RAMS documents in place for the removal of certain objects within your collection which could be included in your salvage plan.

Incident Response Procedures

Salvage plans are also separate from incident response procedures such as fire safety and evacuation plans. These are typically known as first response actions, and cover procedures such as evacuating visitors and staff, calling the **emergency services** if necessary, and other immediate actions that need to be taken to manage the initial incident – these types of documents are legal requirements. Recovering collections does not typically begin until the incident has been contained and it is deemed safe for staff to enter the affected areas. Salvage is, therefore, referred to as secondary response.

Further guidance on risk assessment and risk management can be found on the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) website: [Risk assessment: More detail on managing risk- HSE¹](https://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/more-detail-on-managing-risk.htm).

¹ <https://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/more-detail-on-managing-risk.htm>

Table 1. This risk assessment scoring matrix is used to assess potential risks on site. Where risks are deemed to be moderate or higher extra measures should be introduced to mitigate risks. Probability is shown on the left, graded 1 (remote) to 5 (almost certain). Similarly, severity is also graded along the top from 1 (insignificant) to 5 (catastrophic). A legend shows a colour coded ‘traffic light’ risk rating score system from very low risk up to very high risk.

Score		Severity				
Risk rating						
1 - 4	Very low risk	Insignificant 1	Minor 2	Moderate 3	Major 4	Catastrophic 5
5 - 9	Low risk					
10 - 14	Moderate risk					
15 - 19	Major risk					
20 - 25	Very high risk					
Probability	Remote 1	1	2	3	4	5
	Unlikely 2	2	4	6	8	10
	Possible 3	3	6	9	12	15
	Likely 4	4	8	12	16	20
	Almost Certain 5	5	10	15	20	25

Table 2. An example of a basic risk assessment for a work-related activity.

Hazard	Worst Outcome	Risk estimation (Probability)	Risk est. (Severity)	Risk est. (Rating)	Controls required	Further controls needed
Trips, slips and falls	Minor injury	3	4	12	Full briefing before salvage/recovery begins. Teams to familiarise themselves with area of task, including steps, surfaces that might be slippery and routes around the site. First aider to be available on site.	Headtorches to be worn if lighting poor. All electric cables to be kept as tidy as possible.

1.3 Scope of this guide

This salvage guide is split into two parts. The first part outlines the essential information needed in a salvage plan, covering topics such as callout lists, health and safety procedures, **priority objects**, and documentation. The second part covers advice and guidance for how to respond to an incident.

The focus of this guide is salvaging museum or heritage collections, particularly objects such as artworks, furniture, archaeology, and social history items. While some information has been included for salvaging archival collections, it is far from exhaustive. For more in-depth information about salvaging **archives**, please see the following sources:

- [Emergency Planning Guidance for Archives](#)¹ (Planning Matters Update, 2020).
- [National Archives Salvage Procedures](#)².

There are many resources that provide templates for salvage plans. These can be helpful in planning the format of your plan and what type of information you want to include.

There is no ‘one size fits all’ approach to salvage, so you should aim to create a plan that is customised for your organisation, buildings and collections.

1.4 Accountability in exceptional situations or circumstances

The aim of managing and preserving collections is to ensure their long-term survival so they can be accessed and enjoyed by the public. Members of the public often have a deep attachment to places and objects that have personal meaning to them. When these are put at risk or even lost during an incident there can be heavy public scrutiny directed towards the organisation responsible for the management of the building and collections. Added to this, investigations can be carried out by governing bodies and insurance companies that may focus on the mitigations put in place for such events and the incident response procedures which were employed.

¹ <https://www.scottisharchives.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Planning-Matters-Nov-2020-Update.pdf>

² <https://www.archives.gov/preservation/disaster-response/salvage-procedures.html>

Table 3. Emergency planning requirements for the **Spectrum Standard**.

Minimum requirement	Why this is important
You assess the risks facing collections and information systems, and review these regularly in line with your policy.	Your governing body can make informed decisions about safeguarding your objects and data.
You have multiple copies of a written emergency plan that will help you respond effectively to all foreseeable emergencies (with at least one copy safely off-site).	You have clear steps to follow so you will not forget something important in a real emergency. You do not lose your only copy of the plan in an emergency.
You always have access to up-to-date contact details for the people and organisations named in your emergency plan.	You do not waste time tracking down the people you need urgently.
You have prioritised the objects you would save first in an emergency, and recorded this information in a way that can guide any rescue that may be possible.	You are able to move objects to safety in a planned way that reflects their value to you.
All your staff and volunteers know, and have practised, what they should do in all the situations covered by your emergency plan.	Whoever is First on Scene can react quickly, efficiently, and safely. You are not relying on someone who happens to be on holiday when disaster strikes.

Source: [Emergency Planning for Collections - the Spectrum Standard](#) | Collections Trust¹.

By having written procedures laid out in a concise document and ensuring staff are familiar with these procedures, organisations can show they have taken reasonable precautions to consider risk and prepare a suitable response to a range of incidents. It will also enable organisations to recover from incidents as quickly as possible.

1.5 The importance of the Museum Accreditation Scheme

The [Museum Accreditation Scheme](#)² is the UK industry standard for museums and galleries. As part of this standard, all museums and heritage organisations must show that they have a workable salvage plan. Guidance provided by the Collections Trust, which sets out the standards by which Museums and

¹ <https://www.collectionstrust.org.uk/resource/emergency-planning-for-collections-the-spectrum-standard>

² <https://www.museumsgalleryscotland.org.uk/museum-accreditation/accreditation-scheme/>

Heritage Bodies are assessed for accreditation (Spectrum Standard 5.1) provides the information in Table 3 outlining the minimum requirements for achieving accreditation when assessed on emergency planning.

For further information about the Museum Accreditation Scheme:

- in Scotland, go to: [Accreditation Scheme | Museums Galleries Scotland](#)¹;
- in England, go to: [UK Museum Accreditation Scheme | Arts Council England](#)²;
- in Wales, go to: [Museum Accreditation Scheme | GOV.WALES](#)³; and
- in Northern Ireland, go to [Museum Accreditation Scheme | NI Museums Council](#)⁴.

1.6 Insurance for historic collections

If historic collections are damaged and require significant conservation work, or if objects are lost entirely, insurance companies may need evidence that sufficient precautionary measures were taken to protect historic collections before they agree to cover conservation costs. This could include:

- providing a copy of a salvage plan;
- providing an **Incident Log** (see Part 1, [Section 8.8: Information that will need to be recorded during a salvage operation](#)) detailing decisions taken over the course of the incident; and
- providing documentation of conservation conducted on affected collections.

Having a robust salvage plan may be a requirement of your insurance, but even if it is not, having a salvage plan can reassure insurers and can help ensure the right steps are in place to support the claims process.

Salvage plans are a requirement of the UK Government Indemnity Scheme (GIS)

The Government Indemnity Scheme

The UK **Government Indemnity Scheme (GIS)** is an alternative to commercial insurance. It allows art and cultural objects to be shown publicly in the UK where the cost of insurance might have been too high otherwise.

Further information about GIS, along with requirements and guidelines, can be found at [Government Indemnity | Arts Council England](#)⁵.

1 <https://www.museumsgalleryscotland.org.uk/museum-accreditation/accreditation-scheme/>

2 <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/supporting-arts-museums-and-libraries/uk-museum-accreditation-scheme>

3 <https://www.gov.wales/museum-accreditation-scheme>

4 <https://nimc.co.uk/accreditation/>

5 <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/supporting-arts-museums-and-libraries/supporting-collections-and-cultural-property/government-indemnity>



Figure 2. A good salvage plan will aid Fire and Rescue Services if they are able to help you recover objects. © Judith Rowett

2. Why a salvage plan is useful

2.1 Ensuring a quick and effective response

An incident can occur at any time and there is no way to guarantee that all members of staff will be available and able to assist with salvaging collections. Key staff may be away on holiday, on sick leave, or just not available. It is advisable to consider this when creating a salvage plan and ensure everyone who will have to respond to an incident is aware of and familiar with it.

Incidents can be very stressful and make staff feel under pressure to act as quickly as possible. Without a plan this may lead to uninformed decisions, staff put at risk, collections improperly handled, and disordered documentation. Creating a plan before an incident occurs ensures it is well thought through and contains all the information required to support effective decision making.

Staff can feel attached to the buildings and collections they work with, and watching an incident progress can have a significant emotional impact which is often overlooked. High stress levels can lead to unpredictable behaviour and staff may not follow correct procedures or forget them entirely, which can cause significant risks to other team members and the collections. In these potentially stressful situations, having a salvage plan and ensuring it is activated can support staff to make objective and rational decisions.

A well-written salvage plan should be a valuable resource for staff during all phases of the salvage process. It should cover a variety of different incidents that could affect collections and provide clear instructions on how to manage them. By laying out appropriate step-by-step actions, the salvage plan will ensure staff manage known risks using agreed procedures and will allow them to make informed decisions quickly. This in turn helps to reduce the resulting damage and any potential further harm to the buildings and collections. It can also reduce any uncertainty for staff should they be faced with an incident.

A salvage plan should be reviewed periodically, or when there has been a significant change to displays, store areas, or building layout following construction. Staff should be made aware of these changes and how they have altered the salvage plan.

2.2 Making your salvage plan easy to use

A salvage plan should be easy to use to the point where a member of staff can pick it up and find relevant information even during a large-scale incident.

The following tips can help your staff navigate your plan:

- The information contained should be clear and concise.
- Information should be easy to read and understand.
- Information should be current and up to date.
- Essential information should be clearly highlighted.
- Document sections should be laid out logically. Information should be well-spaced out and formatted accessibly.
- Flowcharts and diagrams can help provide information at a glance and work as a type of checklist.
- Colour-coding sections that are relevant for particular groups can help with finding information effectively.

Once a salvage plan has been written, it is a good idea to pass it on to key members of staff so they can provide comments and potential amendments. This ensures the plan is robust and staff feel comfortable using it.

2.3 The importance of clear guidelines and procedures

A lack of clear procedures and guidance can cause significant delays, which can lead to mistakes and oversights with serious consequences. For example, when dealing with a collection of wet paper, it can take as little as 48 hours for mould to appear, which can lead to irreparable damage and can be extremely costly to treat.

If the same objects are removed as soon as possible and either frozen or treated by a conservator, they may suffer relatively little damage. Likewise, rushing to act can lead to health and safety procedures not being followed.

This can put staff at risk of serious injury and cause potential further damage to objects if they are handled incorrectly. Clear instructions encourage staff to work through the steps laid out, ensure all safety procedures are followed, and ensure staff feel empowered to take on the necessary roles, regardless of previous incident response experience.

2.4 Building resilience through training

Unless the incident response procedures are familiar to teams and tested through training, there is no way of knowing if they will work. Training provides an opportunity to see how workload is spread across the team and a chance to test roles, remits and levels of responsibility assigned to each team member.

It is not necessary to jump straight into a full-scale training exercise to test the

procedures. A test of the callout structure can be a good place to start and does not need much in the way of preparation or staff time. Other exercises can include:

- practising completing risk assessments;
- locating **priority objects**; and
- salvage kit location and use.

Regular training will allow staff to practise parts of the incident response they are unsure of, give them an opportunity to build their confidence and identify omissions in the plan. Training is vital for encouraging staff to think through scenarios logically and to focus on clear predefined priorities such as risk assessment and initial coordination.

2.5 Assisting the emergency services

The priority for the emergency services is the preservation of life. To this end, they will focus primarily on ensuring the safety of staff and visitors during an incident and controlling access to affected areas. However, if there is an opportunity for services such as the fire brigade to assist with the retrieval of collections, and they are willing to do so, then a salvage plan can direct them to priority objects and give guidance on how to remove them.

It could be useful to engage your local emergency services as part of your planning process. This could include:

- reaching out to raise awareness of your salvage plan;
- providing a copy of your plan for your local service to hold if appropriate;
- taking a site tour with your local service to discuss site layout and the location of key objects, including any notes on fixings or mounting; and
- delivering a training exercise with your local service around a particular practice scenario, giving staff and the emergency services the opportunity to learn about each other's procedures.

Ideally, you should reach out to the emergency services early on during the planning process.

Experienced members of the emergency services have a wealth of useful knowledge and can provide valuable advice on what information would be useful for them. By involving your local emergency services early, you are more likely to spot, and therefore resolve, any potential problems that could hinder the response to an incident.



Figure 3. Flooding is one of the most common types of incidents that can affect historic properties. This view of Threave Castle shows the surrounding River Dee flooding right up to the castle walls. © Lee Howard.

3. What to include in a salvage plan

3.1 Baseline information in your plan

No two salvage plans will be exactly the same as each organisation has its own requirements. Information will vary due to the nature of the buildings and the collections, levels of available resources, and complexity of removing objects.

It is helpful to identify the key factors that will need to be specific, including where your site is located, how many members of staff might be available at any given point in time, and the accessibility of the collections.

The following standard information should be included in every salvage plan:

- Types of incidents that could affect your collections, how to identify them, and when the **Salvage Team** should be alerted.
- **Callout procedures** and contact details for key members of staff.
- Roles and responsibilities of different sections of the Salvage Team.
- Health, safety and security procedures.
- Locations of the **Muster Point**, **Command Post** and **safe areas** and set up procedures.
- How to locate emergency equipment and supplies.
- Site plans and maps.
- A list of priority objects and where they are located.
- Forms to record important information throughout the salvage process, such as an Incident Log, Triage Forms for damaged objects, and object movement forms.

Further information about each of these is detailed in the following sections of this guide.

3.2 Identifying an incident

An incident is any event which threatens or impacts the safety of historic collections and their associated information. This can range from fire, flooding, and structural collapse to smaller and more localised events such as minor water leaks, vandalism and pest infestations. It can also include events such as cyber security breaches or information theft.

The most likely type of incident to affect collections is water ingress. This is becoming more commonplace and severe due to increases in extreme weather events as a result of changes in localised climates. Historic properties, which are often used to house museums and historic collections, struggle to cope with the level of rainfall we now experience. Even modern, purpose-built facilities can sometimes fail.

Changes to seasonal climates are also putting collections at risk from pest infestation and mould growth. Wetter summers and milder winters allow for pests to have longer life cycles and provides favourable conditions to reproduce. Damp environments can encourage mould growth, especially in archive collections if they are stored in areas which were not originally designed to hold archival materials.

Fire has the potential to be one of the most devastating incident types to encounter, not only because it can cause extensive destruction, but the soot can also damage objects, as can the water used to put out the fire.

Every incident is different, but some types of incidents are more serious than others. It is important to respond to an incident proportionately. Overreaction to a small water ingress could lead to a waste of resources and could encourage staff not to take callouts seriously. An underreaction to a large-scale incident such as a fire can lead to unnecessary delays and further damage to collections.

Major incidents requiring an immediate response can include:

- Fire
- Flood (rising water or ingress from the roof)
- Roof collapse or major structural damage
- Explosion
- Major vandalism
- Large-scale or ongoing theft

Minor incidents which may not require an immediate response can include:

- Small leaks and spills
- Petty vandalism
- Pest infestation
- Small-scale theft/suspected theft
- Minor building structural damage (damage to windows etc)

Incidents can rapidly develop, and what at first appears to be a minor incident may turn out to be more serious than initially thought. For example, a small leak in a corner of a room may be viewed as minor; however, if it later turns out that the leak was caused by a burst pipe, the water ingress could become much more widespread, and the risk of damage to collections is dramatically increased. It is essential to consider a variety of options when writing a salvage plan, including how to identify the level of response needed and how to escalate the response when necessary. For more on this topic, see Part 2, [Section 1.4: Escalating an incident](#).

3.3 Identifying key contacts for incidents

An incident is as likely to happen when a museum or heritage site is closed, as when it is open. It is also possible that key members of staff will not be immediately available. Therefore, it is essential to have an efficient call-out system to ensure staff can be notified about incidents quickly, especially when they occur out of hours. Even if certain members of staff are not available to attend an incident in person, they could give advice over the phone. Sending photos and videos of the incident can give them a better idea of what is going on, and they can use the information to guide salvage efforts.

It is also useful to include contact details for external contractors and suppliers with the staff callout list. This will be valuable if the office or network where the information is normally kept is unavailable. If you do not have a fixed supplier list, details of conservators and other contractors can be found through the Institute of Conservation (ICON) and Museum Association (MA) websites:

- [Find a conservator | ICON](https://www.icon.org.uk/conservation-hub/find-a-conservator.html)¹
- [Find a Product or Service | Museums Association](https://www.museumsassociation.org/find-a-product-or-service/)²

During your planning stage, it is worth reaching out to potential conservators and suppliers you might need in the event of an incident and discussing what capacity they have to help.



Figure 4. Evidence of woodworm shown on a historic decorative carving. Signs of pest activity in several objects could be classified as a minor incident and may trigger a salvage response ([CC BY-SA 2.0](#); Creator: Bob Harvey).

¹ <https://www.icon.org.uk/conservation-hub/find-a-conservator.html>

² <https://www.museumsassociation.org/find-a-product-or-service/>

3.4 Signing up to be a key contact

Consider who is appropriate to be a key contact, and whether this is part of your staff contracts or if you need to ask people to volunteer. Responding to an incident can be demanding, both mentally and physically so staff should be given the opportunity to look at what is required of them in a particular role and decide whether it is suitable for them to carry it out. This prevents staff from having to divulge sensitive information. Even if some staff members are not on the Salvage Team it is a good idea for them to know what the callout procedures are so they can call out their colleagues, if necessary.

3.5 General Data Protection Regulation

When collecting and storing contact details for team members, including staff, volunteers, and contractors, remember that this constitutes personal information and should be stored and managed in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). You should only collect personal information, particularly private mobile numbers, with consent and should not share this information for any purpose other than emergency callout. Ensure that any contact information you hold for team members is kept up to date, and that any personal information you hold is destroyed if team members leave the organisation, or if they request their information to be removed. For further guidance on GDPR, see [The UK's data protection legislation](https://www.gov.uk/data-protection)¹.

3.6 Explain your callout procedures

All members of the Salvage Team, and any members of staff or volunteers who may discover an incident (such as those in visitor-facing roles and Security staff) should be aware of the callout procedures in the salvage plan. This may form part of staff induction or could be a specific training module.

These procedures should include instructions on when different types of incidents should be reported, who they should be reported to, and what information will be needed for Collections staff to appropriately respond.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/data-protection>

3.7 Provide a callout checklist

It can be helpful to provide a callout checklist for staff. This can ensure that no steps are missed and that all essential information needed to initiate a salvage response is available. Some organisations may use the 'ETHANE' structure to capture and pass on important information when reporting an incident.

This is a structure used by the emergency services when responding to major incidents¹.

- **E** – Exact location: what is the exact location or geographical area of the incident?
- **T** – Type of incident: what kind of incident is it?
- **H** – Hazards: what hazards or potential hazards can be identified?
- **A** – Access: what are the best routes for access and egress?
- **N** – Number of casualties: how many casualties are there and what is their condition?
- **E** – Emergency Services: which and how many emergency responder assets or personnel are required or are they already on scene?

While not all of the ETHANE considerations will be directly applicable to a salvage situation, the process can easily be adapted to suit callout procedures for collections incident response. Checklist 1 is an example of a simple checklist based on the ETHANE procedure that could be included in a salvage plan to help guide staff who might report an incident.

Suggested callout procedure and checklist

If you discover an incident, you should contact Collections staff using the Incident Callout Checklist. Take the following measures:

- If there is no mobile reception, take photographs of the incident and call as soon as there is reception, or when you reach a landline.
- In some cases, it might be useful to video call to better allow the Collections staff to assess the incident.
- Ensure to note the following from Checklist 1 and pass the information on to the Collections staff.

¹ LFC-0468-D Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles - JESIP at <https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/media/5614/lfc-0468-d-joint-emergency-services-interoperability-principles-jesip-fin.pdf>

Checklist 1. Example of how a Callout Checklist could be completed.

Checklist item	How to complete the item
Name and contact details	of yourself and a senior member of staff on site
Location of incident	name of site and the areas affected
Type of incident	describe what has happened and what caused it (if known)
Emergency services	whether they have been called and are on site
Damage	whether there are obvious signs of damage to any objects
Priorities	whether any identified priority objects or loans are affected
Access to affected areas	describe any inaccessible areas and access routes
Hazards	describe any potential risks to objects and Salvage Team
Personnel already on site	include names of staff acting as First Responders

You should have a clear procedure and structure around who is responsible for contacting staff during callout.

One staff member might oversee the callout, or you may use a cascade system to mobilise different levels of staff. You should determine what will work best for your organisation, as this can vary depending on the number of staff available and different organisational structures.

If it is likely that the alarm will be raised by members of staff who are not directly involved with collections, it can be helpful to include information about when the salvage plan should be triggered. It should be made clear to staff that collections incidents should always be reported, even if they seem minor.

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Figure 5. An exercise at Duff House, Aberdeenshire. Roles may differ from your usual organisational structure, as these roles should be appointed by whoever has the appropriate skills and experience, rather than simply by seniority. © Judith Rowett.

4. How the Salvage Team works

4.1 Salvage Team family tree

A Salvage Team structure showing the roles which will need to be taken during an incident will prevent confusion about responsibilities. A simple family tree in the salvage plan itself can show the main roles that will need to be filled and provide a clear outline of levels of responsibility and the team reporting structure.

This will ensure a smoother operation and will prevent any roles or tasks being overlooked or duplicated. When deciding your Salvage Team structure, it is advisable to reference job titles rather than specific people, and to include multiple options for each designated role. That way, if a specific staff member is not available, you can agree who can take on the required role.

Salvage recovery can take several days or even weeks. Depending on the size of your team, you may wish to identify several staff members who could take on specific roles and organise a rota to make sure that workload is shared while ensuring that key salvage roles are always covered.

The Salvage Team family tree provides a visual guide for the chain of command during a **salvage incident**. This may differ from your usual organisational structure, as these roles should be appointed by whoever has the appropriate skills and experience, rather than simply by seniority.



6

Figure 6. Example of a suggested Salvage Team structure and potential family tree.

The **Salvage Team** can be made up of several groups who carry out distinct roles during the salvage operation. These groups cover functions such as object recovery, documentation, security, communications, and conservation.

Scalability is key, and each museum or organisation may require variations on these roles.

For large sites requiring a major response, it may be necessary to create more roles to spread responsibility.

Small sites with limited staff numbers may find they need to combine the functions of these roles. For example, the **Incident Manager** and **Recovery Manager** roles could be fulfilled by one person, and the **Documentation Group** may consist of one person for a minor incident.

You may find the **Facilitator** role not to be necessary for the size of your organisation, or you require a specific security role after a major incident.

The Incident Manager has overall responsibility for the salvage operation. They have overview of the entire salvage operation and make strategic decisions. They may take on tasks such as deciding on the correct approach for salvaging collections, coordinating communications, contacting insurers, and ensuring sufficient budget is allocated.

Taking lead from them, the Recovery Manager oversees the groups 'on the ground', ensuring that the salvage operation runs smoothly and safely. Each group should also have an appointed group leader, who reports any developments to the Recovery Manager.

It can be helpful to think of the Salvage Team as made up of tiers with varying levels of responsibility during a salvage incident:

1. Top tier: Incident Control Group, consisting of Incident Manager, Recovery Manager and Group Leaders.
2. Middle tier: Members of the Documentation, Salvage and **Conservation Groups**.
3. Lower tier: Members of the **Salvage Support Group**, such as external volunteers.

The following sections explore suggested groups which could be included within

a Salvage Team, along with the types of roles and responsibilities for these groups.

4.2 Top tier response: the Control Group

The role of the **Control Group** is to assess the incident and the risk it poses to the collections and act accordingly. They have an overview of the entire salvage operation and are responsible for making all high-level decisions, such as whether money should be released to pay for equipment or storage, and for keeping senior management teams informed about developments throughout the incident. It is their responsibility to decide what should happen to the objects, such as whether they should be removed or protected in situ.

Typical roles and responsibilities of the **Control Group** are explored in more detail in the following pages.

Incident Manager

Responsible for the overall management of the incident, making high-level strategic decisions.

Typical responsibilities

Immediate Actions / First response

- Respond to an initial call. Confirm whether the incident is major or minor.
- Go to site if necessary and make an initial assessment of the incident.
- Contact other members of the team.

Assessment / Strategy

- Liaise with the wider **incident response teams** as needed.
- Arrange to carry out a risk assessment for proposed actions if an assessment has not already been carried out.
- Establish the Command Post.

Operations / Coordination

- Ensure the salvage scene is photographed before contents are removed if time allows.
- Arrange for equipment and materials to be taken to site.
- Identify area to take collections to, if not already done.

Logistics / Resource management

- Appoint the Control Group, consisting of Salvage, Documentation and Conservation Team leaders, and Support Group if numbers allow.
- Continue to check progress and call additional contractors and suppliers (eg conservators) as needed.
- Decide whether other facilities or equipment such as freezers, fans and dehumidifiers are needed. Arrange for the purchase of more supplies of materials.
- Ensure security of collections is maintained.
- Arrange for transport of collections off-site to safe storage if needed.

Post incident and Reporting

- Log key decisions and incidents.
- Inform insurers.
- Liaise with Communications Team.

Recovery Manager

Responsible for managing the incident on site, coordinating and leading teams on site during the salvage operation.

Typical responsibilities

Immediate Actions / First response

- Maintain communications with the Incident Manager and ensure they are aware of all developments on site.
- Oversee the individual group leaders to ensure staff welfare is maintained and adequate breaks are taken.

Assessment / Strategy

- Assist with the initial site risk assessment and recording of the initial incident site.
- Lead the main briefing for the Salvage Team.

Operations / Coordination

- Work with the rest of the Control Team to ensure staff and equipment can be safely transported to site.
- Work with Security staff and/or Control Team to ensure site and staff are kept safe.
- Provide a point of contact for emergency services where necessary.

Logistics / Resource management

- Ensure lines of communication are kept open between all teams.
- Oversee and advise on the removal of collections from the affected areas during the operation.

Post incident and Reporting

- Give specialist advice on site when dealing with collections.
- Work with conservators to ensure objects requiring immediate treatment can be dealt with promptly.

Salvage Group Leader

Responsible for overseeing the physical recovery of objects affected by the incident.

Typical responsibilities

Immediate Actions / First response

- Maintain communications with Recovery Manager and other Control Group members.
- Lead and manage the **Salvage Group**.
- Obtain a copy of the Collections Salvage Plan for the site and lead a team in the physical recovery of collections.

Assessment / Strategy

- Undertake risk assessment prior to beginning work and ensure that those salvaging are wearing PPE and working in pairs.
- Assess priorities for action. Protect or remove priority objects first.

Operations / Coordination

- Install in situ protection where needed: if items can be protected from the threat or are too large to move.
- Log decisions and actions, and provide information to the Recovery Manager for the Incident Log.
- Liaise with emergency services if on site for access and assistance if appropriate.

Documentation Group Leader

Responsible for overseeing the documentation of any objects removed from the affected area.

Typical responsibilities

Immediate Actions / First response

- Maintain communications with the Recovery Manager and other Control Group members.
- Lead and manage the Documentation Group.
- Obtain a copy of the collections **inventory** and record all objects removed from the affected area.

Assessment / Strategy

- Complete a risk assessment prior to beginning work and ensure team members are wearing PPE if necessary.

Operations / Coordination

- Separate out damaged objects and alert the Conservation Group.
- Log decisions and actions, and provide information to the Recovery Manager for the Incident Log.

Conservation Group Leader

Responsible for overseeing any remedial treatments carried out on damaged objects.

Typical responsibilities

Immediate Actions / First response

- Maintain communications with Recovery Manager and other Control Group members.
- Lead and manage the Conservation Group.

Assessment / Strategy

- Complete a risk assessment prior to beginning work and ensure that those carrying out initial object treatments are wearing PPE.

Operations / Coordination

- Log decisions and actions, and provide information to the Recovery Manager for the Incident Log.

Facilitator

Responsible for coordinating volunteers and ensuring the Salvage Team has access to on-site resources.

Typical responsibilities

Immediate Actions / First response

- Maintain communications with the Recovery Manager and other Control Group members.
- Lead and manage the Support Group.

Operations / Coordination

- Provide specialist information and advice about the site.

For larger sites or large-scale incidents, other roles may need to be included in a salvage response plan. Examples of these types of roles are **Security Leader**, **Communications Leader** and **Loans Supervisor**.

Security Leader

Responsible for overseeing the safety of staff and objects on site.

Typical responsibilities

Immediate Actions / First response

- Maintain communications with Recovery Manager and other Control Group members.
- Ensure the safety of the site and collections in the event of an incident.

Logistics / Resource management

- Oversee security arrangements during the emergency; specifically, site security / security of works removed from site.

Communications Leader

Responsible for coordinating external communications.

Typical responsibilities

Immediate Actions / First response

- Maintain communications with Recovery Manager and other Control Group members.
- Gather, compile and coordinate information for dissemination through media.
- Receive all external communications requesting information.

Operations / Coordination

- Coordinate social media response.
- Release a press statement as/when necessary.

Loans Supervisor

Responsible for overseeing the safety of loaned objects and communicating with lenders.

Typical responsibilities

Operations / Coordination

- Liaise with lenders as directed by the **Documentation Group Leader**.
- Ensure lenders' instructions about loaned objects are carried out.
- Obtain consent to remove loaned objects.
- Oversee removal and packing of loaned objects.
- Ensure loaned objects are fully documented, including removal inventories and **Conservation Triage Forms**.

4.3 Middle tier response groups

The middle tier of the Salvage Team should consist of groups which will carry out the recovery, documentation, and basic conservation of objects affected by the incident.

Salvage Group

This group will usually consist of museum or gallery staff who are familiar with the collections and buildings. It is likely to include roles such as Curators, Collections Managers and Collections Assistants.

Key responsibilities are to:

- ensure that those salvaging are wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and working in pairs;
- obtain equipment and materials needed. Assess priorities for action. Protect/remove priority objects first;
- take detailed photographic records of any objects if they are lying broken amongst the debris, including position and orientation of all fragments;
- install in situ protection where needed;
- recover collections from the affected area, ensuring they are packed appropriately where necessary; and
- inform Documentation Group of new location to ensure records are updated accordingly.

Documentation Group

This group will usually consist of museum or gallery staff who are familiar with collections documentation procedures. It is likely to include roles such as Registrars, Collections Managers and Curators.

Key responsibilities are to:

- obtain inventory of the collection and ascertain priority objects;
- record (check off) the objects that have been salvaged;
- ensure that priority objects have been retrieved;
- use blank inventory forms to record object information;
- take photographs and add labels to retrieved objects, particularly if to be removed from site;
- Send recovered objects to the conservation area or the storage area depending on level of damage they have incurred; and
- liaise with the Control Group if objects are to be removed from site for conservation treatment or safe storage, ensuring inventories have been completed.

Conservation Group

This group will usually consist of qualified conservators and museum or gallery staff who are trained in conservation techniques.

Key responsibilities are to:

- identify separate areas for wet and dry objects;
- obtain equipment and materials including tables;
- if dealing with wet material, cover tables with **Tyvek**;
- ensure heavy items are stable, using wedges;
- assess items quickly: whether wet / dry / damp and keep in separate areas;
- start to treat objects that are particularly vulnerable to further damage;
- identify objects which are so damaged that they will require specialist treatment by a conservator. Fill out **Conservation Triage Forms**;
- ensure loaned items are prioritised for action where possible;
- if dealing with wet material, set up fans and a wind tunnel to aid drying;
- if objects are going to be removed from site, pack them for transport, ensuring documentation is completed, including crate lists;
- communicate to Recovery Manager on additional equipment and/or materials needed; and
- work with Documentation Group to ensure all conservation decisions and actions are recorded.

4.4 Lower tier response groups

Where necessary, other members of staff and volunteers can also help during a salvage operation, depending on the size and nature of the organisation. While this assistance can be a valuable support, it is best practice for participants who are not trained or experienced in working with collections to be overseen by an experienced member of the team.

4.5 Salvage Support Group

The **Salvage Support Group** could be made up of other members of staff and volunteers who may help to fill in any gaps in the other groups, if it is considered suitable for them to do so. This could include office staff, visitor services teams, volunteers, or other site stakeholders. It can be helpful to discuss this with potential team members as part of your planning process to ensure agreements are in place.

This group should be managed by an appointed Facilitator, who will also be a member of the Control Group. This person will be somebody with a good working knowledge of the site. If your organisation has a lot of volunteers, a Volunteer Manager would be a good fit for this role.

The role of the salvage support group may include:

- supporting the Salvage, Documentation and Conservation groups as directed by the group leader;
- helping to control visitor flow if the site is still open;
- informing tour groups/events if visits need to be cancelled;
- arranging welfare facilities for Salvage Team members; and
- helping with recovery if needed. For example, they may help move large numbers of objects and archives by helping to form a human chain.

Case Study

This is an example of a scenario which could happen at a museum with a small team. The case study shows how the roles discussed in this section might be allocated when staff resources are limited.



Figure 7. An example of a window needing repair.

Situation

Storm damage has broken the windows of the collections store at a small local museum. The museum is run by a small team, comprising a Curator, Collections Assistant, Learning and Engagement Officer, Volunteer Manager and four volunteers.

There has been some water ingress, and the paintings store is now damp and unsuitable for storage until the window can be repaired. The team will need to recover around 100 paintings and move them to a different room.

Action

The Curator takes on the role of Incident Manager and also takes on the responsibilities of the Recovery Manager role. They are leading the salvage response and have called in the rest of the team to help recover objects from the store.

The Collections Assistant is assigned the role of Salvage Group Leader and is assigned two volunteers to help remove objects from the paintings store.

The Volunteer Manager leads the other two available volunteers in the Documentation Group to record object movement and make sure everything is accounted for. None of the museum team have conservation experience, so the Learning and Engagement Officer is delegated the task of contacting a conservator to come and assess the paintings that have suffered water damage as quickly as possible.

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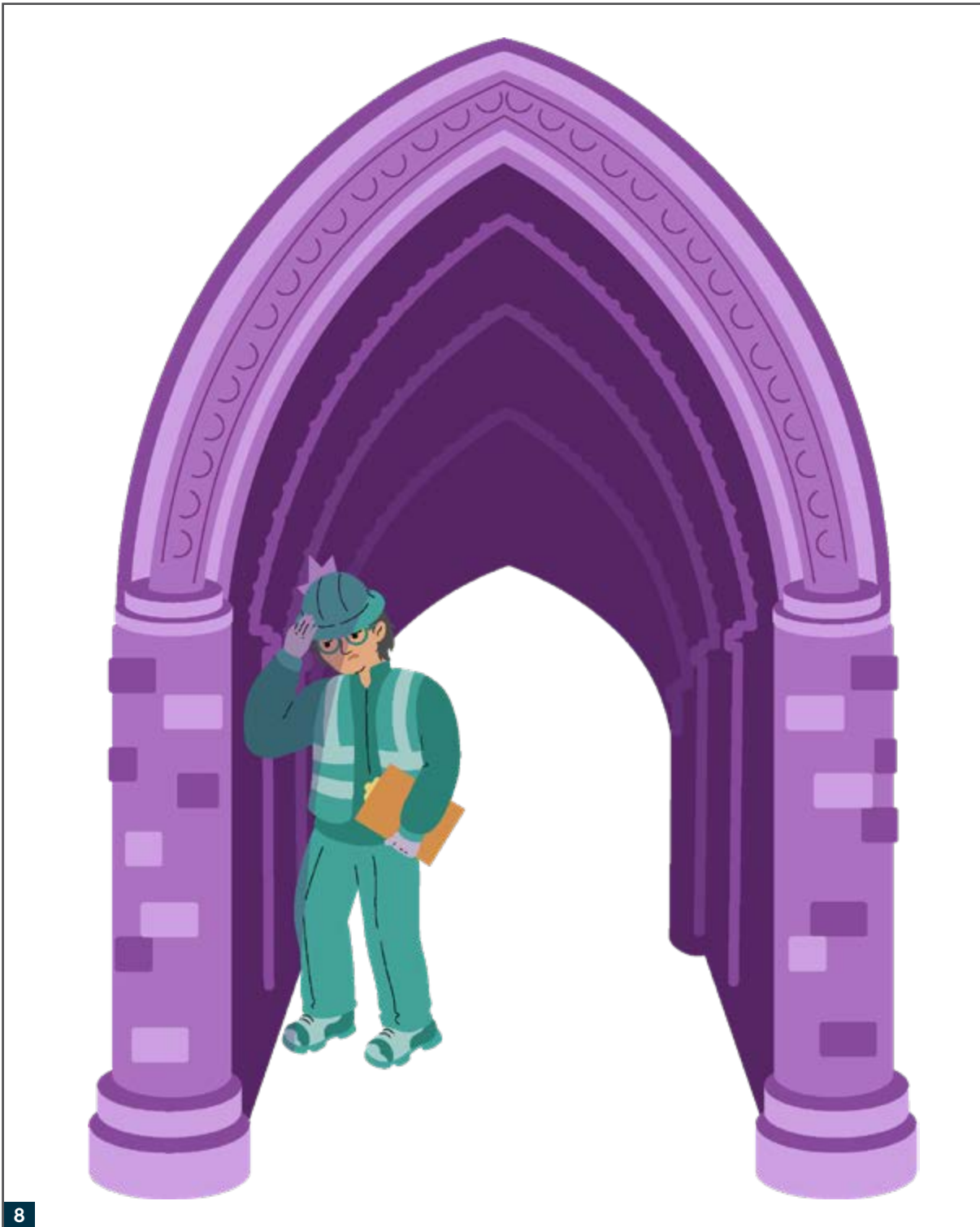


Figure 8. Once the lights go out in a building, it is difficult to move around safely, so always make sure you have batteries for your torches and PPE.

5. Health, safety and security

Salvage incidents can present many hazards that may pose a risk to staff as well as collections. Before any salvage work can start, it is essential for risk assessments to be carried out to make sure members of the Salvage Team are not putting themselves at risk of harm.

While many of these risks may be present and managed as part of your everyday work, salvage incidents can present new hazards, and the risk presented may be increased. It is, therefore, important that a risk assessment specific to the incident is carried out, rather than relying on a standard version for day-to-day activities.

5.1 Common risks

Table 4 shares examples of the types of hazards that might be present during a salvage incident. Illustrations of some of these, which you might find in training materials, are shown in Figures 8-10.

Suggestions have been provided as to how the risk presented by these hazards could be mitigated. This list is not exhaustive, and you should always consider what type of hazards are present at your site and whether any new hazards have appeared during the incident.



Figure 9. Trip hazards are a common risk when working in a busy environment. During a salvage operation you should ensure that cables and other equipment do not pose a risk to staff.



Figure 10. Injuries can happen through incorrect manual handling. Can you spot what might be done differently here?

Table 4. Common hazards associated with salvage work and suggestions about how the risks from these hazards may be reduced.

Common risks	Possible mitigations
Poor lighting	• Use floodlights or portable lighting. Bear in mind any limitations on use of power and plan for battery operated lighting if required. • Hard hat with headlamp or headtorches to be worn. • Ensure access routes are well lit.
Trip hazards	• Teams to familiarise themselves with area of task, including steps and surfaces that might be wet or slippery, and routes around the site. • Access routes to be kept clear. • Equipment to be kept out of way when not in use.
Inhalation of dust, soot or mould spores	• Wear face-fitted FFP3 masks and gloves. • Use Tyvek suits or disposable overalls. • Set up procedures on site for disposing of affected PPE.
Injuries through incorrect manual handling	• Provide training on correct manual handling techniques. • Assess the lifting and lowering risk associated with the weight of any items to be moved using HSE guidance¹. • Team leader to ensure that there are sufficient personnel for items to be moved. Physical ability of participants must be considered. • Assess exit routes before beginning to move items to ensure are clear and hazard free. • Wear safety boots.
Contaminated water	• Wear rubber boots, overalls and gloves where necessary. • Set up procedures on site for disposing of affected PPE.
Moving vehicles	• Make sure walkways are clearly identified. • Keep vehicle areas closed off to the public. • Wear high-vis vests or jackets.
Falling debris	• Do not enter the area until it is confirmed it is safe to do so. • Hard hats to be worn during salvage operation.
Electrocution	• Electrical equipment is not to be used until supply has been checked by a qualified person.
Hazardous materials, such as asbestos or lead	• Ensure hazardous materials registers are up to date. • Full briefing before salvage begins. • Always wear appropriate PPE while in contact with the objects and be aware of any limitations on movement or handling. • Ensure disposal procedures for contaminated materials and equipment are up to date and followed.

¹ <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg143.pdf>



Figure 11. Make sure you have a list of which keys are needed to access your site. © Judith Rowett.

5.2 Access and security to the sites and buildings

Do not assume familiarity

It is advisable to include information about how to access the buildings and the collections, in the event that staff usually responsible for opening or closing procedures are not the first to respond.

This information will also be useful for the emergency services. This could also include information on access considerations.

Access considerations

- How the building is normally accessed, both during normal working hours and out of hours.
- Access routes to the building by foot or vehicle, including any width or height restrictions on these routes. Consider any restrictions on vehicle size, and that some routes may be affected during events or severe weather.
- Where to park vehicles, and safe routes for object loading if needed.

Security considerations

- Which keys are needed for any locked doors. If your site employs a designated **keyholder**, include contact details.
- If buildings are alarmed, where alarm panels are located, and who knows the code.
- If there are any areas which need a keycard or fob to access.
- If you use a contracted security company, you should include contact details for them, including out-of-hours numbers.
- Ensure that if you use an automated alarm system, the Unique Reference Number (URN) for this is recorded in your salvage plan, as you may need to provide this to the emergency services.

Information of this type is highly sensitive and should, therefore, be shared with caution.

Object considerations

- How display cases open, and where keys and other necessary access equipment such as T-bars or glass suckers, are stored.
- If there are any security fixings on wall mounted items such as paintings, and if equipment is needed to remove them such as specific screwdrivers and Ryman keys.
- If any objects on display are fitted with security alarms which activate when they are moved.



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Figure 12. Make sure your team has the correct PPE for the work they will be doing.

6. Important locations on site

During a salvage incident, there are several key areas that should be established to manage the incident. For small sites, options may be limited, but where possible it is a good idea to have several options available. In some circumstances it may be suitable to combine areas; this might depend on the size of the site and scale of incident and response. Within your plan you should include a list of viable options to help staff leading the response assess and make a decision quickly.

6.1 Incident control areas

Muster point

The Muster Point is the area where members of the Salvage Team gather before they enter the affected areas of the site. Ideally it will be at this point that staff sign in on the **Attendance Log**. This may also be where teams are briefed on the incident.

Further guidance on setting up the Muster Point can be found in Part 2 Conducting a salvage response, under [Section 3: When you arrive on the scene of the incident](#).

Command Post

This is where the Control Group will be based during the operation, when they are not needed in the affected areas. Having a specific point of command will ensure that staff know where to go if they need guidance or to report any developments.

Staff welfare and amenities

A space with seating should be provided as a rest area. Drinking water should be provided, or the nearest source identified (eg local shops), and in some situations it may be advisable to provide a hot drinks station. It is also important to make sure there are toilets available. For small sites this may not be possible to guarantee if a large area is affected, so it might be worth discussing this issue with another organisation or business nearby who might be able to help, or locating the nearest public toilets.

Further information on setting up welfare and amenities is provided in Part 2 of this guide, under [Section 4.4: Providing welfare](#).

6.2 Locations of equipment

Identify essential equipment

In general, equipment should be available to cover all types of incidents that may pose a risk to objects.

This should encompass materials to both protect objects and cases in situ, and materials that will be needed to remove objects from site.

Store it in more than one place

It is advisable not to store all equipment in one place. If this area should be affected during the incident, then the equipment may be damaged, or inaccessible. By splitting up equipment and storing it in several separate locations staff can ensure they can always access the most basic equipment they may need.

Record the locations

If equipment is stored in salvage equipment boxes, these can be spread around the site. By making them distinctive they are easy to find and should contain all the equipment you might need in the first couple of hours of an incident. Staff training should also include familiarisation of the equipment in the boxes, and where to find them. A plan of the site with the locations of the equipment marked out, and a brief list of what equipment is in which area, will save valuable time.

Make regular checks and audits of the equipment

It is important to regularly audit salvage equipment to ensure that items such as pens are still useable, and that battery operated items like torches still work. Stocks of materials needed for salvaging such as acid-free tissue and polythene sheeting should ideally be kept separately from regular stocks to ensure they are not used up accidentally and, therefore, unavailable for a salvage operation.

6.3 Recommended equipment and materials

Tables 5 and 6 show recommended materials for a typical salvage operation. Other more general equipment may be required depending on the nature of the salvage area. This may include:

- Torches or portable lighting
- Generators
- Duckboards
- Pallets, crates and trays
- Pallet trucks
- Trolleys or skates
- Carrying straps for heavy objects
- Cleaning materials such as mops, buckets, brooms and dustpans
- Barrier tape to **cordon** off areas
- Coloured tape for marking out walkways and other designated zones

Table 5. Recommended materials for a typical salvage operation: Salvage materials.

Salvage materials	Used for
Absorbents	Soaking up spilled liquids and removing excess moisture from water-damaged objects
Sturdy boxes or crates	Packing and carrying small objects
Bubble wrap or Jiffy foam	Padding objects packed in boxes (note that acid free tissue should not be used if objects are wet)
Acid free tissue	Padding dry objects packed in boxes
Cotton tape	Attaching Tyvek labels and securing moving parts on objects
Tyvek labels	Labelling objects with accession numbers
Finds bags (various sizes)	Packing very small objects, or keeping broken parts of objects
Permanent markers or archive pens	Labelling objects or finds bags
Trays	Carrying several small objects, or providing extra support when transporting fragile objects
Plastazote	Padding areas where objects will be stored once removed from the salvage area
Trolleys/carts	Manoeuvring larger objects
Masking tape	Attaching contents lists to crates or boxes

Table 6. Recommended materials for a typical salvage operation: **Protect in situ** materials.

Protect in situ materials	Used for
Polythene or Tyvek sheets	Draping over cases and objects on open display
Duct tape	Sealing polythene sheets to cover objects
Wooden battens	Holding down polythene sheeting
Permanent markers	Labelling polythene sheeting on wrapped objects
Cotton Tape	Securing loose items, attaching labels to objects
Scissors or craft knife	Cutting polythene or Tyvek
Fire retardant blankets	Covering objects if there is a risk of fire

6.4 Provide personal protective equipment (PPE)

All members of the Salvage Team should be supplied with appropriate PPE. This will vary depending on the nature and severity of the incident, but will include:

- Appropriate class dust masks (see below)
- Hard hats
- High-vis vests
- Safety boots
- Work gloves and/or nitrile gloves
- Tyvek overalls
- Protective eye goggles/glasses

Some PPE such as face masks and hard hats can expire, so be sure to regularly audit your emergency supplies and replace any items which have expired. Ensure expiry dates are clearly marked on relevant PPE and equipment, and are swapped out of salvage kit boxes and put into general equipment supplies when they are nearing the end of their shelf life. This practice is especially helpful where equipment budget is limited as it can minimise wasting resources. It can also lessen climate impact by reducing the amount of unused materials going to landfill.

Choosing face masks

You should carry out a full risk assessment prior to assigning PPE to determine which class of face mask is best suited for the task. At a minimum, FFP2 masks should be used for salvage work.

Table 7. Descriptions of different levels of mask protections.

Class	Protection offered
FFP1	Dust that is non-toxic and non-fibrogenic.
FFP2	Harmful, fibrogenic liquid and solid particles, smoke, dust, bacteria and mould.
FFP3	Protection against toxic and harmful particles including some known carcinogens such as asbestos. Also offers protection against wood-based dusts and masonry containing silica.

FFP3 masks offer good protection but must be fitted by a professional to ensure they are fully sealed against the skin. If you suspect that toxic or carcinogenic particles are present, you should contact a registered and qualified person or company to address this before beginning any salvage work.

For full information regarding the selection and use of respiratory protection, see [Respiratory protective equipment \(RPE\) | HSE¹](#).

6.5 Keep a note of your suppliers

Where equipment is not immediately available, it may be possible to borrow from other organisations. Consider speaking to other local museums and heritage organisations to find out what resources they may be able to lend if your own stocks are limited and discuss if reciprocal arrangements could be made.

Many general materials and PPE can be bought from hardware or DIY stores, and other conservation materials from specialist companies. Ensure your salvage plan includes information about who within your organisation is authorised to release emergency funds and procure extra equipment.

It is important to keep note of where materials will be sourced from if they are not typically held with the rest of the salvage equipment.

Lists of suppliers should be reviewed periodically and kept up to date.

Estimated costs of equipment and purchase hire will speed up the process of having extra budget released if this is needed.

6.6 Safe areas for objects

Within your plan you should include a list of viable options for the **safe areas** for objects. This will help staff leading the response to assess and make a decision quickly.

What are safe areas for objects?

Safe areas are places where objects can be taken as soon as they are removed from the affected areas. This may consist of one large area which can be divided up, or several smaller areas which can be allocated as storage, conservation, or documentation areas.

1 <https://www.hse.gov.uk/respiratory-protective-equipment/index.htm>

Ideally a safe area will have the following:

- Reception area for incoming objects to be checked off from inventories and labelled if necessary.
- Protection from the elements.
- Plenty of space to move around easily.
- Space to separate out wet and dry objects.
- Space to spread wet objects out to dry.
- An area for priority objects.
- A source of natural light, or a reliable source of electric lighting.
- Tables for drying and treating objects.
- Space for conservators to stabilise damaged objects (if not possible the objects may have to be removed and taken to a conservator's studio immediately).
- Can be secured and protected for the duration of use.

6.7 Issues to consider when choosing your safe area

Limited amount of space for processing objects

This is a particular issue when large numbers of objects have been affected, especially when objects are wet. Laying objects out for drying will take up a lot of space, so it is important to ensure that designated areas are large enough to accommodate this.

It is important to ensure that loaned or priority objects are clearly labelled when they are recovered, and if possible stored in a separate area. Otherwise, they may be at risk of being lost or damaged further. It is also important to separate wet and dry objects or contamination may occur.

Staff safety

Wires, cables and equipment boxes can take up a significant amount of space and can leave staff with limited room to move around. Where possible, stack boxes to one side, tape down wires and cables, and designate walkways. Plenty of light will be needed for staff to assess objects to check whether there is any damage which will need to be dealt with immediately. Inadequate lighting also means staff are at increased risk of trips, falls and other hazards.



how these objects have been stored?



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Figure 14. Collections can be located at large and complex sites, like Fort George, Inverness.

7. Include site plans

Site plans are useful to include in a salvage plan, as they can be used by people who are not familiar with the affected areas. They can be marked up to highlight a variety of information, including:

- locations of display areas and priority objects;
- access and escape routes from buildings; and
- areas which have been designated as incident control areas or safe areas.

Remember information about the layout of buildings and collections is highly sensitive so it should be shared with caution.

Benefits of full site plans

Where a site is particularly complex, it can be useful to include site plans if they are available (see Figure 15). These can be used to show access routes, locations of equipment, and where to find collections. They can be very useful for the emergency services if they are in attendance.

Mark up building plans

Full site plans can be marked up to show access routes to display areas and exit routes to designated safe areas (see Figure 16). These can be included on priority object cards as well as in the salvage plan.

Benefits of room plans

Room plans can be useful if there are several displays in one area. Even a basic plan, like the plan in Figure 17, can aid identification.

Display maps

Where there are multiple objects on display, a layout showing how objects are positioned can aid in finding priority objects, thus avoiding confusion and allowing for a more efficient recovery process. See Figure 18 for an example.

Provide photographs where needed

Site plans may not be available for all buildings or areas. In these cases, photographs can be used to show the layout of a room or the location of priority objects. For example, the location of an alarm control panel may be difficult to describe but can be easily illustrated through a photograph. Satellite views can also aid in navigation to sites and can show a general layout of a site if architectural plans are not available.

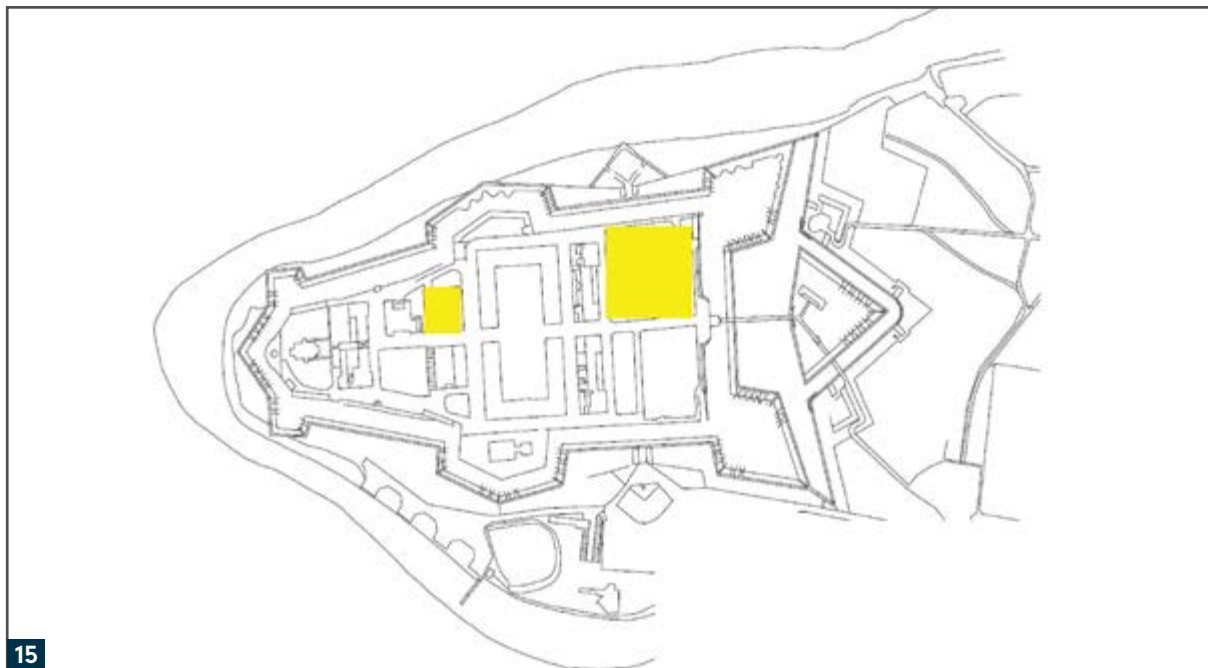


Figure 15. Fort George is an example of a complex site. This plan shows example display areas highlighted in yellow.

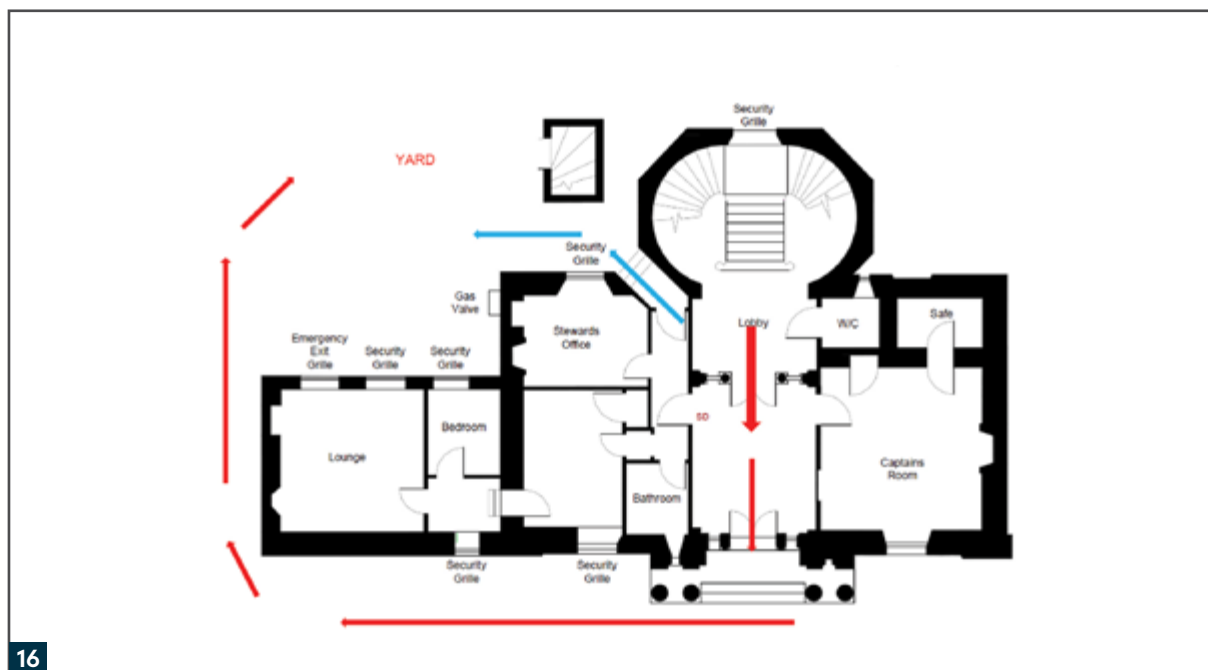


Figure 16. An example of a site plan annotated with access routes. The long egress route is marked from a central lobby space out into a yard space. Some annotations mark types of rooms.

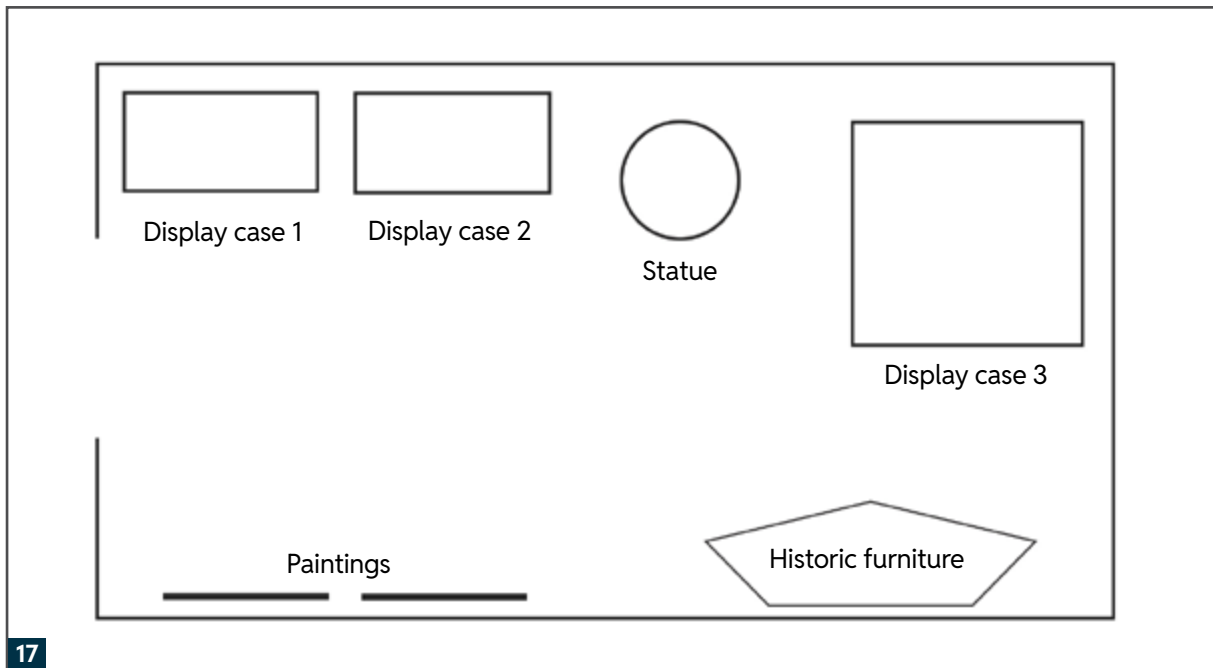


Figure 17. An example of a simple marked-up room plan.

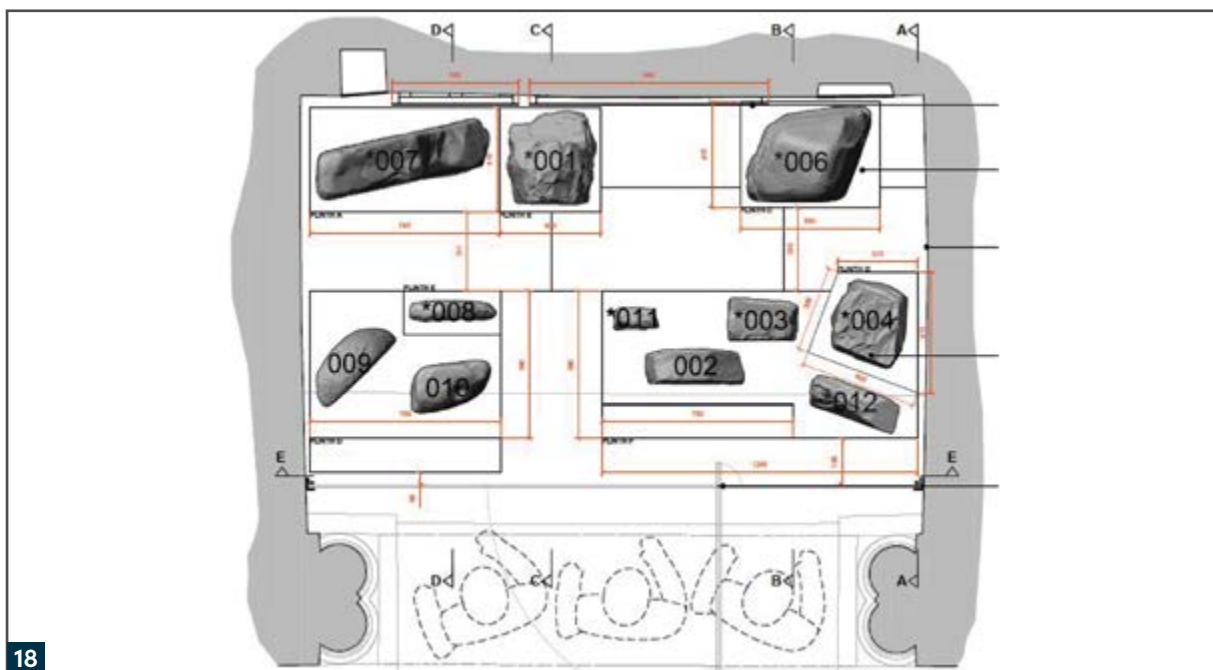


Figure 18. An example of a display map. The dimensions and images of display objects can be seen in relation to how people might interact with them. Some annotations have been clipped from view.



Figure 19. Priority objects deemed to be highly significant need to be rescued as soon as possible during a salvage operation.

8. List priority objects

Priority objects are deemed to be the most significant in a collection and should, therefore, be recovered first during a salvage operation. Your salvage plan should include a list of these objects in an easy-to-understand format. For a large site, it might be helpful to divide this list by location. Careful consideration should be given to which items are included, and how many objects it will be feasible to retrieve in the first instance.

8.1 Why is a list important?

A list of priority objects can be useful for several reasons. Firstly, it shows the Salvage Group where to focus efforts at the beginning so they can remove the most vulnerable and important objects. Secondly, it gives the Documentation Group a checklist of objects they need to find and process as soon as possible.

Remember, if everything is a priority, then nothing is!

One thing that should be taken into consideration is the fact that not all highly significant objects can be priority objects. For example, a painting that is positioned on a wall 10 feet off the ground which can only be accessed with a scaffold should not generally be added to the **priority object list**.

This is because the object cannot be removed quickly, and in the time taken to remove it, several other objects could be removed. This may be a difficult decision to make, but it does not mean you cannot mark the object out for removal as soon as possible once the other priority objects have been removed and the correct equipment has been put in place, or prioritise it for protection in situ.

8.2 Selecting priority objects

Priority objects have been deemed to be highly significant and need to be rescued as soon as possible during the salvage operation. These generally include:

- objects of high cultural significance;
- objects of high financial worth;
- objects on loan from other institutions (see Part 2, [Section 10.2: Conservation for loaned objects](#) for more information).
- If any affected objects are covered under the Government Loans section for more information);
- vulnerable objects and objects on open display;
- objects blocking entry and exit routes; and / or
- objects blocking access to other priority objects.



Figure 20. While they may be highly significant, heavy objects like these may not be practical to remove as a first response, so may not be suitable as priority objects.

There are several important considerations when selecting which objects to prioritise for recovery during an incident. The first is with regards to access.

8.3 Accessibility considerations

- Can the object be accessed and removed easily?
- Does it require scaffolding to reach?
- Can it fit out of the door and around corners?
- How many people does it take to move?
- Does it require specialist equipment?

Object type considerations

- Are there several of the same type of object? Would it be more practical to focus on a few examples rather than the whole collection in the first instance?
- How vulnerable is the object? Some materials are much more sensitive to environmental changes than others.
- How is the object displayed? Display cases usually offer good protection, so it may not be necessary to target these objects straight away.
- Will the object still be stable and able to be moved, especially if it becomes wet? Some objects may be better left where they are.

Object location considerations

- How many objects are located on site?
- Can a substantial number be moved at the same time?
- Are there objects stored together where an entire box can be retrieved?

8.4 Considerations for loaned objects

Salvage arrangements for any loaned objects should be discussed as part of the loan agreement between institutions. Depending on the nature of the object being loaned, it may not be practical for loaned items to be considered priorities for salvage, due to their size, weight, display location, etc. When this is the case, this should be clearly communicated to the lending institution and clearly laid out in the loan agreement. Arrangements should be put in place as part of the loan agreement as to how the lending institution will be informed, and who will inform them. Contact with lenders should be carefully managed so clear, accurate and transparent messaging is conveyed.

If loaned objects are displayed in a secure and well-sealed display case, lenders may specify that the objects cannot be removed without their permission and overview, even during a salvage operation. In this instance, these objects cannot be priority objects, and this should be clearly communicated to the lender.

8.5 Create priority object cards

Priority object cards are an effective way of providing quick information about objects which should be retrieved first during a salvage incident. An example can be seen in Figure 21. Where possible, this information should include:

- object name and accession number;
- photograph of the object, preferably in situ to aid in finding the object.;object dimensions and weight if known;
- equipment needed for removal;
- procedure for safe removal; and
- a site plan showing the object's location within the display/storage area.

8.6 Priorities for the emergency services

It is important that the emergency services are aware of the significance of collections housed in museums and historic properties as it will help them to respond to any emergencies which threaten the safety of the objects. An effective way to do this is to develop links with local and regional emergency services. Inviting them to visit sites and see the collections for themselves can give them a clearer picture of the challenges they and staff may have to face when trying to protect or rescue objects and ensure familiarity with priorities.

Creating a simple priority object list for the emergency services of the most important pieces which can be moved quickly and easily can help them focus their efforts if they can help with recovering objects.

GALLERY ROOM 1 - MANTELPIECE	
PRIORITY OBJECT	
1960.883 - Carved Penguin	
 Dimensions (mm): 60h x 30w x 20d	
<u>Location Details:</u> Mantelpiece opposite entrance door 2.	
<u>Removal:</u> one person  x 1 3.	<u>Equipment & Materials:</u> • Cotton / Nitrile gloves • Tyvek labels • Tyvek / polythene 4.
<u>Procedure:</u> Object is secured to shelf with putty. Gently remove adhesive from bottom before lifting carefully from underneath and carrying to safe area for assessment and documentation.	
<u>Advice:</u> Always wear gloves when handling. If damaged by incident, seek advice from a conservator before removal. If there is time, attach Tyvek label to show accession number. 5.	

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Figure 21. An example of a priority object card and the types of information to include. The card is presented as a table with the room, display case and object codes identified at the top. An image of an ivory penguin can be seen. Under this, location details, the number of staff for removal, any equipment and materials, the procedure for removal and any further advice are all noted.

Labels explaining how to fill a priority object card, from Figure 21:

1. Include a photograph of the object so it can be easily identified.
2. Give details of where the object is located. It can be helpful to include a map on the back of the card.
3. Show how many people will be needed to remove the object.
4. List any essential equipment and materials needed.
5. Give basic advice on how to handle and remove the object.

Any information provided to the emergency services needs to be simple as they will not have time to read detailed descriptions. They need:

- dimensions;
- how many people needed to move it;
- weight;
- a clear photograph; and
- the object location.

8.7 Protecting objects in situ

There may be some objects that cannot be removed immediately but are still considered to be highly important. Objects may require specialist lifting equipment, or else may be in a location that is not easily accessible. For example, paintings that are hung high on walls.

Objects in display cases may also be safer being left where they are, depending on the nature of the incident and the integrity of the case. In these circumstances, the best course of action is to protect the object where it is until arrangements can be made to remove the object to a safe location. Guidance on how to protect objects like this can be provided on '**protect in situ cards**', such as the example shown in Figure 23.

These cards could look very similar to your priority object cards, or you could choose to use a different format to make them easily distinguishable. For example, colour coding is a straightforward way to show different types of object cards.



Figure 22. Sometimes it is better to leave objects where they are rather than trying to remove them. Covering objects with polythene sheets is an effective way to protect them.

WEST PORCH	
PROTECT IN SITU	
XYZ001 - Incised Headstone	
1.	
Location Details: West porch	
Equipment & Materials: - Nitrile gloves - Polythene or Fire Blankets - Ducktape - Cotton Tape - Scissors - Wooden battens	Procedure: Use Tyvek or polyethylene sheeting to cover objects to protect from water damage or risk of smoke or soot damage. Use wooden battens and duck tape to hold polythene down, ensuring that no parts are left trailing. If there is risk of fire, then fire blankets should be used if available; polyethylene and polythene should not be used if fire is deemed likely.
4.	Advice: Always wear gloves when handling objects. Do not attempt to move before consulting a conservator. Specialist lifting equipment may be required to remove object. If protecting from debris, enclose stones using wooden frames or cushion using blankets.

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Figure 23. An example of a protect in situ card. The card is presented as a table with the site and object code identified at the top. An image of an incised headstone can be seen. Under this, location details, any equipment and materials, the procedure for removal and any further advice are all noted.

Labels explaining how to fill a protect in situ card, from Figure 23:

1. Include a photograph of the object so it can be easily identified
2. Give details of where the object is located. It can be helpful to include a map on the back of the card
3. List any essential equipment and materials needed to protect the object
4. Give basic advice on how to protect the object and what materials to use

8.8 Information that will need to be recorded during a salvage operation

During a salvage operation, a wide variety of information will need to be recorded. You need to have a record of everything that has happened during the incident, as well as detailed information about any objects you have removed and carried out remedial treatments on.

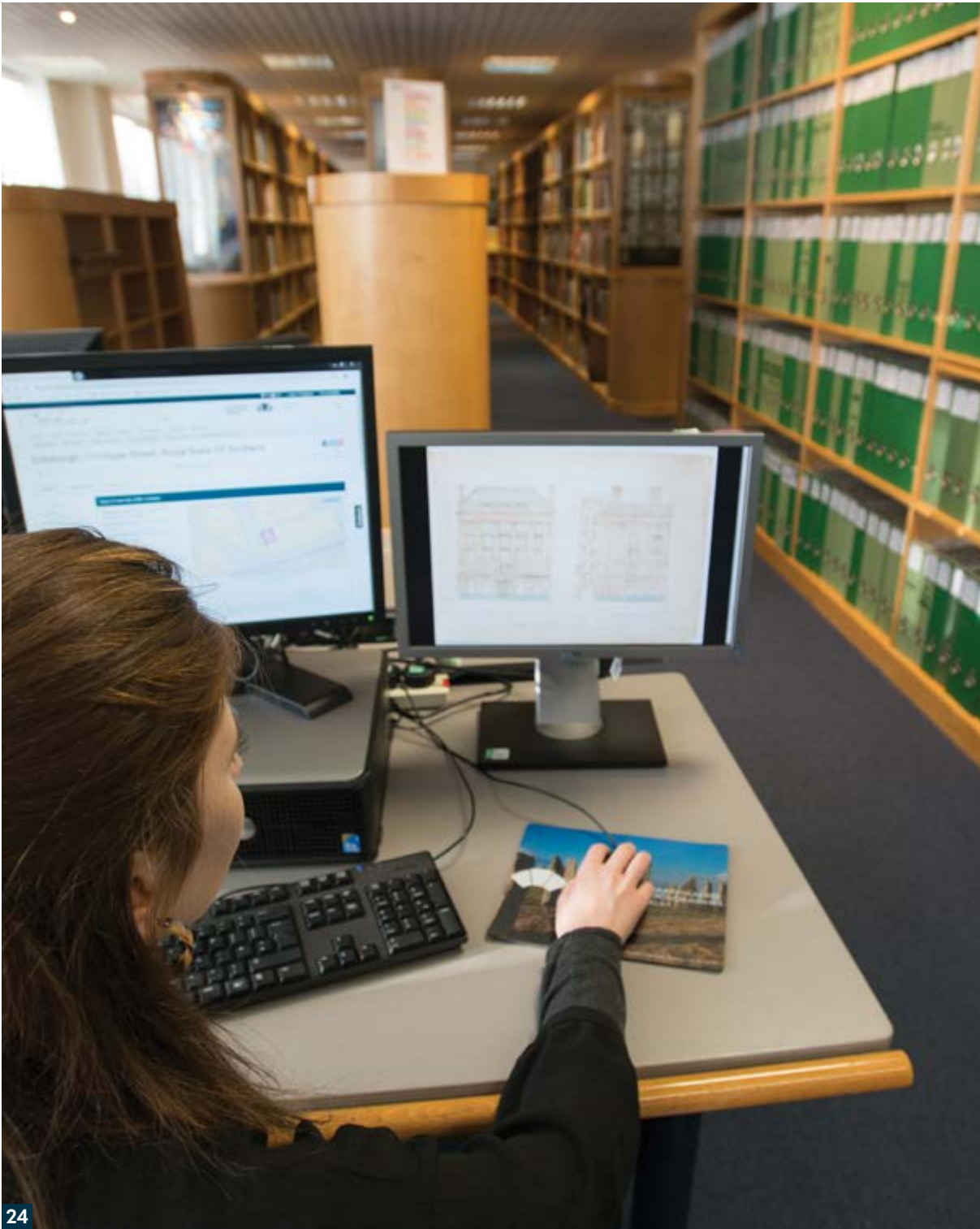
Table 8 describes forms that should be available ahead of time and alongside your salvage plan to reduce confusion and to save time. Examples can include but are not limited to:

1. **Blank Risk Assessment:** This should be filled out as soon as possible, and before any recovery actions are taken by the Salvage Team. It should be updated if new risks arise or become apparent in the course of work.
2. **On-Site Attendance Log:** A log recording who has attended an incident, and when they arrived and left site. This should be started as soon as the first member of the Salvage Team arrives on site.
3. **Incident Log:** This should be filled out to detail key developments and decisions that have been made as part of the salvage process. It should also include which people and organisations have been contacted, such as lenders and insurers.
4. **Blank Inventory Sheets:** These should be filled out by a member of the Documentation Group as objects are brought to the documentation area. You should also complete an inventory for any objects that will be removed from site; for example, if they are being sent for conservation or being moved to a different storage site.
5. **Conservation Triage Forms:** Simple forms used to record an initial assessment of damage to an object. This helps to identify priorities for treatment. These should be filled out by a member of the Conservation Group when assessing objects that have been passed on to them by the Documentation Group.

Table 8. Examples of different types of information that will need to be recorded during a salvage operation.

Information to be recorded	Why this is important
Inventories of all objects that have been removed from the affected areas.	This is vital for ensuring that all priority objects have been retrieved. It is also important for recording all movements of objects around the site. If this is not recorded, there is a risk of objects getting misplaced and lost.
Inventories of all objects that have been removed from site.	This is particularly important if objects are being taken to a storage or conservation facility that is not directly under your organisation's control.
Records of all remedial treatments that have been carried out on damaged objects, particularly during initial triage during an incident.	This will be important to pass on to any conservators who carry out further treatments on objects.
A record of who attended the incident, including when they arrived on site and when they left.	Recording who is on site during an incident is crucial for ensuring health and safety of the Salvage Team. This will also include any volunteers and contractors who come on site.
A log of all important communications that occurred during the incident, and all key strategic decisions which were made.	This will be important to establish the order of events, and who authorised certain actions to be taken. This information may be required by governing bodies, insurance companies, and potentially the judicial system in the case of a large-scale incident which results in an inquiry.

These forms should be available ahead of time and alongside your salvage plan to reduce confusion and save time.



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Figure 24. Careful consideration should be given to where copies of salvage plans are kept.

9. Storing your salvage plan and other documentation

9.1 Ways to document object information

Most museums will use Collections Management System (CMS) software to record object information, although some may use Microsoft Excel or paper filing systems. Regardless of what system your organisation uses, you should ensure that all your object records are up to date, both before and after an incident.

9.2 Storing your salvage plan

Careful consideration should be given to where copies of salvage plans are kept. Remember a salvage plan is likely to contain sensitive information, so while staff should be able to readily access the plan, it must be kept in a secure location, such as a safe. It is also important to ensure that any digital copies are protected, either by password or by storing on an access restricted network.

If there are any concerns about including any sensitive information in the salvage plan, especially about how to remove highly valuable objects, the information could be kept as 'need to know' and disseminated to key members of staff through training or kept in a separate document stored on a password-protected drive.

You should ensure you have more than one copy of the salvage plan available. For example, there is little point in only having one copy kept in the collections store, as it will be of no use if the store becomes inaccessible. Where possible keep an additional copy of the salvage plan and accompanying documents off site in case physical and digital copies held on site are unavailable. Make sure that all copies of your plan are dated so staff know they have the most up-to-date information.

During the incident

It can be helpful to mark object records as priority objects on your CMS, as this can aid in quickly producing inventories of objects that need to be salvaged in the event of an incident.

During a salvage incident, it is vitally important to record as much information as possible, especially everything that happens to each object during a salvage operation, including movement and condition assessments.

You should also document all processes that are carried out during a salvage operation, such as key decisions (and who made them), any staff or volunteers who attended the incident, and risk assessments.

After the incident

Following an incident, ensure that completed forms are filed correctly. This includes all your salvage documentation, as well as any forms that will be used for insurance and evaluation. It can be useful to create digital versions of these, which can then be uploaded or linked to your CMS or object records, or else stored on a secure server. Ensure that any forms containing sensitive information are stored securely.

9.3 Debrief and plan update

Following the closure of an incident, you should hold a full debrief with your team and update your salvage plan to reflect any areas where improvements to procedures have been identified. These areas may include:

- callout procedures and sharing information;
- team structure and roles and responsibilities;
- use of safe areas and identified access routes;
- equipment storage and availability (are there things you needed and didn't have?);
- health and safety;
- procedures for incident escalation and long-term recovery management; and
- management of information sharing with partner organisations and lenders.

Make sure that all changes are reflected throughout your salvage documentation, including all copies of the salvage plan and any supplementary forms or documents that you use.

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Figure 25. It is often necessary to advocate the importance of salvage planning to colleagues and partners who work in other areas of an organisation or externally, as their buy-in could be essential.

10. Challenges of salvage planning

10.1 Advocacy within an organisation

While the benefits of salvage planning will be clear to those who work in heritage and with heritage collections, it is often necessary to advocate the importance to colleagues and partners who work in other areas of an organisation or externally, as their buy-in could be essential. You should outline a clear business case as to why salvage planning is important and why it is worth your organisation's time and resources. This can include:

- mitigating reputational damage to public opinion of the organisation;
- mitigating reputational damage between lenders and partner organisations;
- mitigating risk to staff responding to an incident;
- reducing potential loss and damage of important historic artefacts;
- reducing recovery costs where objects might otherwise require significant conservation;
- avoiding potential issues when claiming from insurance companies; and
- promoting efficient use of materials and resources.

10.2 Justifying cost for something that might not happen

Salvage planning can be seen as a resource-heavy exercise. A lot of time and energy goes into planning for scenarios that may never happen, but there are also associated costs which need to be considered. Building up stocks of materials, devoting staff time to developing salvage plans, and training staff members all cost money, and this can often be difficult to justify, especially in organisations which already have very limited budgets.

There will be ways of reducing costs, especially in terms of equipment. For example, rather than buying pre-made salvage kits (which can be expensive and include materials that your organisation may not need) it may be cheaper to put together 'custom' kits that are better suited to your collection and the types of incidents that you are likely to face.

Shopping around for equipment and PPE rather than relying on one supplier is always recommended.

Equally, training does not need to be a resource-heavy exercise. Simple tabletop exercises can be carried out at minimal cost and are an effective way of cementing processes and encouraging staff to work through potential scenarios they might encounter at a pace that encourages reflection and collaborative problem solving.

Practical exercises can also be carried out at low cost by using mock objects to stand in for collection objects.

10.3 Updating and revising plans

Depending on how many different sites your organisation is responsible for, it can be time consuming to keep all your salvage plans up to date. You should review your plans periodically, especially if key information is likely to change (for example, if you regularly host temporary exhibitions, or employ staff on fixed term contracts).

Structuring your salvage plans in a way where only a couple of pages will need to be replaced will cut down on the need to re-print. Likewise, referring to job titles rather than names when laying out roles and responsibilities can also save time on updates if staff members change roles or leave the organisation.

A lot of waste can be produced when updating salvage plans and their accompanying documentation. If objects often change location, or you borrow loan items regularly, **priority object cards** and lists can quickly become obsolete.

While lamination is a reliable way of ensuring key documentation is safe from water damage, it also means that these documents cannot be recycled. Waterproof cardstock has been found to be an effective alternative to lamination, and some brands can be recycled with regular paper.

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Figure 26. Training sessions are vital to ensure your team knows what is in your salvage plan and what to do in the event of an incident.

11. The importance of training staff

Once salvage procedures have been established, it is vital that all relevant staff are aware of and can practise them through training activities. This can involve a practical mock scenario, tabletop exercises, or salvage plan read-throughs.

11.1 Training with emergency services

Regardless of the size and nature of your organisation, it is always useful to contact your local fire station and police unit and invite them to visit.

If possible, they may be able to send representatives to take part in training exercises, which will add to the realism of the scenario, and can be a good test of whether plans work when put into practice.

11.2 Creating a training checklist

Training can be tailored to include any specific team needs, for example the trainees might need to become more familiar with objects and spaces, focus on how to put procedures into practice, test decision-making, and build relationships with emergency services.

A brief list of things to consider while planning your staff training programme is provided below and a suggested outline of how you could approach salvage response training.

This is divided into five phases:

1. Preparing for training
2. Introductory training for all team members
3. Training for key roles
4. Planning a Scenario Exercise
5. Auditing the training programme

Checklist 2. Example of the phases outlined in order to complete a training checklist.

Preparation	Check when complete
Identify which members of staff and/or volunteers require training.	☐
Decide format of training session, whether it is a desktop exercise, a presentation, or a scenario, and what skills you want staff to gain.	☐
Work with line managers to ensure staff and volunteers can attend.	☐
Plan out session and decide what equipment and materials are needed, and purchase any additional materials required.	☐
Provide staff with relevant documents and information in advance.	☐
Set up training space ahead of session.	☐

Checklist 3. Example of an introductory training checklist.

Introductory training	Check when complete
Familiarisation with the contents of the salvage plan, and where to find it.	☐
Familiarisation with the building(s), including display areas, utilities isolation, access routes, and locations of equipment storage.	☐
Health and safety, such as working at heights, working in the dark, using specialist equipment, safe manual handling, and correct use of PPE.	☐
Object handling for collections, including for objects which have been damaged (wet or broken), and an appropriate level of technical specialist knowledge to inform decision-making for different objects (usually material types).	☐
How to protect objects in situ if they cannot be removed.	☐
Communications: use of radios, checking emergency contact numbers, activation of the call-out system.	☐

Checklist 4. Example of a training checklist for key roles.

Training for key roles	Check when complete
Outline the main responsibilities of each role.	☐
Ensure all team members are familiar with Emergency Response Procedures (fire evacuation etc) and when to activate the salvage plan.	☐
Ensure all staff are aware of the chain of command during a salvage operation (as this may differ from your usual organisational structure).	☐
Discuss callout procedures – including who will be responsible for contacting staff and volunteers, and providing information they will need prior to arrival.	☐
Go over processes to follow when receiving a report of an incident – eg what information to record, how to assess an incident remotely, and what actions can be taken by staff on site.	☐
Discuss different scenarios and how the responses to these may differ.	☐
Discuss key health and safety considerations for carrying out a salvage operation.	☐
Ensure all staff members know how to access key information such as conservator contact details, insurance providers, equipment suppliers and lenders.	☐
Ensure all staff are familiar with all salvage documentation (inventories, Triage Forms, Incident Log etc) and how to fill these out.	☐
Go over how to set up your Command Post, including what equipment will be needed and how this will be staffed throughout a salvage operation.	☐
Discuss potential security issues, and how you may be able to mitigate these.	☐
Discuss what would need to be included in an incident briefing for the Salvage Team.	☐
Discuss where objects can be sent for storage if they need to be taken off-site, and how you would arrange this.	☐
Discuss the arrangements for any loaned objects you have and how these would be dealt with during a salvage operation.	☐
Discuss where you may need extra support (such as from volunteers or other organisations) and how you would obtain this.	☐

Checklist 5. Example of a ‘planning a scenario’ exercise.

Planning a scenario exercise	Check when complete
Decide the scale of the exercise, what type of scenario you are practising (flood, fire, etc) and which members of staff need to be involved.	☐
Decide where the exercise will take place – in a specific display area, or throughout the whole building.	☐
Consider security – will you need to close areas to visitors, and do you have enough staff to maintain a secure perimeter for the exercise? Ensure that everyone on site is wearing official identification.	☐
Prepare sign-in sheets to log those going in and out of the building.	☐
Assess requirements for protection of historic surfaces, such as floors, and protect vulnerable surfaces and objects which cannot be moved. Use hazard tape to mark no-go areas for the exercise.	☐
If bringing in props in place of real objects, consider producing fake room plans, priority object lists and inventory lists and attach fake inventory numbers.	☐
Mark floor plans with suitable locations for incident control and safe areas.	☐
Ensure that a risk assessment for the exercise has been completed and that it is part of the briefing.	☐
Decide equipment and materials needed for object retrieval and for in situ protection and provide any other equipment needed.	☐
Ensure that methods of communication are understood and that all are aware of the signal/call sign that will be used in the event of a real emergency and the location of the Assembly Point.	☐
Ensure that there are enough First Aiders on site for the number of people taking part; that their names are recorded and that participants have access to drinking water and refreshments.	☐
Brief staff thoroughly about the exercise, and debrief after exercise is completed.	☐
Consider rotating key salvage roles (particularly team leader) so all senior staff are aware of how to carry out these roles if they are required to step in during a real incident.	☐
Consider using ‘observers’ to help monitor progress of the exercise rather than participate. These roles can be useful if working with the emergency services to accompany and help direct them to avoid risk to building fabric and collections as they move through spaces.	☐

Checklist 6. Example of an ‘auditing the training programme’ checklist.

Auditing the training programme	Check when complete
Debrief after each training session and allow everyone to have an opportunity to comment on what they learnt, what worked well and what did not, and how procedures can be improved.	☐
Consider using an Audit Form or survey as a means of recording feedback in a structured way, which can also be anonymous.	☐
Hold a debrief session for senior staff to ensure that recommendations result in a change of practice where a need has been identified.	☐
Revisit salvage training regularly – consider annual refreshers, or a rolling programme which coincides with seasonal recruitment or new projects to ensure updated procedures are fit for purpose and that all team members are familiar with how your organisation will carry out a salvage operation.	☐
If this is too much in one go, then look at focusing on part of the response individually in smaller sessions to build confidence and familiarity.	☐

11.3 Suggested training methods

Always adapt your training approach to fit the size, knowledge, and experience of your team. Some team members may have had to deal with an incident before – what learning points could you draw from this? Other team members might be new and still learning the layout of your buildings and collections. Make sure to use existing knowledge within your team and ensure that everyone knows the basics.

If you work with a large and busy team, you may find it difficult to organise a large-scale scenario exercise that everyone can attend. In this circumstance, you might need to organise small, targeted sessions to make sure everyone has the knowledge they need. Likewise, smaller teams work well for desktop-based exercises, where it is easier to have everyone in a room together.

If your organisation works with volunteers, ensure they are included in any salvage training, particularly how to report incidents and which roles they might be asked to take on during an incident.

This section includes some ideas for methods you could use to train your Salvage Team.

Remember, during a salvage operation, things will not always go to plan.

Presentations

This is a simple way to introduce your team to your salvage plan by highlighting important information, outlining roles and responsibilities, and giving an overview of key procedures. This does not necessarily have to be a slideshow; it could be presented as a plan read through, a group discussion, or even a video or online module. You could end the session with an informal quiz to test your team's knowledge.

Site walkthroughs

Walkthroughs are useful for highlighting potential issues you might find around your site, such as access routes, and can help your team visualise where your safe areas will be. It is also an opportunity to highlight your chosen priority objects and discuss how they might be retrieved during an incident.

Desktop exercises

A desktop exercise is an opportunity to work through a scenario on a theory level. This is less resource intensive than a full scenario exercise and can work well for both small and large teams.

You could also combine a desktop exercise with some practical elements, such as sending teams to find priority objects, or getting participants to set up a drying area for wet archives.

Mock scenarios

Scenario exercises offer the opportunity to put your plan to the test in a more realistic situation. You can set these up to run through the entirety of an incident (from first discovery to incident close), or you might decide to focus on one aspect, such as testing your callout procedures, or carrying out triage on damaged objects.

Try throwing in 'curveballs' to encourage your trainees to think outside the box:

What if certain team members cannot attend?

What if the building has no power and you cannot use the lift?

What if you can't access object inventories?

What if you run out of space in the Safe Areas?



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Figure 27. View of a blaze on Arthur's Seat, Holyrood Park, in July 2026.

12. Conclusion

12.1 Adapting to climate change

As a result of changes to seasonal climates and more frequent incidences of extreme weather, salvage incidents are unfortunately likely to become more common.

Historic buildings, which often house museums and heritage collections, struggle to cope with the extreme weather conditions we are now experiencing. Storm events are becoming more frequent, and our climate is becoming warmer and wetter, which could affect your site regardless of location or age of your buildings.

Floods and fires are becoming more widespread, severe and common. It is more important than ever to ensure that we are prepared to deal with these situations when they arise.

For more information about the impact of climate change for heritage sites, see our [Climate Change Adaptation Manual for Heritage Tourism](#)¹.

12.2 Learning and adapting your approach

While it can be catastrophic when disaster strikes, it is also an opportunity to learn and adapt our own plans and approaches.

If anything can be learnt from the incidents such as those at Glasgow School of Art, the National Museum of Brazil, or Notre Dame Cathedral, it is that prevention is always better than cure, but where robust salvage procedures are in place it can make a real difference to possible preservation in the worst of circumstances.

Proper and regular maintenance of buildings, utilities, and fire prevention systems all play a significant role in reducing the chances of an incident occurring, and in reducing the impact if it does – but effective salvage procedures which are successfully carried out can make a big difference to the impact on heritage collections.

1 <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/publications/all/publication/?publicationId=36f510ff-3ef2-4329-9d2b-b39900ab339b>



Figure 28. Ensure that all essential building components, such as electrics, are regularly checked by a qualified person.

There will never be a one-size-fits-all solution to salvage planning. It is an ongoing process and must always be a collaborative effort.

12.3 Maintenance checklist

You should make sure that the following areas of maintenance are regularly checked:

- Inspect guttering and downpipes for leaks, blockages and evidence of overflow.
- Check surface water drains for blockages and obstructions.
- Check if the rising main / hydrant needs servicing.
- Check rubbish disposal (ensuring procedures for regular disposal and waste recycling are in place and followed).
- Check water pipe systems for leaks.
- Check the function and accessibility of stop valves.
- Check the function and accessibility of all down drain points.
- Inspect cellars, basements and roof spaces for evidence of water penetration.
- Check the function of internal drains and sewers for blockages and obstructions.
- Check the function and accessibility of circuit breakers.
- Test electrical circuits.
- Maintain and check air conditioning (including a check of duct fire-shutters).
- Check Fire alarm / emergency lighting servicing and check fire exits are clear and are working.
- Check any fire-fighting equipment (including sprinklers) and monitor their servicing.
- Check security systems (intruder alarms/CCTV) and their servicing.
- Check windows and doors are secure and there are no signs of forced entry
- Check electrical appliances and their servicing.
- Check gas appliances and their servicing.
- Check heating systems and their servicing.

Everyone who will be involved in a salvage operation should be given the opportunity to feed into plans, ask questions and raise concerns. This will ensure that your team is knowledgeable, invested and confident in your salvage plans and procedures.



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Figure 29. Salvage training exercise at Duff House, Aberdeenshire, in 2025. © Judith Rowett.

Part 2: Conducting a Salvage Response

1. Introduction: Before an incident happens

Salvage plans are important documents to have in place before an incident occurs. Advice and guidance on how to put together an effective and comprehensive plan can be found in Part 1 of this guide. The plan should include all the information that you and your staff will need to be able to respond effectively.

The aim of Part 2 of this guide is to provide practical advice on how to manage an incident to ensure a safe, efficient and effective salvage operation. Note that some information provided in Part 1 may be repeated within Part 2; this is to aid those who may be referring to this section in the event of an incident.

In some situations, key staff identified in your Salvage Plan may not be immediately available to lead a salvage response. Part 2 provides information for all staff to support key actions during an incident response.

The risk can never be reduced to zero, but we can stop an incident from escalating.

Ensuring your organisation can respond quickly and efficiently to a salvage incident will cut down on financial costs, reduce stress for staff and provide the best chance of minimising damage to historic objects.

However, there are also other procedures and considerations that should be in place in case an incident occurs. Many of these are detailed in Part 1 of this guide, however key points for consideration are laid out in the following sections.



Figure 30. A salvage plan ensures that you can respond quickly and efficiently if an incident poses a risk to your collections.

1.1 Insurance and budget release

Depending on your organisation, it may be advisable to set aside budget for buying salvage supplies. It is also essential that there is a designated person or channel through which emergency budget can be released in the event of an incident. Large-scale incidents are likely to incur significant costs; however, even small-scale incidents, particularly those involving water damage, can incur costs that can quickly add up. These may include hiring equipment, paying staff overtime and contractor fees, and buying extra supplies and materials. An appropriate member of staff should be designated to contact your insurance provider and given access to all relevant documentation.

1.2 Emergency equipment stocks

Basic equipment should be available to cover all types of incidents that may pose a risk to collections and interiors. This should include materials to both protect objects, display cases, and historic interiors in situ, and materials that will be needed to remove objects from affected areas. Further guidance on salvage equipment and materials can be found in Part 1, [Section 6.2: Locations of equipment](#) and Part 1, [Section 6.3: Recommended equipment and materials](#).

1.3 Classifying incidents

Different types of incidents are likely to require different levels of response. Incidents can rapidly develop, and what may initially appear to be a minor

incident may turn out to be more serious.

It may be sensible to divide potential scenarios into categories, which will then help to determine the type of response that is needed. This can be as simple as something like 'Major' or 'Minor' or can expand to cover a range of different scenarios such as a pest infestation, changes in environmental conditions (like a faulty air conditioning system), or an identified security risk. Having these classifications can help to determine how many staff, what equipment, and which other resources you will need to mobilise early on in your response procedures, which can save valuable time.

Incidents can change and develop very rapidly, so an adaptable approach to your salvage response is recommended. Changing circumstances might mean that damage is occurring more quickly than expected, or collections are at higher risk of becoming damaged.

Flooding can vary from standing water on the floor to significant ingress from a burst pipe. Water can disappear very rapidly, or can spread to other areas of the building, causing ongoing damp problems which may not be immediately apparent.

Consider deciding on a procedure for escalating or de-escalating an incident depending on these circumstances. You should clarify who will make this decision, and what actions will be taken as a result. You should also determine how this decision will be shared with other members of the Salvage Team.

1.4 Escalating an incident

It is important to know how to escalate the response to an incident to ensure the level of response is appropriate to the scale and nature of the incident in question. The decision to escalate an incident should be made by the Control Group or the Incident Manager (see Part 1, [Section 4: How the Salvage Team works](#)). They will need to look at the information available and decide what course of action to take next. Some examples of how an incident may change and escalate are shown in Table 9.

Table 9. Examples of how an incident may change and escalate.

Initial incident example	First assessment and actions	Development	Escalation and revised action
A plaster ceiling in an adjacent room has collapsed, but no damage has occurred to objects.	Objects are protected in situ with polythene and bubble wrap.	After a few days it becomes clear that the ceiling collapse has been caused by ongoing water ingress, and the room is quickly becoming damp.	Objects are salvaged from affected rooms and moved to specified safe area on site.
Heavy rainfall has caused water ingress from rising water. The carpeting in one room is saturated, but paintings on the walls are not affected.	Paintings are protected in situ, and Plastazote inserted behind to keep them off the walls. The saturated carpet is removed, and dehumidifiers are brought in.	Heavy rainfall continues, and damp is rising up the walls. Dehumidifiers cannot bring the humidity down to acceptable levels.	Objects are salvaged from the affected room. Paintings are examined and treated by a conservator.
A small wildfire has broken out near the building. It seems to be under control.	Collections staff are informed by site staff – they consider themselves to be on ‘stand-by’.	The fire has spread, and the site is engulfed in smoke.	Once safety risks are managed, collections are salvaged from site and sent for cleaning.

Case Study

This is an example of a scenario which could happen at a museum with a small team.



Figure 31. A historic dining room, which could be vulnerable to pest infestations like woodworm.

Situation

Hugo is a Collections Assistant at a historic house. During routine condition checks, Hugo finds evidence of active woodworm affecting historic furniture in the dining room. Hugo identifies this as a minor incident and follows procedures to report it to the rest of the team.

Action

Davina, the Curator, attends the incident and helps Hugo wrap all the affected furniture in plastic. They contact a furniture conservator and advise other members of the team that the room is closed to visitors.

The following week, Hugo makes a similar discovery in the drawing room next door. He reports the incident to Davina. Concerned, Davina and Hugo inspect the rest of the furniture throughout the house and discover that the woodworm is much more widespread than they initially thought.

Davina makes the decision to escalate to a major incident and closes the house to the public. Davina contacts the rest of the Salvage Team to attend site the next day to begin salvaging the collections.



Figure 32. Make sure your staff know what to do if they receive a report of an incident.

2. Receiving an incident report

Receiving an incident report can be as stressful as discovering the incident itself. It is important that as much information as possible is captured when the alarm is raised, as this will inform those coordinating the response of the best course of action to take next in terms of which members of the Salvage Team need to be alerted and how urgently a response needs to be initiated. This information will also be needed for evaluation and insurance after the incident has been resolved.

Salvage response staff may also be able to advise on intermediary actions that could be taken, such as turning off stopcocks or isolating electrics.

2.1 How to record information

Recording this information does not always need to be a formal process. Even hand-written notes which can be typed into a report later will be sufficient in establishing the order of events once the incident has been dealt with.

You should ensure that you have a robust callout system to alert staff in the event of an incident. Incidents can happen at any time, but historic buildings and museums are most vulnerable outside of normal working hours, when buildings are unstaffed and collections areas unmonitored.

Ensure that everyone who works with or around collections is aware of the callout procedures for the organisation. This can include front of house and gallery attendants, security personnel, housekeeping staff and maintenance teams. They should know who to contact, and most importantly, how to contact them. Make sure to provide an emergency contact list that staff can easily access with a short list of instructions.

All procedures for alerting staff to an incident should be via phone. While many people regularly use email communication, those with frequently busy inboxes will know how easy it is for important emails to become buried. Emails will also be unsuitable for contacting staff outside of normal working hours, and it is often during this period that a prompt response is most crucial.

Staff should also have a set procedure to follow in the event they receive a report of an incident. This will help reduce stress and ensure no important information is forgotten.

The following information is useful to capture when an incident affecting collections is reported. You could keep this as a form for staff to fill in or simply have a checklist in your salvage plan.

Checklist 7. Information to record when receiving an incident report.

Information to record	Check when complete
Name and job title of the person receiving the incident report	☐
Name and job title of the person reporting the incident	☐
Which staff members are currently on site and acting as First Responders?	☐
Who is the most senior staff member currently on site?	☐
Contact details for the senior staff member and the person reporting the incident	☐
The exact location of the incident	☐
Brief description of the incident	☐
What is the current status of the incident, eg are emergency services in attendance/is site access currently possible?	☐
Are any objects, including priority objects and loans, affected by the incident?	☐
Are there any areas of the site that are currently inaccessible?	☐
Are there any identifiable risks to staff or the Salvage Team posed by the incident?	☐

Once all available information has been recorded, staff at the scene should be told what actions they should take next. This might include:

- carrying out a risk assessment where possible;
- taking appropriate intermediary actions to help alleviate the incident, such as diverting water ingress, turning off stopcocks, etc;
- photographing or videoing the incident if it is safe to do so; and
- gathering salvage equipment and PPE so they are easily accessible for the Salvage Team when they arrive.

You should tell staff on the scene that you will contact them once a course of action has been agreed.

2.2 Determining an incident response

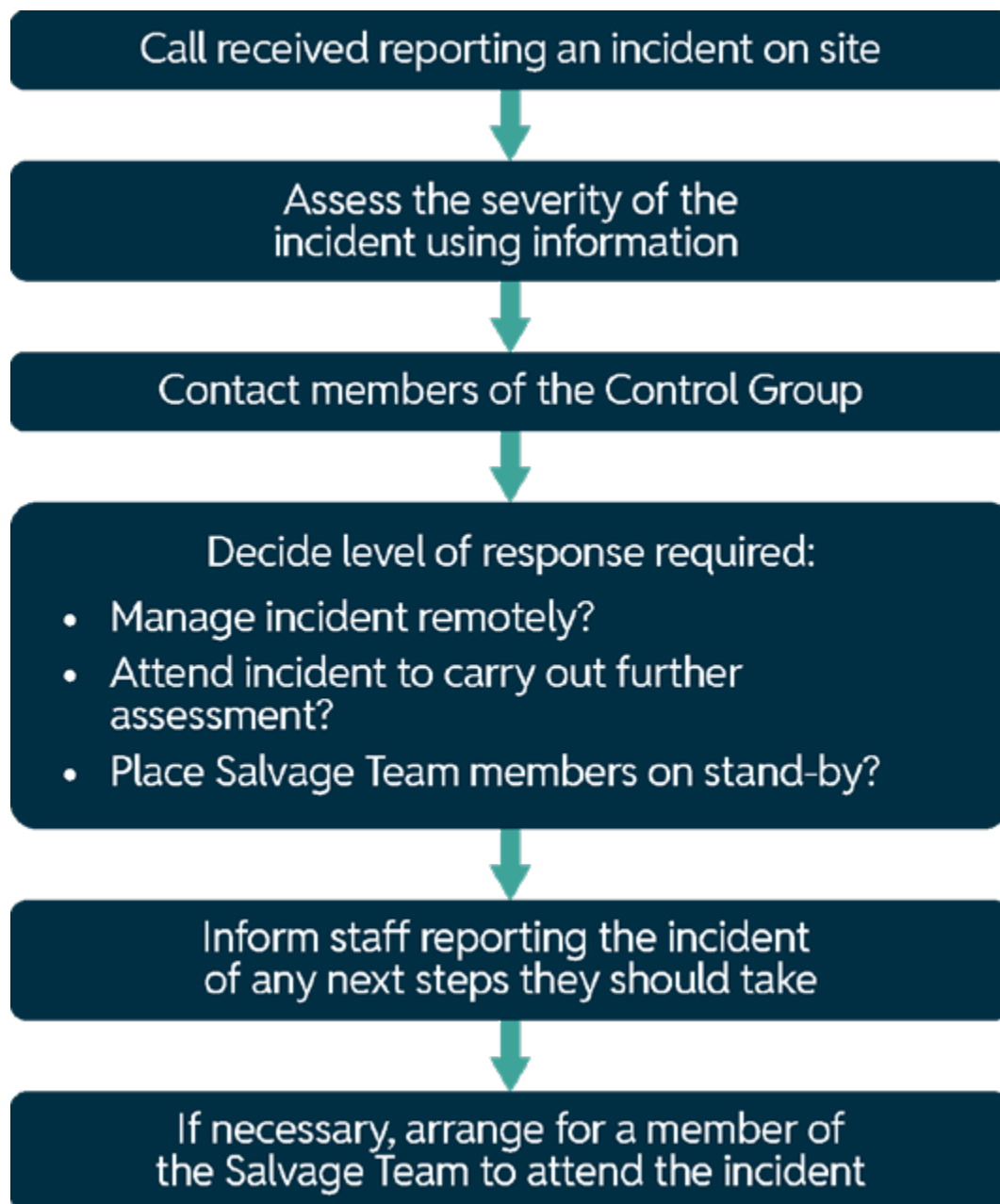
Once information has been gathered from staff on the scene, and they have been instructed on what to do next, the person receiving the incident report should contact other members of the Salvage Team to decide on the next steps.

The best course of action will depend on the nature, severity and location of the incident.

This could involve:

- attending site in person to assess the incident;
- mobilising the Salvage Team and activating the salvage plan;
- placing the Salvage Team on stand-by: if the severity of an incident cannot be immediately determined, Salvage Team members may be placed on stand-by if there is a chance that the incident could require a salvage response; and
- advising site staff on how to manage the incident remotely – usually for minor incidents where a full response is not needed.

Your chosen course of action may change as the incident develops. If you decide to escalate or de-escalate an incident, you will need to clearly communicate your decision and any actions that need to be taken as a result.



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Figure 33. Summary of procedures when receiving an incident report.

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Figure 34. Scottish Fire and Rescue Service arriving at Stirling Castle. © Lynsey Haworth.

3. When you arrive on the scene of the incident

3.1 Assessing an incident

The first member of the Salvage Team to arrive at the incident scene should take steps in establishing the nature of the incident and setting up areas needed to run and manage the incident. See also Figure 38.

Definitions for the forms and checklists mentioned in this section can be found in the Glossary.

3.2 First-on-scene checklist

1. Preparation on arrival

- Put on PPE and ID.
- Locate the person who reported the incident, the head of the emergency services (if on site), or the most senior member of staff on site, and introduce yourself.
- Set up the Muster Point, as indicated in the site salvage plan, and establish the Command Post.
- Assign someone to manage the Muster Point to sign in Salvage Team members.
- Photograph the incident scene if possible and if not already done.
- Ensure to fill out an Incident Log for the salvage operation to record all key developments, decisions and communications.

2. Assess and control the situation

- Begin an Attendance Log to keep track of who is on site.
- Ensure that all necessary initial incident response procedures have been carried out.
- Establish the extent of the incident using the Incident Assessment Checklist and refer to the salvage plan.
- Set up a cordon around the affected area to limit access; in some circumstances it may be necessary to close the entire site.
- Carry out an initial safety assessment using the Health and Safety Checklist.
- Depending on the nature of the incident, take initial mitigative steps – for example, turning off the water stopcock, and arranging for any necessary electrics to be isolated.
- If you use an automatic alarm system, make sure to check if this will be affected by any electrical work. If so, contact your alarm company as soon as possible.

3. Incident assessment checklist

An incident assessment checklist is used by the first member of staff on site to gather a clear picture of the incident which can be passed on to other members of the Salvage Team. This information will help the team to make an informed decision about what level of response is needed, and which processes and procedures need to be activated.

3.3 Health and Safety checklist

Once a member of Collections staff has arrived on site, a Health and Safety Checklist should be completed as soon as possible. In some circumstances, it may be possible to assign a member of site staff to complete this checklist while waiting for a member of the Salvage Team to arrive.

This checklist is not a replacement for a risk assessment but is intended to inform the approach to the incident and ensure a more efficient response by identifying possible issues on site. This will allow the team to mitigate issues early by obtaining more equipment, contacting specialist services, and ensuring all appropriate team members are contacted.

Checklist 8. Example of an incident assessment checklist.

Incident questions	Yes	No
Incident: Is the incident area safe to access? Have emergency services been called, if needed? Is the incident still ongoing? If no, is there potential for further risk? Has the incident been photographed?	☐	☐
Collections: Are any collections' objects currently affected by the incident? Do any objects have noticeable damage requiring immediate attention? Are all affected objects documented? Is there a salvage plan available? Are any loans affected?	☐	☐
Protect in situ: Is there equipment available on site to protect objects? Can equipment be easily obtained?	☐	☐
Object removal: Are collections' objects accessible? Is there a suitable safe area on site? Can objects be easily removed to an alternative location?	☐	☐
Callout: Will a full salvage response be needed? Have identified Salvage Team members been alerted? Will volunteers be needed? Will welfare systems need to be put in place?	☐	☐
Internal communications: Have internal contacts been made aware of the situation? Do any external stakeholders need to be involved?	☐	☐

Health and Safety Checklist			
	Item	Yes	No
1.	Have the emergency services given permission for the Salvage Team to enter the site?		
2.	Are site plans and the Collections Salvage Plan available?		
3.	Is it possible to access any salvage equipment stored on site?		
4.	Are access routes through the building clear?		
5.	Is there electricity?		
6.	Is there running water?		
7.	Is suitable vehicle access and suitable parking available?		
8.	Are there any First Aiders currently on site?		
9.	Is there access to drinking water?		
10.	Is there access to toilets and messing facilities?		
11.	Have site staff received training in:		
	• Manual Handling		
	• Risk Assessment		
	• Collections Salvage		
12.	What hazards may be present on site?		
	Water	Sewage/contaminated water	Mould spores
	Fire	Smoke	Falling objects/high level masonry
	Moving vehicles	Uneven surfaces	Airborne contaminants/dust
	Hazardous substances (eg, asbestos, lead, mercury, etc)	Poor lighting	Other (eg security, theft)
	Specify below		Specify below
Hazardous substances		Other risks	

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Figure 35. Example of a Health and Safety Checklist. The checklist is on an A4 sheet, with questions numbered 1-12. There is additional space for hazardous substances and other risks at the bottom third of the sheet, under question 12.

Case Study

This is an example of a scenario which could happen at a museum during out of hours.



Figure 36. Close up of a stop cock cover.

Situation

Alan works as a security guard in a museum. During his evening rounds, he discovers a pipe is leaking directly above a display case, and water is dripping onto the case.

Action

Alan takes some photographs, then retrieves the salvage plan from the office. He uses the emergency callout sheet to contact the Curator, Jess, and sends her the photographs of the water ingress.

Using the Incident Callout Procedure Sheet as a guide, Alan tells Jess about what has happened in as much detail as possible. From the photographs, Jess can see that the water has not penetrated the case.

Jess takes Alan through the Health and Safety Checklist to ensure Alan can safely carry out any intermediary actions to address the incident. She asks Alan if he knows how to turn off the stopcock for the leaking pipe.

Alan confirms that he does and goes to isolate the water supply. While they are still on the phone, Jess asks Alan to mop up the water spill and to cover the case with plastic. Jess tells Alan that she will check on the case when she comes in to work tomorrow and asks Alan to let her know if there are any developments. Jess and Alan end the call. Jess makes sure to write down what Alan told her and the advice that she gave him. When Jess comes in to work the next day, she checks on the display case to make sure there has been no further water ingress. She contacts the Facilities Team to organise a plumber and sets up a humidity monitor near the case. She then types up all her notes and makes sure to file them in the right place. When Jess next sees Alan, she thanks him for his vigilance and quick thinking.

3.4 Setting up the Muster Point and Command Post

Muster Point

The Muster Point should be a secure area, physically distanced from any potential hazards presented by the incident, where team members can sign the Attendance Log. It may also be where the salvage team is briefed on the incident before beginning any salvage work.

If located on site, the Muster Point should ideally be at a point of entry. This will allow staff to check entry and exit from the site and will make it easier for Salvage Team members who may be unfamiliar with the site to find the Muster Point.

The Muster Point may be off-site, depending on the nature of the incident. If this is the case, this should be clearly explained when calling out Salvage Team members to attend the incident. If possible, the off-site Muster Point should be marked by signage.

Command Post

The Command Post should be set up as soon as possible by the first member of the Salvage Team on scene. This is where the Salvage Team leaders will be based during the operation, when they are not needed in the affected areas. Having a specific point of command will ensure that staff know where to go if they need guidance or to report any developments.



Figure 37. Ensure all team members know where to go when arriving on site. © Rob McDougall.

The Command Post should be located as close to the incident site as possible and should always be staffed.

If possible, it should be inside. Ideally, there will be access to a phone and a table for laying out plans and documentation. If it is somewhere near the entrance/ Muster Point, then it can also be used as the registration point for staff going in and out of the site. Ideally, this should also be an area where team members can leave personal belongings that will not be needed during the salvage operation.

If suitable, this room may also be used as a rest area for team members.

3.5 Instructions for team members arriving on site

To support your Salvage Team, you should provide information for when they arrive at the location of the incident, including to:

- Park in designated place and assemble at the Muster Point.
- Put on protective clothing, high-visibility vest and hard hat.
- Ensure you have your ID and mobile phone on you and any documents, keys or fobs you may need.
- Make your way to the Muster Point to show your ID and sign the Attendance Log.
- Check where the team briefing is being held and make your way there.
- Attend the briefing and note important information such as who is undertaking key roles and how communication will be maintained. If you are unsure of anything, ask.

3.6 Initial on-site briefing

Once all staff are on site, have signed in, and are ready to start, the Incident Manager should give a briefing. No team member should begin any salvage work until they have been briefed on the incident. Ideally, the briefing should take place at your established Muster Point, unless you have designated an alternative location. The briefing is one of the most important parts of the salvage operation to ensure staff do not put themselves at unnecessary risk. Any accidents could seriously hurt someone, and any confusion could delay the salvage operation.

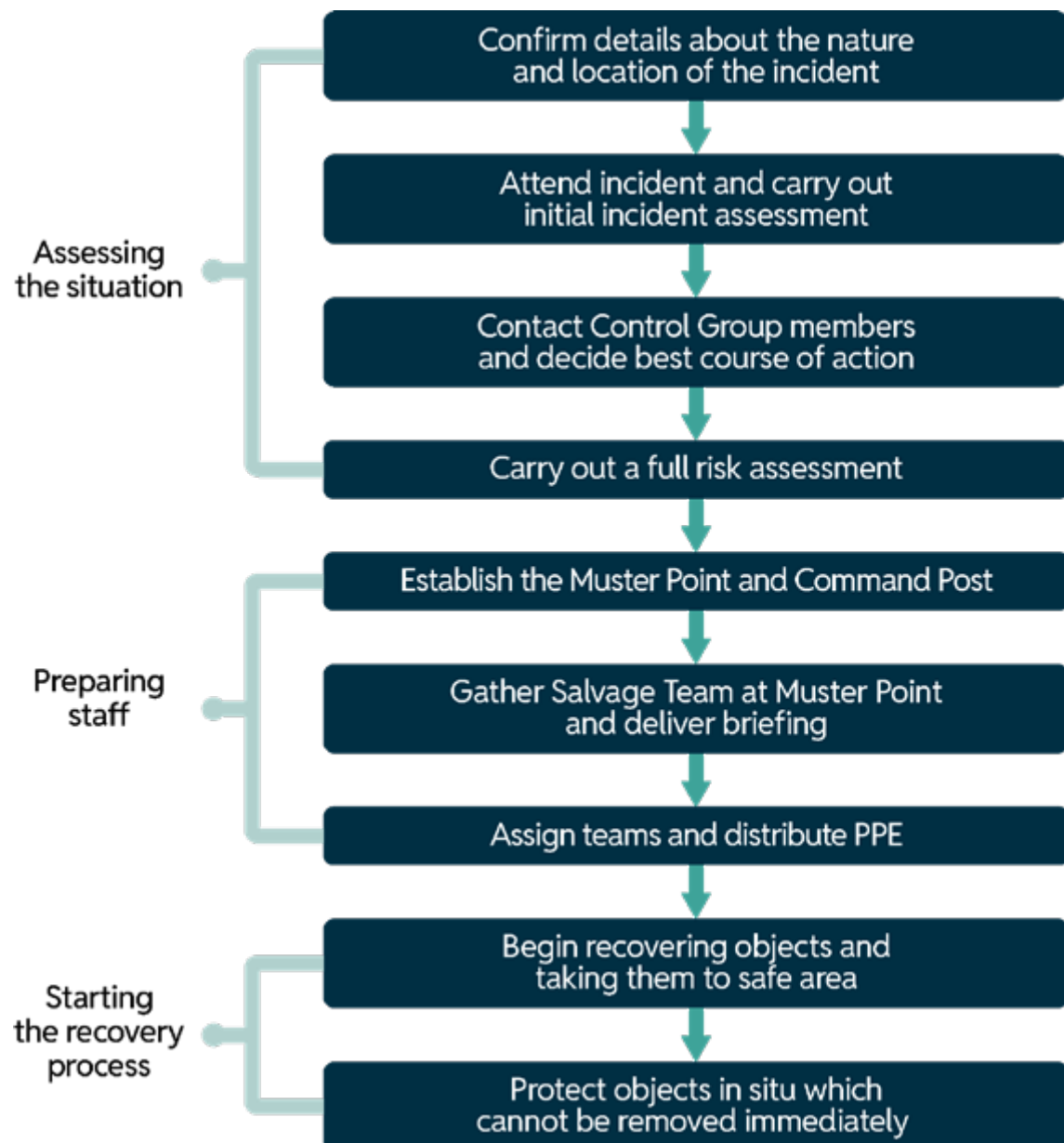
During the team briefing, the Salvage Team should be given further information about the nature of the incident and be informed of the proposed plan of action. This should include information on where the safe area is, and where objects will be moved to for short-term storage.

Individuals should be assigned to a team and given instruction on their roles and responsibilities. At this stage, the team leaders may pair team members together if they are carrying out practical tasks.

3.7 Suggested briefing content

The briefing should have the following information:

- the nature of the incident;
- which areas have been affected;
- what has already happened on site;
- how the salvage operation will be carried out;
- the location of safe area(s);
- access routes;
- welfare facilities;
- restricted areas;
- health and safety, including potential risks and hazards highlighted in the risk assessment;
- methods of safe working and accident reporting procedures;
- evacuation procedures;
- chain of command, such as who will be fulfilling specific roles and who team members should report to; and
- agreed methods of communication (such as walkie talkies or mobile phones) and communication protocols.



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Figure 38. A flowchart summarising the steps taken to respond to a salvage incident.



Figure 39. Make sure your team is fully briefed before beginning any salvage work.
© Donald MacLeod.

4. Managing an incident

4.1 Health and safety

The top priority when carrying out a salvage operation should be the health and safety of all staff, contractors, and volunteers. You should ensure your organisation has a robust incident response plan which covers fire and evacuation procedures.

4.2 Fire alarms and fire watch systems

If fire alarm systems have been deactivated in response to the incident, you should set up a fire watch system using trained fire wardens until the fire alarm system can be reactivated. During the salvage operation, you should establish a clear procedure for alerting team members in the event of a fire, and a signal for evacuation.

4.3 Risk assessment and reporting

Before starting any salvage work, a full risk assessment must be carried out. Be aware that risk assessments may need to be updated as the incident develops. All developments must be reported to the Incident Manager, as these may alter the approach the Salvage Team will take in dealing with the incident, or the PPE they need to be provided with. In some circumstances it may become necessary to cease the salvage operation altogether if the site or situation becomes unsafe.

4.4 Providing welfare

It is important that staff and volunteers take regular breaks. Where possible, the following should be provided:

- Drinking water
- Hot water/drinks
- Food
- Sunscreen, if working outside for long periods in the summer
- Seating
- Quiet rest area
- Toilets

4.5 Personal safety measures

Salvage Team members should be reminded of their responsibilities to health and safety for themselves and those around them. Some rules to follow are:

- Always wear appropriate PPE, including gloves.
- Always work in pairs, and do not enter a salvage area alone.
- Do not enter a building or salvage area until you have been advised that it is safe to do so.
- Clear floor areas to remove trip hazards.
- Do not try to lift more than you can manage, and do not overload crates.
- Be clear on any individual requirements you may have, so that they can be risk assessed and reasonable adjustments made as needed.
- If possible, wear glasses rather than contact lenses, in case of dust and debris.

4.6 Working with the emergency services

Fire and Rescue Service: response to automatic alarms

In response to an increasing number of false alarm callouts from Automatic Fire Alarm Systems (AFAS), Fire and Rescue Services across the UK have introduced the Call-Challenge approach when responding to the AFAS signals or 999 calls reporting fire.

The Call-Challenge is a process that involves asking the duty holder with responsibility for the workplace premises whether they have investigated a fire alarm before reporting a fire. If a fire alarm system is triggered, a keyholder will need to confirm if there is indeed a fire before the Fire Service will attend the incident. If your site is in a remote location or does not have a designated local keyholder, this will lead to a substantial delay in the response time if a fire alarm is triggered.

Further information on the Call-Challenge approach can be found on the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service website: [Reducing unwanted fire alarm signals \(UFAS\) | Scottish Fire and Rescue Service](#)¹.

Fire and Rescue attendance to an incident

During an incident, the main priorities of the Fire Service will be:

¹ <https://www.firescotland.gov.uk/businesses-and-landlords/reducing-unwanted-fire-alarm-signals-ufas/>

1. **Life Safety:** In all structures, regardless of occupancy status, life safety is the top priority. All fireground actions must support and prioritise the search and rescue of life.
2. **Incident Stabilisation:** This covers fire control, ventilation, and incident mitigation, with the goal of stopping extension and minimising risk to civilians and firefighters.
3. **Property Conservation:** Salvage and overhaul operations directed towards preserving structures, property and contents from unnecessary damage.
4. **Post-Incident Stabilisation:** This involves providing assistance, support and guidance to the occupant post incident.

In the event of an incident, the Recovery Manager should establish on site contact and liaise with the Fire Service Incident Commander. The Recovery Manager will be responsible for communicating any instructions given by the Fire Service to the rest of the Salvage Team.

Access to the building may be limited, but in circumstances where it is deemed safe to do so, the Fire Service may escort members of the Salvage Team into the building during an ongoing incident:

- if the fire is at high level, entry into rooms below may be possible;
- if the fire has been brought under control and is isolated in a specific area; and
- after the fire has been extinguished.



Figure 40. Fire Services will prioritise saving lives and controlling the fire, but they may agree to help salvage your priority objects if it is safe for them to do so. See also [Standard Assignments and Tactical Priorities: Making the Right Choice on the Fireground](#)¹.

¹ <https://www.fireengineering.com/firefighting/standard-assignments-and-tactical-priorities-fireground/>

Police Service: response to automatic alarms

According to the National Police Chiefs Council, the police will only attend monitored intruder alarms that 'confirm' alarm activations. The aim of this policy is to enable the police to provide a more effective response to genuine intruder alarm calls and reduce the number of false calls.

Any installed automated alarms must be registered with the police and given a Unique Reference Number (URN). Sites will be assigned one of the following response levels:

- Level 1: Immediate response.
- Level 2: Police response is desirable, but attendance may be delayed (eg due to resource availability).
- Level 3: No police attendance, keyholder response only.

See also [Police Scotland's Freedom of Information Response](#)¹.

Following the issue of a URN, the alarms will be subject to a Level 1 response. However, following two false calls in 12 months the police response will move to Level 2.

If your buildings are fitted with an automatic security alarm, ensure that it is registered with the police and that you have a record of the URN.

Police response to an incident

During an incident, the police priorities will be:

1. To enable the emergency services to perform their tasks effectively by:
 - facilitating access to the site
 - setting up traffic management and diversions
 - setting up cordons
 - dealing with the media.
2. Protecting and assisting the public.
3. Establishing or assisting in establishing the facts of an incident.

It should be noted that if the police are in attendance during an incident, the salvage area may be considered a crime scene. If this is the case, it is vital that the area is kept secure and no staff enter it for any reason. Nothing is to be removed without the express permission of the Commanding Officer. Your Recovery Manager should liaise with the Police Commanding Officer and communicate any instructions given to the rest of the Salvage Team.

¹ <https://www.scotland.police.uk/spa-media/scyatttrc/23-2551-dl-response.docx>

4.7 Response to terrorism and complex major incidents

During a major incident, such as a terrorist attack or natural disaster, it will be necessary to coordinate your response with other services and organisations. You should have a clear hierarchical structure established to make it clear how your Salvage Team will work within your wider organisation and alongside emergency services and other organisations.

Figure 41 is an example of how you might communicate this team structure when responding to complex incidents.

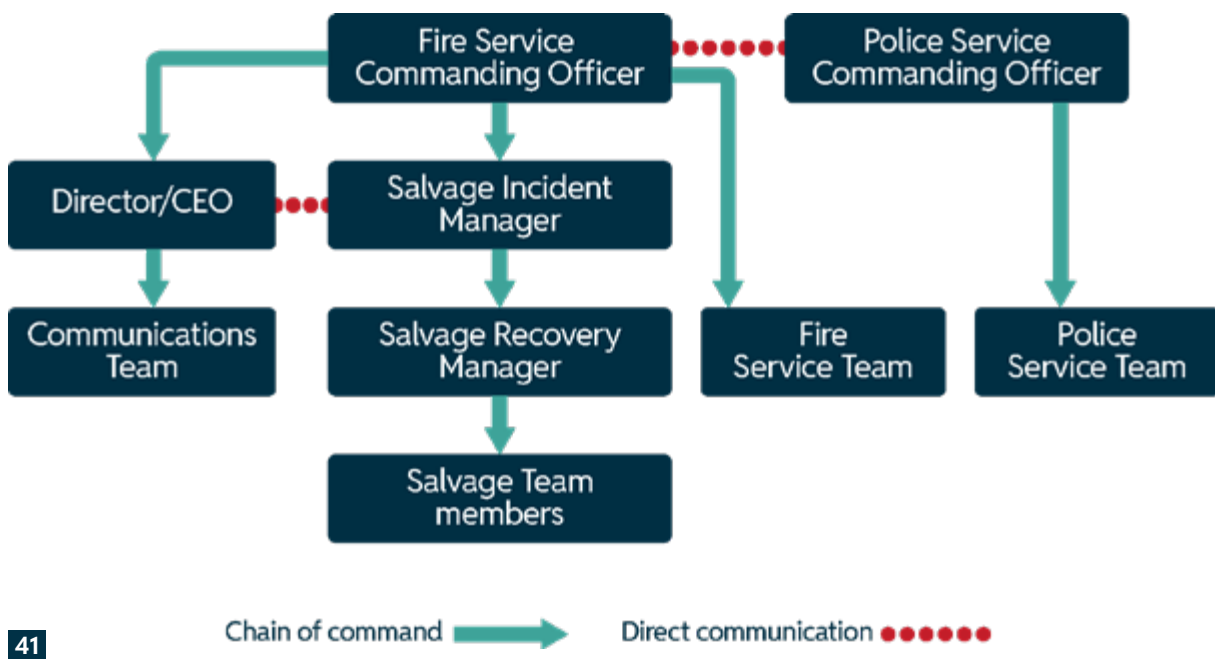


Figure 41. A diagram showing a suggested team structure for responding to a major incident.

4.8 Salvage Team communication

It is important that you consider how your team will communicate with one another during an incident. In many circumstances, the use of mobile phones will be sufficient, providing that mobile reception is good and power is available. However, a more serious incident may mean that power is cut off, and phone networks may be affected.

Mobile reception may also be poor or non-existent. For example, in old buildings with thick stone walls, in subterranean levels, or in remote locations. Even in areas with good reception the mobile towers could be affected by adverse weather. Phone batteries may also run down quickly if in constant use. In these circumstances you will need to utilise an alternative method of communication.

Use of mobile phones

Mobile phones are extremely convenient if mobile reception and internet access is reliable and available. Team members can call or message one another to provide updates, and group chats on apps can provide a secure means of passing on information to multiple team members at once.

Pros:

- Most people will have access to a mobile phone, either personal or work issued.
- Generally, a secure means of communication.
- Group messages can quickly circulate information to multiple team members.
- Team leaders/managers can receive photographs and video calls from team members, allowing for faster assessment of situations and damage to objects and areas.

Cons:

- If messages are used, they may not be seen immediately, causing delays.
- Mobile reception and battery life may be unreliable.
- Some team members may not consent to sharing their personal phone numbers if they do not have a work-issued device, or an organisation may block their use as a security risk.
- Risk of photographs and messages being sent to people outside of the Salvage Team and/or organisation
- Remember that Freedom of Information (FOI) requests for communications sent during an incident include messages sent using mobile phones.

Use of two-way radio systems

Use of Radios and 'walkie talkies' are ideal for instant communication and there might already be radios available at your organisation. There are two options available: single frequency or dual frequency. Dual frequency increases the range of communication and ensures that all radios receive all messages. Note that varying licensing levels may apply for the use of radio equipment depending on the type of equipment and level of usage by your organisation.

Further guidance on this can be found at [Ofcom](https://www.ofcom.org.uk/siteassets/resources/documents/spectrum/business-radio-licences/business-radio-guidance-document.pdf?v=408940)¹.

When using radios for communication, be sure to instruct staff on their proper usage as part of the briefing, as some team members may not have used radios before.

¹ <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/siteassets/resources/documents/spectrum/business-radio-licences/business-radio-guidance-document.pdf?v=408940>

Staff should:

- Speak clearly at a steady, slower-than-normal pace.
- Use plain language that can be easily understood.
- Not gossip, discuss sensitive matters, or use bad language as other people may overhear radio conversations.
- Always assume someone else is listening!

Pros:

- Lots of different systems are available, making it easy to choose one that suits your organisation's needs.
- Many organisations are likely to have a radio system in place already.
- They are easy to buy and set up at short notice and can be bought in bulk.
- Radios can be used in areas that mobile signals cannot reach.
- Two-way radios can be installed with users having an order of priority, ensuring messages from team leaders etc make it through to all staff.

Cons:

- Risk of disruption from other signal sources.
- Radio channels can be used by several users, which can cause confusion if multiple communications are happening at once.
- Outside parties may be able to tune in to unsecured radio channels, which could present a security risk.
- Radios have limited range (often a couple of miles at most) so will not be able to communicate with staff and teams working further away or off-site.
- Signal can be weakened or blocked entirely by thick walls or walls lined with metal.
- Radios need to be recharged regularly so would need to be taken off-site if there is no power.

With these considerations in mind, you should choose the system of communication which best suits your organisation's needs. You may decide to use one or several systems of communication together. Whichever you choose, you should make sure that all Salvage Team members and other staff understand communications protocols.



Figure 42. Radios are a good way to ensure communication channels stay open during a salvage incident.

5. Communicating with the public and the media

It is important that all members of your team, including any volunteers, understand your communication procedures and protocols. Ensure everyone is aware of how information will be disseminated to the public. Emphasise that all team members should avoid speaking to the press and should not post anything on social media.

5.1 Large sites and major incidents

High-profile sites and major incidents such as fire and flood are likely to garner significant public attention. In these cases, it may be necessary to request police assistance in maintaining cordons and ensuring the public cannot access restricted sites and areas. Extra security staff could also be hired in from external companies. If this course of action is followed, it may be necessary to require these staff to sign non-disclosure agreements, depending on the nature of the incident and the site affected.

5.2 Dealing with the media

Early media engagement is vital to avoid speculation and rumour. A press statement should be released as soon as possible after an incident occurs, even if it is simply to state that emergency procedures are in place. This should be coordinated through a designated member of staff. Media communications may be managed by a team external to the immediate salvage operation, depending on the size of the organisation.

5.3 Small sites and minor incidents

During minor incidents, it may be possible to keep unaffected areas of a site open to the public. Where possible, visitor operations staff should be on hand to redirect visitor flow and should be instructed by the Incident Manager on how to answer any questions the public may have about the incident.

5.4 Site closures

If a site must be closed entirely, you should consider releasing a statement as soon as possible. This could be done via your website. Social media is also an effective way of quickly issuing information. It can help you control the narrative surrounding an incident because you can address questions and comments relatively quickly. Avoid posting photographs of the incident and ensure that Salvage Team members have also been instructed not to post to social media about the incident.



Figure 43. At some sites it may be necessary to conduct bag searches for everyone entering and leaving a site.

6. Security during an incident

Security measures are not only put in place to keep staff safe, but also to make sure no members of the public enter the site. This means that the public are not put at risk if they enter any of the affected areas. It also stops journalists from capturing images of the incident and publishing them before the organisation has had a chance to update lenders and other interested parties. Security measures are also important to help to prevent any theft of unsecured objects. During a large-scale incident it can be easier for someone to slip through regular security measures. By making sure access to the site is strictly controlled, these measures will help to mitigate any security incidents that could delay, or even halt, the salvage efforts. Such measures could include but are not restricted to:

- Cordons
- Staff identification (ID)
- Signing in contractors and suppliers
- Overnight security
- Bag searches

6.1 Staff identification (ID)

Staff and volunteers should always have ID with them. This helps to ensure that only authorised personnel can gain access to the site. ID should be presented when signing in and out, and should be kept in an accessible place, either on your person or in a personal bag nearby. If possible, ID should not be worn around the neck, as this can present a hazard both to the person and any objects they might be carrying or treating. All Salvage Team members attending could be issued with a wristband identifying them as a team member on arrival at the Muster Point.

6.2 Signing in and out

Attendance logs

The Attendance Log should always be kept up to date. This not only increases the security of the collections, but also the safety of all staff working on site. If the site needs to be evacuated during a salvage operation, it is critical you have an accurate count of who is on site to ensure everyone is accounted for.

Recording contractor visits

When bringing in external contractors, remind them to bring a form of ID, whether this is personal ID or work ID from their respective organisation. Contractors sending multiple members of staff should provide a list of people the Salvage Team can expect to attend.

Remind contractors that they must sign in and out using the Attendance Log.

6.3 Setting up cordons

If the emergency services are in attendance, they may set up their own cordons. These must be complied with at all times by all members of staff. In some circumstances, the fire service may set up an inner and outer cordon, which will allow staff and contractors to access some areas of the site, while restricting access to areas they have not yet deemed safe to enter. The Recovery Manager should liaise with the Fire Service Incident Commander to establish which areas of an affected site will be accessible, and where possible, work with the fire service to retrieve priority objects where staff cannot access them.

If you are managing the incident internally, a perimeter should be set up at the first available opportunity around the affected area using barrier tape. This may be the responsibility of your own security team if you have one or may be assigned to a designated member of staff.

- Portable 'No Entry' signs can be used to deter access.
- The number of access points into and out of the affected area should be limited, with a single route in and a single route out if possible. This will limit disruption to the site and ensure that object movements can easily be tracked.
- Entrances and exits should be staffed at all times.
- The people staffing access points should be fully briefed on who is authorised to access the salvage site, including information on external contractors such as names and ID badges.

What to do if an intruder enters cordoned areas

If you suspect a person does not have authorisation to be on site, take the following steps.

1. Politely ask for ID.
2. If no ID can be presented, ask the person to leave and escort them off-site.
3. If they refuse to leave or are acting in a suspicious manner, call the police or your security team, if you have one.

You should also alert the Control Group if you are concerned about security or a person's behaviour.

If you feel it is not safe to directly challenge an intruder, inform the Control Group and immediately call the police.

Bag searches

At some sites it may be necessary to conduct bag searches for everyone entering and leaving a site. This is especially true at high-profile sites or sites which house

particularly valuable collections. If bag searches will be in operation, this should be explained to everyone attending a site when they are called out to attend. If it is found that unauthorised removal of equipment or objects has occurred, this should be reported to the police and reported internally via the Recovery Manager and included in the Incident Log.

6.4 Overnight security for temporary storage of collections

Museum-controlled sites may lose their standard security controls as part of the incident. For example, doors and windows may be broken, or CCTV or intruder alarm systems may be offline due to extended loss of power. Overnight guarding might be needed even if the museum building is otherwise secure.

In the event of a total loss of site, objects may have to be stored at an external location not owned by your organisation. These sites may not be as secure as museum-controlled sites, and security should be increased through 24-hour personnel presence.

It may be worth consulting the local police if you need to store collections at a site that you do not directly control. The police may be able to offer guidance and advice. They may even be willing to increase patrols around buildings that temporarily house collections following a salvage incident, if they have the capacity to do so.

External sites may be found through existing working relationships, or through a local authority disaster planning officer. Locations that have been identified as suitable for public safe areas during a disaster may also be suited to storing collections for a short period of time. If this option is used in the event of an incident, the local authority should be given a realistic estimate of how long objects are expected to be stored for.

6.5 Key security and keyholder logging

There should be a list available of keyholders for your organisation. An inventory of permanently issued keys should be prepared and kept up to date. You may choose to include this information in your salvage plan or may keep a separate list elsewhere. Keys should be logged out on a register and ideally returned on the same day or signed for every day. It must be emphasised that the recipient is responsible for that key at all times and the key must not be passed to a third party without permission (and recorded on a key register or in the Incident Log). Spare keys and master keys must be secured in a separate safe with limited access for nominated keyholders.

Security and fire alarm companies must always have full and current details of keyholders to the premises.



Figure 44. Welding is an example of ‘hot work’ which could pose a fire risk.

7. Risks for construction sites

Sites undergoing construction are at a significantly higher risk of incidents. Plans should be put in place to cover these sites, with particular consideration to the following areas.

7.1 Hot works and isolation of fire suppression systems

When a contractor needs to use flame or heat producing apparatus, ie cutting, welding, burning, brazing, grinding, hot-air guns, blow lamps and portable heaters; this is referred to as ‘**hot work**’.

Consider the following if hot work is expected to be carried out:

- A **Hot Work Permit** must be completed and presented to the person responsible for fire security who then authorises the work to proceed.
- Fire extinguishers must be made available for the contractors.
- Where it is necessary for a contractor or member of staff to isolate fire detection/suppression equipment, a procedure is required to ensure that the risk is reduced. A permit should be required for all isolations of fire detection or suppression equipment which may become necessary.
- On completion of the work, all alarms must be fully reactivated and recorded again.
- On completion of the work, at least one hour before the contractors leave, the area must be inspected for damage and to ensure nothing is left smouldering and the site is safe. Inspections may continue on an hourly basis for as long as necessary.

Further guidance on hot works in historic buildings can be found at [Fire Safety: Hot Work and Historic Buildings | Historic England](#)¹.

¹ <https://historicengland.org.uk/content/docs/advice/fire-safety-hot-work-historic-buildings>

7.2 Scaffolding and security

Construction sites also often create increased opportunities for theft and vandalism. Scaffolding can provide new points of entry to sites, increasing the risk of unauthorised entry.

Normal entry and exit routes, or secure entrance procedures may temporarily change.

Extra security measures should be put in place if any buildings which house collections require scaffolding for any length of time. You should also ensure that all external companies working on your sites are aware of security requirements for your organisation, and that a robust sign-in and sign-out procedure is in place. Specific guidance provided under the Government Indemnity Scheme (GIS) can be found on the Collections Trust website: [Security specification for external scaffolding | Collections Trust](#)¹.

7.3 Engaging contractors

The presence of contractors on a museum's site may raise additional security issues, including:

- Contractors may introduce a severe threat of fire from hot works.
- Increased risk of theft due to the increased presence of workers in the building. Depending on the nature and length of the project, this could increase opportunism in terms of imitating legitimate workers to gain access.
- Increased risk of damage to the building or to the collections from poor working practices.

Selection of contractors needs to be undertaken with care, not only for their skills and experience, but also to ensure they are from established organisations working to approved standards. You may require contractors to provide a RAMS (Risk Assessment and Method Statement) before agreeing to any work. Before a contractor is allowed onto the premises, a contract or other written agreement must be issued to cover all aspects of the work to be undertaken. This should include an induction briefing.

¹ <https://collectionstrust.org.uk/resource/security-specification-for-external-scaffolding/>

7.4 Working with contractors

The areas of access should also be clearly defined and enforced. Contractors should be easily identifiable as should all staff in the venue. The opportunity and agreement to carry out random checks on all contract personnel, together with their vehicles, will help prevent collections or other material being illegally removed. A contractual right of search will support this procedure.

When employing contractors:

- Appoint and know who is responsible for managing contractors in your venue.
- Ensure the contractors are well managed and know who their manager is.
- Ensure there are no unacceptable risks to collections, whether in storage, being handled, or in transit.
- Keep communication and updates regular.
- Be prepared to halt the work should there be a breach of procedures.



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Figure 45. Items recovered from a fire, in a designated safe area.

8. Setting up safe areas

Safe areas are secure, protected spaces where salvaged items can be taken to be assessed, treated if immediately necessary, and wrapped and packaged for transport. These spaces should be located as close together as possible to minimise distances over which objects have to be carried. Each site may have several spaces that can be used as safe areas in the event of an incident. Where possible, all safe areas should have the following:

- Protection from the elements
- Plenty of space to move around easily
- A source of natural light or means of providing electric light
- Secure perimeters
- Step-free access

8.1 Documentation area

The documentation area is the first place where objects should be taken after they are retrieved from the affected site.

You should ensure that all relevant documentation is available, such as Conservation Triage Forms and inventories of recovered objects.

Equipment needed to set up and run the documentation area

You will need:

- A table or several tables
- Laptop and printer access, if possible
- Priority object lists
- Outward inventory, to be filled out by a member of the Documentation Group as objects are removed from the affected area
- Reception inventory, to be filled out by a member of the Documentation Group when objects reach the safe area
- Removal inventory, to be filled out if/when objects are removed from site
- Tyvek labels, cotton tape and archive pens
- Camera, small whiteboard and dry erase pens (useful for recording object numbers in images of recovered objects)
- Masking tape or electrical tape to create storage areas and walkways on floors

8.2 Preparing the conservation area

Once items have been received and recorded at the documentation area, they should be taken to the conservation area. Here, objects would ideally be assessed by qualified conservators, and any first aid that can be carried out to stabilise or treat damaged objects will also take place.

The conservation area should include:

- Space to separate wet and dry objects
- Space to spread wet objects out to dry
- Tables for drying and treating objects
- Space for conservators to work on damaged objects

The space should be divided into two sections: one for wet objects and one for dry objects. It is, therefore, essential that the designated treatment area is large enough to allow for this.

Equipment needed to set up and run the conservation area

This can include:

- **Object First Aid Cards;**
- Conservation Triage Forms;
- fans or hairdryers with a 'cold' setting, if dealing with wet objects;
- Polythene sheeting;
- Conservation brushes and sponges;
- Finds bags;
- Tyvek; and
- Blotting paper or paper towels.



Figure 46. Stone objects can be heavy and difficult to move without the right equipment and personnel. © Judith Rowett.

9. Recovering objects

9.1 Clearing a room

When conducting a salvage operation, it is important to clear the room systematically. This will ensure that no objects are missed and objects are not put in danger of being damaged by other objects being moved around them.

In general, clearing a room should be carried out in the following order:

1. Always work in pairs – do not enter any affected areas alone.
2. Clear any debris and potential trip hazards from the floor. If this includes any objects, ensure to keep parts together using finds bags.
3. Remove objects that are blocking access routes or in danger of being damaged by moving other objects past them.
4. Cover and protect any objects that are not going to be immediately removed. Make sure to label wrapped objects to show what is inside.
5. Do not open display cases or remove objects from them unless you have been specifically instructed to do so.
6. Locate and retrieve priority objects, starting with those closest to the door/exit route.
7. Clear surfaces first, such as tops of tables and mantelpieces, before moving furniture items.
8. Remove furniture items in front of paintings before trying to remove paintings from walls.

9.2 Object handling

General collections

Make sure of the following:

- Check for object hazards, either on the Collections Management System (CMS), in the risk assessment, or on warning labels attached to the objects.
- Be aware that collections such as natural history, ethnographic and contemporary art may contain specific hazards that you should check before handling.
- Use extreme care in handling collections which have become damaged or waterlogged as they may be unstable and present risk to the handler, and be at risk of further deterioration.
- Move objects one at a time.
- Do not lift by handles, spouts, arms, rims, tails, heads, or any other protruding parts. Use two hands and lift from the base or secure area only. Separate jars and lids whenever possible and transport individually. Carry with one hand at bottom and one hand at side or near bottom for support and balance.
- Transfer small objects to boxes or trays, padding with acid-free tissue paper or **Jiffy Foam**.
- If possible, use a cart or trolley to move more than one object at a time. Use protective pads, wedges, or blankets to stabilise objects on carts and prevent them from rubbing against each other. Be aware of projecting parts as they may require extra padding and extra precaution.
- Lift objects to move them – do not drag them.
- Know how a piece should be handled before lifting; know where you are going and where you plan to put it.
- Always be careful where placing hands, as paint, gold leaf, feathers, etc, are easily knocked off.
- Collect and preserve fragments broken off from any of the collections. Save all pieces in finds bags and label clearly.
- Place objects where there is minimum chance of them getting accidentally knocked into or being in the path of Salvage Team members moving around.
- Do not allow parts of objects to protrude beyond the edge of shelving, where they might be bumped or knocked off the shelf.
- When moving objects to new areas, store heavier objects on lower shelves to lower the centre of gravity and minimise danger of a rack toppling over.
- Place padding underneath if you must place an object on a pallet or on the floor.

Furniture

When handling furniture, make sure of the following:

- Ensure there are enough people to safely lift the object.
- Lift by the object's strongest point. In most cases, this is the lowest weight-bearing point, such as the seat of a chair.
- Use both hands to handle and move furniture, and be sure to wear gloves.
- If possible, hold the object close to your body and never above waist height.
- Ensure that you follow manual handling procedures when lifting heavy objects.
- If the item is too large or too heavy to move, place it on wooden blocks and cover with polythene to protect it from water damage. If there is a risk of fire damage, cover with a fire-retardant blanket.
- Use webbing straps to lift heavy or awkward items.
- Remove drawers and contents of furniture to reduce its weight.
- Tie or lock cupboard doors shut.
- Do not lift furniture by handles.
- Always plan your route in advance of lifting and moving. Make sure your path is clear and there are no obstructions or trip hazards.
- Make sure the object will fit through doorways and along narrow passages and staircases, if these are part of your planned route.



Figure 47. Always lift furniture from the lowest load-bearing point, such as underneath the seat for chairs. This situation has been posed.

Textiles

Consider the following when handling textiles:

- Be aware that wet textiles can be extremely heavy.
- Avoid excessive folding. Put tissue or bubble wrap between layers and along folds. Carry objects over extended arms to avoid further folding.
- Use polythene as a carrying support.
- Roll carpets pile-side out. Plastic drainpipes can offer good support.
- If textiles cannot be moved, roll them up, cover with polythene, and place them next to a wall or under a table.



Figure 48. Always have two people lift paintings from walls, particularly if they are hung above head height. This situation has been posed.

Paintings

When handling paintings:

- Always carry only one painting at a time.
- Always have two or more people lift or move any painting, when one person finds it even slightly difficult to manage alone.
- If the painting is too large to be moved safely, cover with a polythene sheet and secure to protect from potential water damage.
- Always carry framed paintings with one hand on the bottom edge of the frame and the other on one side. Never hold a frame by the ornate decorations at the corners or lift a frame by the top edge.
- Always hold the face of a painting towards your body when you are carrying it. Ensure that nothing is worn around your neck that could damage the surface of the painting.
- Never touch the surface of a painting with your fingers.
- Never hold an unframed painting with your knuckles pressing into the reverse of the canvas.
- Always be very careful of where you put your hands when holding a frame; **gesso** becomes soft when wet.
- Know where you plan to put the painting and where you are going before you lift it. Do not move it unnecessarily.
- Put paintings where they will not be accidentally bumped or in the way of access routes.
- Always rest paintings vertically against a wall and not flat on the floor, unless there is no other alternative or if paintings are wet. Use non-skid padding such as **Plastazote** to stop stacked paintings slipping. If possible, rest single frame paintings face against the wall.
- Paintings should not be stacked vertically against each other. If necessary, stack them back-to-back and front-to-front. Always make sure that any wire, screws, or protruding pieces on the reverse of frames cannot cause damage. If possible, use cardboard, soft foam, or **Correx** to separate stacked paintings.

Archives and paper

When handling archives and paper:

- Move items into crates for movement, where possible, to reduce the risk of damage through direct handling.
- If items are in cabinet drawers, remove the entire drawer rather than the individual items where possible.
- If the items are boxed, do not unpack them. Take the entire box to the documentation area (placing them in crates if the box is too weak). Remember, wet cardboard provides very little support strength.
- Books and papers should be carried flat, particularly if wet or damaged. Wet items should always be supported while carrying using a rigid, flat, non-stick surface. If necessary, polythene or Tyvek sheets can also be used.
- Avoid touching the surface of the paper when carrying it. Lift it from underneath and handle it by the edges as much as possible.
- Support books well. Do not hold them by the spine. Carry books in a container, if possible, and do not allow wet covers and bindings to come into contact with other items to avoid staining.
- Any unframed items should never be placed against each other. If it is necessary to stack items, always place tissue between each piece.
- If removing books from shelving, push them out from behind and avoid pulling on the spine.



Figure 49. ‘Blotting paper’ inserted between the sheets of a book to illustrate the techniques that can be used to salvage books damaged by water.

Stone, sculptures and plasterwork

When handling stone, sculptures and plasterwork:

- Different stone types react differently to fire, water and environmental changes and may become more fragile.
- Plaster becomes very soft when wet, and you should avoid handling it where possible.
- Protect floors with duckboarding when moving heavy items.
- Move objects using trolleys and barrows, and use proper lifting equipment.
- If items cannot be moved, protect from water damage with Tyvek, uncoated side down, using wooden battens to hold the Tyvek in place. Avoid using polythene where possible, as this can trap moisture and cause further damage.
- Do not use polythene if there is a risk of fire; use a fire-retardant blanket.
- Carry and store tabletops and other large, flat pieces on their sides to prevent them collapsing under their own weight.

Human remains from collections

When handling human remains be aware that:

- Viewing or handling human remains can be distressing. Human remains should only be handled if absolutely necessary, and ideally by a member of staff who has received appropriate training.
- Human remains should be stored separately to other types of collections, either in a separate room or on dedicated shelving away from the main activity of the store. They should be away from public view.
- Whenever it is possible for individual remains to be separated, each should be given a storage container. Specially designed storage boxes for skeletons are available for this purpose.
- Boxes should never be in direct contact with the floor. If there is no shelving available, pallets may be used to elevate boxes containing human remains from the floor.
- Be aware of potential hazards that might be associated with human remains, such as mould, lead from historic coffins and mercury from historical estimation of cranial capacity.



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Figure 50. A simple wind tunnel can be constructed to help air dry paper items that have become damp.

10. Object treatment and conservation

10.1 Prioritising objects

Depending on the nature of the incident and the space you have available, it may be possible to begin conservation of damaged objects straight away. Priority should be given to objects that have become damp or wet. These must be dried within 48 hours. After this point mould is likely to develop, which will cause substantial and likely irreparable damage.

The exception to this is stone, which needs to be dried in a slow and controlled manner to avoid issues such as rapid salt crystallisation.

10.2 Conservation for loaned objects

If any affected objects are covered under the Government Indemnity Scheme (GIS), you should refer to guidance regarding conservation or restoration in the event of damage:

Unless the Arts Council has first been consulted, conservation or restoration should not be carried out on a damaged object.

The exception to this is where it is manifest that immediate structural, consolidation or other treatment is necessary to prevent further damage or deterioration (by way of example, it might be necessary to repair a tear in a canvas that might continue to widen and undermine the paint surface still further if left untreated).

The borrower should where possible consult the owner (or their agent) before proceeding.

Full guidance for the GIS can be found on the [Arts Council England website](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/supporting-arts-museums-and-libraries/supporting-collections-and-cultural-property/government-indemnity)¹.

¹ <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/supporting-arts-museums-and-libraries/supporting-collections-and-cultural-property/government-indemnity>

10.3 Drying wet objects

If collections have become wet, you should contact an experienced person as soon as possible to assess the items.

Small objects

- If you see signs of corrosion, embrittlement (fracturing), or mould, consult a conservator as soon as possible.
- Remove excess surface water by gently dabbing the object with paper towels or small pieces of blotting paper. Do not wipe or rub objects, and do not use soft tissues or toilet paper.
- Lay it out on blotting paper and allow it to air dry ensuring good air circulation using fans. Hairdryers can also be used on the cold setting. Do not use heat, as this may cause damage through rapid expansion.
- Do not hang fabric items; lay them out flat on blotting paper or clean towels and air dry.

Paintings and painted objects

- Seek advice from a conservator as soon as possible, especially if there is obvious damage.
- Lay paintings flat, with painted side facing upwards and place on blocks to allow air circulation. Ensure weaker areas are supported. Do not touch or dab at the painted surface.
- Be careful of wet frames as gesso can become very soft when wet and gilding can be sticky. If gilding is wet, avoid touching it with hands or equipment.
- Ensure good air circulation and allow to air dry until a conservator can attend. If using fans to increase air circulation, keep on a low setting and do not point directly at objects.

Textiles

- Gently press excess water from textiles with the palm of your hand.
- Place textiles flat onto a clean cloth or polythene sheet. Blot the textile with another clean cloth or paper towel.
- Cover textiles with clean towels or sheets. Allow the textile to fully air dry in a room with a dehumidifier or fan for air circulation.
- Do not hang textiles to dry.

Paper and archives

- Seek advice from a conservator as soon as possible, especially if items are stuck together, a large volume of material has been affected, or mould is present.
- Avoid air drying large or heavily saturated bound volumes, as it is unlikely they will fully dry before mould develops. Items like this should be frozen wherever possible.
- Do not touch surface images. Try to handle from underneath and from the edges. Carry it flat and ensure wet items are well supported.
- If sturdy, books can be stood upright, and blotting paper interleaved every few pages. Do not pull apart pages that are stuck together and do not force bound volumes open further than they naturally or easily go. Upright books should be placed in a wind tunnel to help drying (Figure 50).
- Do not point fans directly at objects as drafts can blow dry objects around. Aim fans into the air to help circulation.
- Robust flat works can be stacked with blotting paper. Blotting paper should be changed periodically. Avoid using weights as this can cause further damage.
- Wet photographs should not be stacked unless interleaved with **Bondina**. If stable enough, wet photographs should be placed face up or hung from drying lines; nothing should touch the photograph's surface.
- Small, light paper items can be clipped onto a drying line, which can help make the most use of space available. Heavily saturated items should not be hung and must be kept flat.

10.4 Freezing wet paper objects

Priority for drying should be given to objects that cannot be frozen, as this will maximise the amount of material you will be able to deal with within 48 hours to prevent mould growth.

Always consult a qualified conservator when deciding which items to dry and which to freeze.

Do not freeze:

Stone

Metal

Ceramics

Glass

Paintings and painted furniture

Framed items

Delicate textiles

Musical instruments

Plastic

Audio-visual media

When freezing items:

- Use sturdy, uniform packing containers. Label each container with the contents and degree of wetness.
- Loosely wrap books with freezer paper and pack one layer deep, spine down. Plastic freezer bags can also be used to separate items. This will prevent dyes bleeding and items sticking together.
- Pack books of similar size in a box to prevent distortion.
- Layer loose documents with freezer paper, stacking no more than 10 layers high. Place stacks flat into suitably sized boxes/crates.
- Freezer temperature should be at least -18°C (this is usually the temperature of a domestic freezer), and it should be large enough to comfortably accommodate all items that require freezing.
- Contact a paper conservator as soon as possible before beginning to defrost any frozen collections.

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Figure 51. Collections objects come in various shapes and sizes. Some require a particular packing approach.

11. Object packing

In a salvage situation, there may not be time to pack objects with the same level of precision that might be expected under ordinary circumstances. If objects are being packed for storage and transport, it should be ensured that they are packed sufficiently to avoid any further damage. Where possible, small items should be packed into boxes, with a box level inventory securely attached to the lid. Larger items should be wrapped and clearly labelled to show what the object is.

11.1 Dry objects

When packing dry objects:

- Ensure objects have been fully documented before packing.
- Line boxes with bubble wrap and cushion with acid-free tissue.
- Ensure all object parts are labelled and packed together.
- Where possible, pack objects in a way to ensure the contents of the box can be easily seen to allow ease of access and inspection.
- Once the box is packed, gently shake it to ensure contents do not move.
- Ensure lid of box is on securely. If wet or windy, wrap boxes with cellophane or cling film.
- Where possible, include a list of box contents in or on the box.
- Roll large textiles on tubes and then wrap in Tyvek to transport.
- Place dry paper objects in **Melinex** and archive boxes.
- Place metals in finds bags, making sure there are ventilation holes in the bag, and store them in Tupperware boxes with silica gel.

11.2 Wet objects

Objects should not be packed wet unless this is completely unavoidable, for example, if a large number of wet objects need to be transported to a suitable drying area.

When packing wet objects:

- Do not pack wet or damp items into boxes with dry objects.
- Do not wrap wet objects in acid-free tissue, as it can become stuck. Instead, use Tyvek and pad with Jiffy foam.
- Clearly label the box to indicate that the contents are wet and should be unpacked as soon as possible for drying.



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Figure 52. Make sure boxes are clearly labelled to ensure equipment can be easily found. © Judith Rowett.

11.3 Equipment needed to set up and run the packing area

Dry objects

You will need:

- Tables
- Acid-free cardboard boxes
- Plastic boxes with secure lids
- Crates or pallets with strapping for larger objects
- Silica gel and humidity strips
- Acid-free tissue
- Finds bags in various sizes
- Rolls of polythene or Tyvek
- Bubble wrap
- Tyvek labels and permanent markers
- Blank box-level inventory sheets
- Masking tape
- Cotton tape and scissors

Wet objects (archival material)

You will need:

- Tables
- Bin bags
- Polythene
- Freezer paper
- Freezer bags
- Blotting paper or unprinted newsprint
- Rolls of Tyvek or **Jiffy foam**
- Sturdy boxes or plastic crates
- Permanent markers
- Blank box-level inventory sheets



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Figure 53. If items need to be moved elsewhere, consideration should be given as to the best method of transporting large numbers of objects off-site.

12. Transporting objects off-site

In the event of a large-scale incident, it may be necessary to transport objects off-site, either to a temporary or long-term storage location or to a conservation studio. Consideration should be given as to the best method of transporting large numbers of objects off-site.

A full inventory of all objects to be removed from site should be completed, before anything is removed, and this inventory process should be repeated at the other end.

12.1 Tips for safely loading objects for transport

Load large items first

As large items are also likely to be heavy, loading these first can help prevent damage to more fragile items. Heavy items should also be distributed evenly across the floor surface of the van, ideally across areas that are most structurally sound. Make sure mirrors and long fragile items are secured along the van wall.

Distribute the load evenly

Always load items in rows from the back to the front of the van space. Where possible, dismantle large items to help lower the centre of gravity of items that are top-heavy. This will also likely make them easier to load and unload. Do not stack objects or boxes too high, and do not exceed the van's load capacity.

Secure objects

Objects may move around during the journey, especially if travelling over rough or uneven terrain, which can lead to damage. It can also be a safety hazard when it comes to unloading a van if items pile up against the door of the van or are stacked precariously. Protect items with moving blankets, use anchoring points within the van and lashing or tensioning straps to tie items down. It is advisable to use two straps to secure items, in case one fails.

12.2 External storage options

Where a relationship exists between your organisation and another nearby museum or gallery, they may agree to store some objects if they are in a stable condition.

Some professional conservation companies have storage facilities available for hire. This may be particularly useful for extremely large objects, or objects that have been water-damaged and require freezing.

Other damaged objects requiring conservation should be sent directly to conservators wherever possible. Consider options for long-term storage if conserved items cannot be immediately returned to their original location. This may include commercial storage or partner organisations with suitable facilities.

If professional storage is unavailable, commercial storage should be sourced. However, it is important that any storage used meets the following requirements:

- The environment should be cool and dry. If there are windows, these should be watertight and lockable.
- It should be as clean as possible and free from pests and mould.
- Ideally it will be climate controlled or at least have a power source that will allow the use of dehumidifiers, if necessary.
- It will be secure, able to be locked, and ideally with 24-hour security, such as CCTV or security personnel.

12.3 Dealing with the transportation of loans

Information on loans should be included in your salvage plan. Considerations for loans have been covered in Part 1, [Section 8.4: Considerations for loaned objects](#). When accepting inwards loans from another institution, discuss your salvage and incident response procedures as part of your loan agreement. The lender may wish to share their own emergency contact details or may be happy to wait and discuss arrangements during work hours.

While it is desirable that loaned objects should be on your priority object list for recovery in the event of an incident, this may not always be possible. If loaned objects are not included on your priority object list, communicate this with the lending institution and have it signed off as part of your loan agreement by the lender and the national body managing the Government Indemnity Scheme.

However, there are other steps you can take to ensure the safety of loaned objects as far as possible, even if they are not priorities for recovery.

Additionally, you can:

- Appoint a person to oversee the movement of all loans throughout the salvage process. This person may also be responsible for keeping lenders and stakeholders updated. For more on this role see Part 1, [Section 4.2: Top tier response: the Control Group](#).
- Track loaned objects throughout the salvage process. You may decide to place restrictions on who can handle loaned items or assign one or two members of staff specifically to recover loaned objects.

External storage for loaned items

It is key to ensure that you consider security and environment when choosing where to temporarily store objects covered under the Government Indemnity Scheme (GIS). If your chosen location cannot meet GIS standards, then the storage location will need to be agreed and signed off. Depending on the value, you may want to relocate material to another location or introduce 24/7 security.



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Figure 54. Managing incidents remotely can be challenging. Consider any specific challenges your team might face and establish ways to address these.

13. Managing an incident remotely

13.1 Consider the challenges

Depending on the nature of your organisation and the location of the sites under your care, it may become necessary to manage an incident remotely. It may be the case that senior management are not available to attend the incident in person, and with the increase in remote working arrangements, it is likely that certain members of staff may not be on site to immediately attend an incident.

Managing incidents remotely can be challenging. Consider any specific challenges your team might face and establish ways to address these. You should undertake the following steps when managing incidents remotely.

13.2 Ensure communication protocols are clear

Establish clear communication channels, such as dedicated call groups, distribution lists, chat groups, or shared online workspaces, to ensure everyone is on the same page. Regular updates help keep everyone informed and reduce confusion.

13.3 Practise transparency

Make sure to share updates with stakeholders to keep them informed. Updating individual stakeholders can take time, but if managed efficiently, good communications can reduce interruptions to the operation, keep repetition to a minimum and help to maintain clear concise messaging.

13.4 Document everything

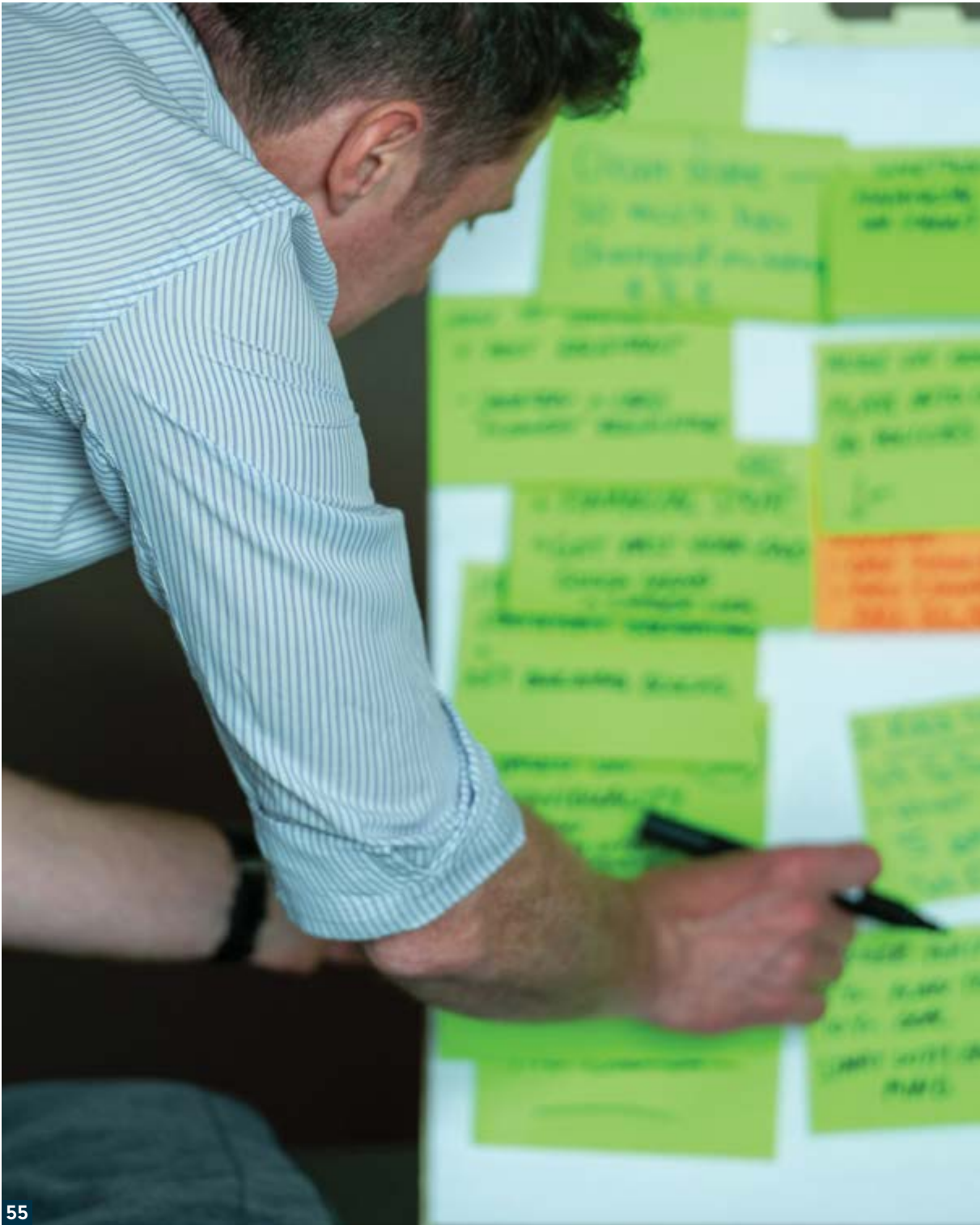
Keep detailed records of incidents, including steps taken and decisions made. This documentation can be invaluable for post-incident reviews and future reference. If appropriate, use a shared live document to ensure everyone has access to the latest information.

13.5 Train your team

Ensure your team is well-trained in incident response procedures and familiar with the tools they will use. Regular training exercises can help keep skills sharp.

13.6 Stay connected

Foster a sense of team cohesion even when working remotely. Regular check-ins and team-building activities can help maintain morale and ensure everyone knows what they need to do in the event of an incident.



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Figure 55. Debrief your team as soon as possible after the incident and include everyone involved in each stage of the process.

14. Closing an incident

14.1 Debriefing the Salvage Team

You should debrief your team as soon as possible after the incident and include everyone involved in each stage of the process. A debrief is designed to look at the incident as a whole, from start to finish. There will be times when the plan does not cover everything, and mistakes can happen. The debrief helps to ensure that these issues are addressed and, if an incident strikes again, both your plan and team remain resilient.

Make sure to set out a dedicated period of time to discuss the incident response and allow everyone the opportunity to feed into discussions. Have a clear agenda and provide this to your team in advance to allow them to gather their thoughts and consider any questions they may have.

It may not be possible to speak to everyone at the same time. In these circumstances, you may need to hold several sessions, or you could send out a feedback survey to gather team members' thoughts.

A debrief should be an open and constructive discussion between everyone involved in the salvage response. It is not about finding fault or assigning blame but finding out what did not go the way you expected, and why.

Remember to discuss what went well too! Celebrate successes and encourage staff to reflect on what they have learnt.

Points for discussion could include:

Referring to the Incident Log, going through each stage of the salvage response and identifying what went well and what could have been improved.

Identifying whether further training is needed.

Does the plan or any documentation need to be revised? Establish a timescale for this.

14.2 Post-incident reporting

Assign a senior member of the team to produce a post-incident report. This may be provided to your insurance company and can also strengthen accountability within your organisation.

The contents of the debrief session will inform your report as to what improvements can be made and lessons learned from the incident. In general, your report should include:

- general overview of the incident, including your Incident Log;
- overview of damage and loss to collections and buildings;
- health and safety issues encountered and how these were managed;
- rundown of staff involved and roles they took on;
- lessons learned – what went well and what could be improved;
- equipment and resources that were used, was anything needed that wasn't available?;
- overall costs of the salvage response – equipment, staff time, hiring of contractors and external resources; and
- recommendations – any changes to the salvage plan, procedures, etc.

Case Study

This is an example of a scenario which could happen at a museum with a small team.



Figure 56. Close up of keys hanging up.

Situation

Following a small flood at a museum, the Salvage Team get together to discuss how they managed the incident.

During discussions, it is raised that a key member of the team with keys to the equipment store was on holiday at the time, meaning that it took longer to find another set of keys to access equipment.

Action

As a result, the team agreed to have an extra set of keys cut and to be kept with the salvage plan. The salvage plan was updated to reflect who could access the equipment store in an emergency.



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Figure 57. Maintaining collections spaces and having robust guidance for managing collections can significantly reduce the likelihood of an incident occurring.

15. Conclusion

15.1 Delivering a high level of care for collections

No matter how well prepared an organisation is, there is no guaranteed way to avoid all risks to collections.

Maintaining collections spaces and having robust guidance for managing collections can significantly reduce the likelihood of an incident occurring. The risk can never be reduced to zero, but it can stop an incident from escalating.

15.2 Creating salvage plans that work for your organisation

The aim of this guide has been to provide general guidance to help any size of organisation create practical salvage plans and feel confident putting them to use. While we have not been able to cover every eventuality or scenario, it is hoped the contents of this guide will prove useful and support staff in making decisions during the planning stages and if they are ever called on to put a plan into action. We see this as a good starting point for creating a salvage plan that works for your organisation.

While it may seem daunting, salvage planning does not need to be a huge undertaking. Using the information in this guide, many aspects of creating a salvage plan can be interwoven with everyday collections management and you will be surprised how much information you already have available.

15.3 Building confidence and resilience

Once a salvage plan has been written, it will provide clarity on areas where staff feel less confident or may benefit from dedicated training.

Training can not only build team resilience, but it can also encourage staff to work together more effectively and promote critical thinking.

This, coupled with a clear, comprehensive, and well-structured salvage plan, will give staff the confidence to approach the challenges of salvage operations.

The aim is to provide a framework to consider processes clearly and avoid making snap decisions under difficult circumstances. This ensures that, no matter what happens, staff have the tools to respond appropriately and with confidence.

Final thoughts

Always hope for the best but plan for the worst.

There is no 'one size fits all' salvage plan that will work for everyone, so make sure to tailor the plan to your organisation's needs.

As a salvage plan is a live document, regular plan updates and staff training are essential to make sure staff are up to date and ready for an incident.

Raise awareness throughout your organisation so everyone knows about the incident procedures and how they may be asked to help.

Make connections with the emergency services and find out what information they will need from you if they are called to an incident.

It does not matter how well you know a site or building, once the lights go out it is difficult to move around safely, so always make sure you have batteries for your torches.

Further guidance related to specific considerations covered within this guide can be found in the bibliography.

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Glossary

Glossary term	Description
Archives	A collection of paper-based materials, such as books, letters and other documents for which an archive, museum or heritage organisation has legal responsibility.
Attendance Log	A log recording who has attended an incident, and when they arrived and left site.
Bondina	A non-woven, chemically inert polyester fabric used to support and protect fragile documents and artworks.
Callout Procedures	Procedures put in place to alert members of the Salvage Team when an incident occurs and their assistance is needed.
Collections Objects	These are objects held in the care of a museum, gallery or heritage organisation for which they have legal responsibility.
Command Post	This is where the Control Group is based and acts as a central hub for managing the incident and overseeing the salvage operation.
Communications Leader	Responsible for coordinating external communications and managing media requests relating to an incident. Reports to the Recovery Manager and the Control Group.
Conservation Group	The group responsible for assessing objects that have been retrieved during a salvage incident and carrying out initial first aid for damaged objects.
Conservation Group Leader	Leads the Conservation Group and reports to the Recovery Manager and Control Group. They oversee the treatment of any damaged objects and manage any external conservators working on site.
Conservation Triage Forms	Simple forms used to record an initial assessment of damage to an object. This helps to identify priorities for treatment.
Control Group	The Control Group will oversee the salvage operation, coordinating team members, delegating tasks, and ensuring safety, security and welfare are followed appropriately.
Cordon	A designated line or barrier which prevents unauthorised people accessing affected areas after an incident.

Glossary term	Description
Correx	A rigid, lightweight and durable fluted polypropylene plastic sheeting, frequently known as corrugated plastic or corriboard.
Documentation Group	The group responsible for ensuring retrieved objects are recorded and that object movement is tracked.
Documentation Group Leader	Leads the Documentation Group and reports to the Recovery Manager and Control Group. They oversee the inventory and documentation of all recovered objects and ensure all priority objects have been retrieved.
Emergency Response Procedures	The plans put in place across an organisation that lays out how they will deal with a range of emergencies, including fire evacuation and terrorist attacks.
Emergency Services	Organisations such as the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and Police Scotland who deal with a wide variety of incidents and safeguard public safety.
Facilitator	Leads the Salvage Support Group and reports to the Recovery Manager and the Control Group. Responsible for coordinating volunteers and ensuring the Salvage Team has access to necessary resources.
Finds Bags	Sealable polythene bags available in a variety of sizes and used to hold small objects or fragments that have broken off to prevent them getting lost.
First on Scene	The first member of the Salvage Team who arrives on site once an incident has been reported. They should evaluate the incident to decide the level of response needed and carry out the initial risk assessment.
First Responder	The person who first discovers and reports an incident. This might be someone who is not a member of Collections staff or the Salvage Team.
Gesso	A primer made of a binder combined with chalk, gypsum or pigment and used to coat surfaces like canvas or wood before painting.
Government Indemnity Scheme (GIS)	An alternative to commercial insurance which allows art and cultural objects to be shown publicly in the UK where the cost of insurance might have been too high otherwise.

Glossary term	Description
Hot Work Permit	A formal, written authorisation and safety document required for tasks that involve generating heat, sparks, or open flames. It ensures a thorough risk assessment has been conducted, all necessary safety controls and fire prevention measures are in place, and trained personnel and emergency procedures are available to prevent fires and protect workers and property.
Hot Work	Any activity that produces a potential ignition source, such as flames, sparks, or heat, creating a risk of fire or explosion. Common examples include welding, cutting, grinding and soldering.
Incident Log	A log recording decisions and actions taken over the course of the incident and salvage process. This should include times and personnel who authorised actions.
Incident Manager	The Incident Manager is responsible for overseeing the entire salvage operation. They make key strategic decisions regarding actions to take and respond to new developments during an ongoing incident.
Incident Response Team	Everyone who is involved in responding to an incident, but is not involved directly with the recovery, documentation, or treatment of objects.
Inventory	A complete list of objects which are being removed from a particular place to ensure everything is accounted for. Each object should be listed with identifying information such as accession number, description and original location.
Jiffy Foam	A non-abrasive, lightweight, moisture-resistant polyethylene foam, often bought in rolls. It is CFC-free and chemically inert.
Keyholder	The designated person in charge of keys needed to access a specific site or area. This could be somebody on staff or may be an external person or party.
Loans Supervisor	Responsible for overseeing the safety of objects on loan from other institutions and communicating with lenders. Reports to the Recovery Manager and the Control Group.
Major Incident	Large-scale incident that poses an immediate risk to the safety of collections. This includes fire, widespread flooding, and major structural collapse.
Melinex	Chemically inert clear plastic sheets used to protect paper-based items such as documents and photographs.

Glossary term	Description
Minor Incident	A small-scale incident that may threaten the safety of collections but will not necessarily require an immediate response. This can include incidents such as small, localised water leaks, petty vandalism, or minor structural damage.
Muster Point	The place where the Salvage Team initially gather to be briefed on the incident and establish next steps.
Object First Aid Cards	Flashcards that give general advice on handling and treating damaged objects.
Organisation(s)	A heritage body with an established remit and purpose. This can include museums, galleries, and volunteer groups.
Plastazote	An inert, lightweight polyethylene foam that is tough, flexible and water-resistant.
Priority Object	An object that is identified as one of the most important or significant objects within the collection. These objects are recovered first during a salvage operation.
Priority Object Card	The information cards put together for each of the priority objects. They will have a picture of the object, dimensions, removal instructions and procedure, equipment needed, and general advice on handling and protecting the object. On the reverse will be plans to show the site location of the object and the best route for removal.
Priority Object List	A list of all the objects within the collection that have been identified as the most important to be recovered first during a salvage incident. The list should include a brief description of the object, identifying numbers, location, dimensions, and, if possible, an image of the object.
Protect in situ Card	Cards put together to give guidance on protecting objects that cannot be immediately moved due to their size, weight, or location.
Recovery Manager	The Recovery Manager oversees the Salvage Team, including the Salvage Group, Documentation Group, and Conservation Group. They are responsible for ensuring that security and health and safety are maintained and assist in obtaining and managing resources.
Safe Area	A section of the site that has been chosen as the place to take objects once they have been removed from their locations.

Glossary term	Description
Salvage Group	The group responsible for retrieving and moving objects affected by an incident.
Salvage Team Groups	Groups who work together and fulfil different roles during a salvage incident.
Salvage Group Leader	Leads the Salvage Group and reports to the Recovery Manager and Control Group. They oversee and advise on the removal of collections from affected areas during the operation.
Salvage Incident	Any incident that could put historic collections at risk of damage or loss. This can include events such as water ingress, fire, building collapse, vandalism, or pest infestations.
Salvage Plan	The plan put in place that lays out how museum and gallery staff will deal with incidents that threaten the safety of historic collections.
Salvage Support Group	Staff and volunteers who are willing to help with the salvage operation, but who may not necessarily have in-depth knowledge of the museum/gallery or its collections.
Salvage Team	Staff members and volunteers who have agreed to respond to incidents that may threaten the safety of historic collections.
Security Leader	Responsible for overseeing the safety of staff and objects on site. Reports to the Recovery Manager and the Control Group.
Spectrum Standard	The UK museum collections management standard for the activities most museums do when managing their collections. Spectrum calls all these activities procedures and gives guidance on best practice for how these should be carried out.
Tyvek	A durable, non-woven synthetic material made from high-density polyethylene (HDPE) fibres, known for its unique combination of properties, such as tear resistance, breathability, water resistance and strength.

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