Response and Recovery of Fine-Art Inkjet Prints during Water Emergencies

Below are step-by-step directions for responding to water emergencies affecting inkjet prints that will guide responders from the moment of access to the wetted collection to fully-dried prints.

1 **Remove non-wetted inkjet prints from the affected area first**. This is especially important if the environment has a relative humidity above 65%.

2 **Remove prints from water**. Wet prints are heavier and more fragile putting them at greater risk of tears, abrasions, or smearing of colorants. Support prints from underneath with a broad surface slightly wider than both the length and width of the prints.

3 **Remove wet prints from enclosures**. Do not allow them to dry inside enclosures. If any prints are to be frozen as part of the salvage process, they may not need to be removed from individual enclosures (see Freezing below).

4 **Gently bathe dirty or salty inkjet prints in tap water to remove particulate matter and partially desalinate**. This should be brief. Prolonged washing will not improve outcomes and may cause further damage. If particulates do not immediately release from the print's surface, a soft brush can be used to gently dislodge them while the print remains immersed; however, be careful not to damage the print surface.

5 **Drain excess water by slightly tilting the print and allowing it to run off**. Do not wipe or blot water from the surface of inkjet prints as that can smear colorants or abrade delicate surface coatings. To complete drying, however, inkjet prints should be kept completely horizontal as colorants may run over time.

6 **Air-dry inkjet prints individually, horizontally, and face up on fiberglass screens or blotter paper**. Use the chart to the right to predict the time to dry. Note: very large prints may take additional time.

RH	Days to Dry
20%	1
30%	1
40%	2
50%	2
60%	3+

7 **Freeze prints if there is not enough space or staff available to air-dry them immediately**. Freezing is not as safe as air-drying and additional damage may occur; however, it will prevent mold growth, which is a more serious problem. Interleave small numbers of prints with wax paper and place in sealable polypropylene or polyethylene bags. (Note that inkjet prints individually housed in sleeves, envelopes or folders can be frozen in those enclosures to save time and minimize handling). Freezers should not be densely packed, as that will slow freezing. Prioritize large prints for air-drying.

8 **Thaw and dry frozen inkjet prints**. Only work on as many prints as can be addressed within a workday and are equal to or less than the area of surfaces available to individually and horizontally air-dry them. Do not allow prints to thaw inside the sealed bags. Remove and begin to separate as soon as thawing allows. The center of the stack will thaw slower than the edges, and larger prints will take longer to thaw than smaller prints. Use the time-to-air-dry chart after the prints have reached room temperature.

Freeze-drying is not recommended for fine-art inkjet prints.

Additional information is available at: http://dp3project.org/museumflood

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