

Handling Paper Artifacts Preservation Do's and Don'ts

ACCESS	
Don't eat, drink or smoke where collections are stored, used or displayed since this will attract insects and lead to structural loss and staining.	Do keep areas clean to avoid attracting insects and rodents; keep liquids away to prevent spills and stains; keep hands clean to avoid stains.
Don't transport documents rolled under arms or without support as this may damage them.	Do support documents in folders, mats, boxes, etc., and on carts if necessary.
Don't carry more than you can safely manage to avoid accidents or strain on the documents or yourself.	Do get help if more than one person is required to move oversized or heavy material.
Don't work in cramped spaces.	Do dedicate surface space on which to work that is at least twice the size of the largest item, to allow it to be turned over safely.
HANDLING	
Don't handle documents more than necessary since, this can tear and stain them.	Do use duplicates for sorting and selecting, and use originals for evidential value and material science research, etc.
Don't slide documents around on top of each other.	Do slide a support or folder under documents to move or turn them over.
Don't grasp documents tightly by their edges.	Do hold documents lightly by diagonal corners if the corners are strong; move unsupported document by holding the document "catty-cornered."
Don't handle photographic materials with ungloved hands as finger oils can mar and degrade their surface.	Do wear gloves when handling photographic materials.
USE	
Don't store photos or alkaline sensitive materials in buffered paper as this may cause color change.	Do use acid-free paper.
Don't over or under pack containers as this jeopardizes the structures of documents.	Do insert acid-free board supports or wedges (the full size of the documents) to take up excess space in boxes.
Don't use acidic enclosures or acidic containers such as kraft paper envelopes or wooden core solander boxes.	Do use acid-free, high alpha-cellulose enclosures and boxes, either neutral or buffered, as appropriate to the type of document.
ENVIRONMENT	
Don't allow friable materials like pastels to travel, or flaking or fugitive media to be displayed.	Do make facsimilies of sensitive materials, and use the facsimilies for display.
Don't allow documents to be exposed to	Do keep documents from physical and

volatile acids from wooden or freshly painted furniture, or pollution.	chemical contact with volatile materials by using only non-volatile materials, adhesives, cleaners, and furniture.
Don't laminate documents since the heat or solvent used can cause irreparable damage to documents.	Do encapsulate appropriate documents in inert, uncoated polyester film using ultrasonic or heat sealing.
Don't line fragile documents on fabric, since fabric expands and contracts in the opposite manner from documents.	Do schedule conservation treatment for documents which require lining or other types of structural repair.
Don't remove documents designated for cold storage from cold storage more than once a year, since each removal counters the gains made by cold storage (like removing food from a freezer!).	Do keep documents designated for cold storage in cold storage and use reformatted copies for general access

BOOKS

Don't pull a book out by its headcap as this can cause damage.	Do pull a book out by pressing books on either side in or by pushing out from behind.
Don't rest books sideways on their foreedges.	Do rest books that must go sideways on their spines.
Don't photocopy damaged books on regular copy machines.	Do copy damaged books if necessary on customized copy machines and reduce access to the book until it is treated.
Don't leather-dress books.	Do protect leather covers with polyester film book jackets or book bands.
Don't expose documents to unnecessary light, since this can cause fading and/or darkening; Don't allow light to come close to documents since this can cause heat and curling.	Do control light intensity, proximity, and duration; keep documents in the dark or in folders and closed boxes or closed drawers.
Don't place elbows or extraneous materials on top of documents.	Do make sure to have plenty of space to use, examine and rehouse documents.

PROCESSING

Don't use pens in collections as these can make irreversible unwanted stains.	Do use graphite pencils while working in collections.
Don't affix adhesive labels to documents.	Do use a #2 pencil if documents need to be marked for identification in a lower corner or on the reverse.
Don't trim documents or dispose of fragmented pieces.	Do keep pieces together; they can be aligned in approximate place if encapsulated using ultrasonic welding to spot weld polyester film.
Don't use any tape to repair tears and losses, since even "archival quality" tape may have reversibility problems.	Do provide adequate support for brittle or fragile documents, reduce access to them and schedule them for repair using stable materials.
Don't fold documents to fit in folders or boxes.	Do store documents in appropriately sized containers.

HOUSING

<p>Don't use interleaving materials inappropriately: interleaving can cause swelling of bookbindings; glassine is dimensionally unstable and loses strength upon aging; buffered tissues can cause color change in some blue pigments, in cyanotypes and albumen photographs.</p>	<p>Do use neutral tissue slip sheets or inert or uncoated polyester film under window mats for non-friable materials, and neutral or buffered insert paper behind encapsulated acidic documents.</p>
<p>Don't pressure-mount documents for display, or use improper glazing materials such as plexiglass for friable media or glass during traveling shows.</p>	<p>Do use spacers in framing and ultraviolet filtering glazing.</p>
<p>Don't use antistatic sprays on glazing that will come into contact documents since solvents continue to volatilize out.</p>	<p>Do clean glazing with deionized or distilled water and a small amount of alcohol if necessary, and wait 15 minutes until the surface is thoroughly dry.</p>

For more information, please contact [Dianne van der Reyden](#), Senior Paper Conservator, SCMRE.