

HARD-COPY INFORMATION DISASTER RECOVERY

Our information is a valuable business asset and has an ongoing importance to the University in terms of its operations, legislative obligations and for historical purposes. This advice sheet is provided to assist with identifying possible risks to hard-copy information and to aid in the recovery process should an incident occur.

All staff have a responsibility to be aware of the need to protect and preserve University information and to monitor for situations that could be hazardous.

How can be done to prevent a disaster?

Damage and loss of information due to disasters can be minimised or prevented by identifying hazards and assessing possible risks. This can be done by:

CHECKING THE PHYSICAL LOCATION AND ENVIRONMENT OF RECORD STORAGE AREAS:

• Where are records stored and kept?	• Can the area be securely locked?
• Are the doors fire-rated?	• Are there overhead pipes which may leak?
• What kind of fire suppression is in place? If water based, are they directly overhead?	• Are flammable chemicals or other hazardous materials stored nearby?
• Are nearby gutters and drains unblocked and cleared regularly?	• Is there any evidence of mould or dampness in the area?
• Is there any evidence of pest infestation?	• Is the area clean and free of clutter?
• Are temperature and humidity levels constant or widely fluctuating?	• Is there prolonged sunlight in the storage area?

CHECKING ACCESS AND SECURITY:

• Are staff familiar with how to handle and store paper and electronic records?	• Who has access to electronic information?
• Who has access to the area?	• Can records be locked away when the area is unattended?
• Are access routes to storage areas clear?	• Who has access to the building and at what times?

What action can be taken?

• Organise the prompt repair of leaks, where necessary.	• Arrange for gutters to be cleared of debris on a regular basis.
• Arrange for preventative pest treatments (<i>check which chemicals are used, as some can damage paper records and be toxic to people</i>).	• Keep access to storage areas clear by removing obstacles and rubbish.
• In areas where records are stored, consider alternative fire suppression options rather than water-based suppression.	• For open shelf systems, raise the bottom shelf above potential flood levels or alternatively don't use the bottom shelf at all.
• For storage units used to house physical information, ensure the top shelf has a cover to prevent water pouring onto records in the event of a disaster.	• Use proper electrical hardware, don't piggy-back plugs, or use heaters with exposed elements or drape electrical cords across walkways.
• Remove any flammable chemicals from the area.	• Increase security by locking rooms or filing cabinets when unattended.
• Keep blinds lowered in storage areas that have windows which let in sunlight.	• Limit area access to authorised personnel only.

What changes can be implemented to minimise risks?

Sometimes you may have to make changes to the storage situation if a problem cannot be fixed. These could include:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moving records to a better location. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changing the storage system e.g. a locked cupboard if there is no other security.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Storing records away from sunlight. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place dehumidifiers in very humid areas.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place folders into archive boxes to eliminate dust & light, and slow the effect of water or smoke in the event of a fire. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arranging for air conditioning installation or maintenance to regulate temperature.

What records should be prioritised for protection from risk?

It goes without saying that some records are more valuable than others. Without certain information a business and/or area would not be able to function properly, if at all. Records that are critical for business continuity are known as 'Vital Records'. The following recommendations are advisable when storing your areas vital records:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Label vital records so that they can be easily identified and removed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep all vital records together in case they have to be moved out of the building or office.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain a file register and make it available to all relevant staff in case the person managing the information is unavailable when a disaster occurs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure that all relevant staff have a copy of your area's Business Continuity Plan and that a spare copy is stored offsite, so that it is available if access to the building is not possible.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure copies or back-ups are kept at a different location, and always keep file registers up to date. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare a disaster recovery supplies bin.

What is a Business Continuity Plan?

A Business Continuity Plan (*BCP*) is designed to assist with the recovery of business in the event of a disaster, and to ensure that assets (*human, information and property*) are protected. The ongoing continuity of Curtin's critical services is paramount to enable the University to meet its legislative obligations.

A well thought out BCP should include a list of your area's electronic and hard-copy vital records, and a building floor plan identifying the location of these records. Your area's 'Business Continuity Coordinator' is responsible for managing your plan.

What is a Disaster Recovery Supplies Bin?

A disaster recovery supplies bin should contain products for use in the event of 'small' localised disasters, such as leaks or dust. It should be mobile for ease of access, and should include the following items:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper towels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dusters.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Garbage bags. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plastic sheeting.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mops and sponges. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Packing tape.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Felt tip pens. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protective gloves.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buckets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note pad.

Need further assistance?

Please do not hesitate to contact us via phone on 9266 7050, or by email at: rim@curtin.edu.au, should you require additional assistance. For information management advice of a general nature, you may wish to visit our website at: rim.curtin.edu.au.

This advice sheet is made under and supports the [Information Management Policy](#) and associated [Procedures](#).