



Preservation Services Leaflet

1438 West Peachtree Street, Suite 200
Atlanta, GA 30309
Phone: 404-892-0943
Fax: 404-892-7879
www.lyrasis.org

Disaster Prevention and Protection Checklist

The inspection checklist provided on the following seven pages is designed to be used as part of an institutional disaster preparedness program. Through the periodic inspections and information-gathering activities outlined here, staff can reduce an institution's vulnerability to disaster. Some of this information may be gathered in regular tours of the building, while other elements can be ascertained in conversations with others in the organization.

The information gathered is of use in two primary ways. First, some conditions will require repair, replacement, or other maintenance activity. For example, if drains are not flowing freely from the roof, a simple cleaning will remedy that condition. Or if fire extinguishers are missing from a critical area, they may be purchased and installed. Second, staff will identify some conditions that are not easily remediable. The existence of such conditions will alert the institution to vulnerabilities that must be considered in the institution's disaster plan. For example, if there is no automatic fire suppression capability, it may not be immediately installed. But this vulnerability should signal the disaster preparedness team to plan carefully for other strategies that will reduce the risk of fire.

In actual use, an institution may create its own checklists based on the frequency with which each item needs to be checked. Some will need attention only once or every few years (e.g., identifying the type of roof on the structure). Others will require annual or semi-annual inspections, as is the case with furnace and boiler inspections. Others will merit monthly or quarterly attention, such as fire extinguisher inspections and examination of the plumbing.

Many of the inspections outlined here are likely to be the duty of personnel responsible for facilities maintenance. In those cases, the repository staff need only (a) develop mechanisms for learning of remedial actions that are needed and (b) verify that the inspections are done as scheduled. Those areas not included in inspections by facilities staff should be assigned to staff in the library/archives. One individual should keep copies of the completed checklists and track progress in completing repairs and other actions noted on the forms; this may be done by the administrator responsible for the building or by the chair of the disaster preparedness committee.

Most librarians and archivists require some education in order to carry out a disaster preparedness program. A bibliography of readings (available from LYRASIS Preservation Services) will provide a good starting point. Training programs on disaster preparedness are offered by LYRASIS and other organizations throughout the country. Contact the Preservation staff at the above address for further information.

Area/Item to be inspected	Yes/ No	Action Required
Outdoor hazards		
Railings, benches, planters, light/flag poles well anchored?		
Overhanging trees/branches trimmed?		
2. Building:		
No sign of cracks/seepage visible in exterior or interior walls?		
Compliance with seismic, fire, electrical, and other codes?		
Roof		
Is roof flat or sloped?		
Roof covering sound? No buckling/bubbles, leaks, cracks, standing water?		
Drainage inspected and cleaned regularly?		
Flashing/caulking intact?		
Equipment on roof prohibited? or (if present) properly anchored?		
Drainage: (eaves, gutters, downspouts, scuppers, drains, interior columns)		
Connected into sewer system? Water directed away from building footings?		
Draining freely?		
Good drainage around doors?		
Windows and skylights		

Caulking/sealants sound?		
Trees/limbs trimmed away?		
Fire safety		
Fire-resistant structure?		
Concrete flooring, with no air passages between floors?		
Concealed spaces (e.g., false ceilings) identified?		
Fire detection in all concealed spaces?		
Stairways and pipe shafts enclosed?		
Electrical wiring in good condition?		
Do staff have keys to mechanical rooms and janitorial closets?		
Regular Fire Marshall visits?		
Detection systems: - appropriate type(s) present?		
- wired to 24-hour monitoring station?		
- tested regularly?		
Appropriate extinguishers present? Inspected appropriately and on schedule?		
Automatic suppression system (i.e., sprinklers, Halon) present and operating?		
Staff trained in: - sounding alarms?		
- interpreting annunciator panels (if present)?		

- notifying Fire Dept. and others as called for?		
- using extinguishers?		
- turning off power, HVAC, sprinklers, gas main?		
- closing fire doors?		
- overseeing evacuation?		

Heating, ventilation, and air- conditioning (HVAC) system

Automatic shut-off capacity in event of fire?		
Furnace/boiler inspected each fall?		
Air conditioning: - no leaks? - no mold present?		
- effective drainage from condensation-collecting pans?		
- dehumidification capacity?		
- capable of operating on exhaust to reduce smoke?		

Collection Storage Areas

Shelves well braced?		
No water sources located above collections?		
Books shelved snugly?		
Shelving 4-6" off floor?		
"Canopies" atop shelving units?		

No valuable materials in basement?		
Exits unobstructed?		
Important collections away from windows?		
Protection from water damage		
Pipes and plumbing well supported?		
No pipe/plumbing leaks?		
Water detectors present?		
Sump pumps and back-ups present?		
Appropriate dehumidifiers available?		
No leakage/seepage through walls?		
Valuable materials stored above ground level?		
Valuable and fragile media stored in protective enclosures?		
Do staff know location of water main and have appropriate tools (if needed) for shut-off?		
Security		
Building exterior well lighted?		
Locks/alarms on all windows and doors?		
Intrusion detectors/alarms present and monitored 24 hours?		
Effective closing procedures to ensure building is vacant?		

Housekeeping		
Cleaning supplies and other flammables stored safely?		
Trash removed nightly?		
Staff room or other areas where food is consumed cleaned regularly?		
Smoking prohibited?		
Food and drink kept away from valuable collections?		
Pest management strategies in place and effective?		
Insurance		
Policy up to date?		
"Acts of God" covered?		
Replacement costs specified as needed?		
Staff aware of records required for claim, and those records maintained safely?		
Duplicate shelflist, catalog, inventory, and/or back-up data tapes for entire collection?		
Construction projects		
Responsibility for fire safety precautions clearly specified in contract?		
Fire guards used in all cutting/welding operations?		
Debris removed nightly?		
Fire-resistant partitions used?		
Extra fire extinguishers on hand?		