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## PROTECTING AND PRESERVING YOUR ART AND STUDIO

an

# ARTIST **EMERGENCY** FUND

resource

Visual Arts Nova Scotia established the Artist Emergency Fund (AEF) to assist artists in financial need arising from severe illness, an accident resulting in inability to work or help with studio replacement in case of a disaster, such as fire, where there is no insurance.

Authored by Conservator and Collections Manager Elizabeth Jablonski, Visual Arts Nova Scotia offers the following resource on preparing for and recovering from emergencies that may affect your studio and work as an artist.

## **PROTECTING AND PRESERVING YOUR ART AND STUDIO BEFORE AND AFTER EMERGENCIES AND DISASTERS**

No one thinks that disaster will strike them, until it actually does. Emergencies and disasters take many forms:

- floods from burst pipes and rain storms
- fire and smoke damage
- falling equipment or collapsing furniture
- mold and pest infestations
- vandalism and theft, as a result of opportunity

While you can't control the weather or the actions of others, you can improve and maintain the environment of your studio and protect its contents: art, supplies and equipment. Even a small amount of the proper preparation can improve the outcome of any unexpected event.

The information in this brochure covers only the very basic best practices for artists in preventing and recovering from emergencies and disasters. To find out more detailed information specific to your needs, seek advice from the experts and resources listed below.

### **EMERGENCY! WHAT TO DO DURING AN EMERGENCY AND AFTER A DISASTER: SEVEN STEPS:**

- 1) Contact 911 emergency services and alert others who may be present in the building**
- 2) Secure life, safety and health:**
  - a. make sure the source of the problem is neutralized**
  - b. seek approval from emergency services and engineers before re-entering**
- 3) Contact insurance agent and take pictures**
- 4) Alert list of local experts and volunteers**
- 5) Locate written and pictorial inventory documentation**
- 6) Obtain funding from list of resources**
- 7) Obtain stable and secure storage facilities, supplies and transportation**

The focus of this booklet is about preparing to complete Steps 3 through 7 and save your art and studio contents. Be sure to also read the resources listed at the end for more detailed information.

**PREVENTIVE MEASURES:  
HOW TO PREPARE YOUR STUDIO FOR EMERGENCIES AND DISASTERS:  
FOUR PARTS:**

- **Part 1: Inventory and Document Your Studio Contents**
- **Part 2: Insure Your Art, Building and Livelihood**
- **Part 3: Identify People and Resources Before Disaster Strikes**
- **Part 4: Create a Stable Environment in Your Studio, Office and Storage Areas**

**Part 1: Inventory and Document your Studio Contents:**

- Establish written and pictorial proof of your art, raw materials, supplies and equipment
- Know what you have so that you can insure its replacement value accurately or secure enough funding for recovery
- Know what your overhead costs are, including rent and utilities
- Store this information in areas other than your studio, office and storage areas
  - Photocopy or scan handwritten information
  - Back up computerized information on hard drives, servers or internet (Cloud) storage
  - An off-site location keeps the information safe during any incidents in your work spaces



Basic tool kit for documenting art and property: Clockwise from top left: soft cloth tape measure, digital camera, paper and pencil (or laptop/tablet) and color bar for digital images.

Additional materials (not pictured): camera tripod, lights, easel/copy stand, documentation forms or software

## **Part 2: Insure Your Art, Building and Livelihood:**

- Talk with insurance providers about plans that are specific to artists' studios, offices and art storage areas in the event of floods, fire, earthquakes, vandalism and theft
  - Identify policies that not only cover your art, but also your raw materials, supplies and office equipment, as well as major equipment like printing presses or kilns.
  - Identify a policy for personal injury for you and your assistants and visitors
  - Ask about covering overhead costs during times when you can't work (injury/illness)
- Ask your insurance agent about procedures that can save money on your policy, such as:
  - Installing smoke, fire and flood detectors and alarms
  - Installing security systems
  - Demonstrating best practices in preventive care for art in storage
- If you think your art or major equipment has high monetary value, have it appraised so you can insure it for the proper amount of coverage
  - Remember that not all art has a high monetary value but may have high sentimental value. Sentimental value is not covered by insurance and the loss can be devastating. Therefore, be sure to follow proper preventive care procedures for these items, as well.

## **Part 3: Identify People and Resources Before Disaster Strikes:**

- People:
  - Create an emergency contacts list of the following types of people
    - Keep the list updated annually in your phone, email or social media programs
  - Experts
    - Insurance agent with an emergency hotline
    - Restoration services for your building and non-art items
    - Art conservator for best practices in art recovery, storage and repair
    - Appraisers
    - Mold abatement and pest specialists
    - Check references for all experts before contracting with them
  - Volunteers/Family/Friends:
    - Trusted and level-head individuals to provide moral support:
      - you and your property are most vulnerable during disaster recovery
    - Point-person with organization and "people" skills:
      - Represents your best interests while you deal with the emotional impact of the disaster
      - Coordinates all of the people and organizations helping out
    - Public Relations/Communications person with social media skills:
      - Speaks to public on your behalf via social media and press to solicit help and donations
      - Speed is key: the best time to ask for donations is in the first few days of disaster recovery
      - Manages your time in speaking to public while you are actively involved in the recovery
    - Financial helper:
      - Helps you sort funding requests/grant applications, donations, insurance claims, appraisal values, supply purchases and other costs

- Providers:
  - Provide free labor, shelter, transportation, security, equipment, supplies and food/beverages
- Funding:
  - Funding is needed for: replacement of valuables, repair of damage, expert services, storage facilities, transportation, supplies, furniture, overhead costs, loss of wages
  - Learn how to make an insurance claim with your provider, should you need it
- Storage Facilities and Transportation
  - During and after a disaster, you may need to evacuate your possessions
  - Consider how and where to store your property securely off-site during any building renovations
- Supplies
  - Clean-up from disasters can require basic supplies and furniture such as:
    - generators, HEPA vacuums/filters, portable fans, heaters, dehumidifiers
    - folding tables, drying racks, shelving
    - plastic bags and sheeting, buckets, sponges, gloves, masks
  - Identify sources willing to lend, donate or sell supplies at a discount
    - Volunteers, community centers, arts societies
  - Food and water: refreshments help repay volunteers
    - Remove all food and trash each night to avoid attracting pests and mold



Art drying rack: an open book and a print dry out on the top rack.  
A textile is drying out on the third rack.

#### Part 4. Create a Stable Environment in Your Studio, Office and Storage Areas

- Building Maintenance:
  - Temperature Range: 15-25 Celsius
  - Relative Humidity Range: 40-58%, depending on types of materials
  - Install proper insulation, repair leaks and seal gaps
    - Look at ceilings/floors for staining from previous leaks to find and repair sources
  - Install a programmable thermostat to control conditions and utility costs
  - Use portable humidifiers and dehumidifiers to counter seasonal changes
  - Install ceiling fans or use portable fans to reduce high humidity
  - Store art and materials up off the floor to protect from flooding and pests
  - Cover art on tables and shelves with plastic tents when not working on them, in order to protect them from leaks
  - Display and store art away from exterior walls
- Lights
  - Put shades on windows to block direct sunlight when not in studio
  - Keep light levels low and turned off when not in use
  - Apply filters to lights and windows that block ultraviolet rays (UV)
- Security
  - Secure and alarm doors and windows, including sky lights
  - Know who has keys, access and knowledge of your work hours
  - Maintain a good neighbor network
  - Keep a charged cell phone on you at all times when working alone in your studio
  - Prevent the appearance of opportunity for theft
    - Close and shade windows
    - Display security system signs
    - Lock away small objects of high value
    - Install security cameras



Art objects in storage bins on shelving.  
Please Note: Bin storage may not be appropriate for all types of art materials.  
Seek advice from an expert for your specific materials.

## RESOURCES

### Securing Your Building

- Seek recommendations from your insurance agent or qualified engineers and contractors on building maintenance and repair
- Canadian Conservation Institute (CCI) Notes: Closing a Museum for Winter (this information applies to art storage areas): <http://www.cci-icc.gc.ca/publications/notes/1-3-eng.aspx>

### Storage and Handling of Your Art and Studio Contents:

- Identify the types of materials that make up your art and seek out specific information for them: For example: paintings on canvas, prints/works of art on paper, photographs, sculpture, ceramics, metal, glass, textiles, etc.
- Find a local art conservator to discuss preventive care best practices for your materials:
  - Canadian Association of Professional Conservators: <http://capc-acrp.ca>
  - Conservators-Atlantic: <http://conservatorsatlantic.com>
  - American Institute for Conservation (AIC): <http://www.conservation-us.org/>
  - Art-Care: <http://www.art-care.com/>
  - Contact your local or regional museum
- AIC: How To Care For Your Treasures: [http://www.conservation-us.org/about-conservation/caring-for-your-treasures#.UtVSS\\_Sthrg](http://www.conservation-us.org/about-conservation/caring-for-your-treasures#.UtVSS_Sthrg)

### Preparing for Emergencies and Disasters:

- Studio Protector: The Artist's Guide to Emergencies: <http://www.studioprotector.org/>
- Craft Emergency Relief Fund (funding is for US residents only, but there are useful tips): <http://www.craftemergency.org/>

### What To Do Following An Emergency or Disaster:

- Emergency advice for saving art materials: Canadian Conservation Institute Hotline: 1-866-998-3721 day or night and press 0 for Security: <http://www.cci-icc.gc.ca/ourservices-nosservices/typesservices/emergbro-urgbro-eng.aspx4>
- CCI: Mould Outbreak – An Immediate Response: <http://www.cci-icc.gc.ca/caringfor-prendresoindes/articles/mould-moisissures/index-eng.aspx>
- AIC: Emergency!, if you're first....: <http://www.conservation-us.org/publications-resources/disaster-response-recovery/guides-and-information/if-you're-first#.UtVUZvSthrh>
- AIC: Tips for the Care of Water-damaged Family Heirlooms and Other Valuables: <http://www.conservation-us.org/publications-resources/disaster-response-recovery/guides-and-information/water-damage-tips#.UtVUjvSthrh>
- AIC: Salvaging Water-damaged Textiles: <http://www.conservation-us.org/publications-resources/disaster-response-recovery/guides-and-information/salvaging-water-damaged-textiles#.UtHGnvSthrg>
- AIC: Saving Photographs After the Flood: <http://www.conservation-us.org/publications-resources/disaster-response-recovery/guides-and-information/saving-photographs#.UtHGyfSthrg>

**Funding To Apply For:**

- VANS Artist Emergency Fund
- Adolph and Esther Gottlieb Foundation, Artists' Emergency Grants: <http://gottliebfoundation.org/>
- The Pollock-Krasner Foundation, Inc., Artists' Emergency Grants: <http://www.pkf.org>
- Please Note: The above funds and foundations accept Canadian applicants. There are a number of other foundations in the US however, they only accept US residents.

**Supplies and Furniture Sources:**

- Local hardware and janitorial supply stores
  - generators, HEPA vacuums/filters, portable fans, heaters, dehumidifiers
  - folding tables, shelving
  - plastic bags and sheeting, buckets, sponges, gloves, masks
  - boards, bins, baskets, carts for transporting objects
- Local art and craft supply stores
  - Drying racks
- Archival Suppliers in Canada:
  - Carr-McLean, Archival Catalogue: <http://www.carrmclean.ca/>
  - Sabic Polymer Shapes: <http://www.sabicpolymershapes.com>
    - Coroplast® Archival fluted plastic board in white: <http://www.coroplast.com/>
- Archival suppliers in the US:
  - Gaylord: <http://www.gaylord.com>
  - Hollinger Metal Edge: <http://www.hollingermetaledge.com/>
  - Talas: <http://talasonline.com/>
  - University Products: <http://www.universityproducts.com/>