



# **Sustainable Emergency Kits:**

## *An Addendum to the Emergency Supply Program Development Manual*

The ARCS Emergency Sub-Committee recognizes the negative impact of climate change on cultural institutions. In light of this, we strive to provide sustainable solutions to our membership so that members can make eco-friendly decisions whenever possible.

This document outlines the potential steps for creating a sustainable emergency kit. It is designed to be used and adapted for all cultural property institutions of any size. The recommendations stated here are not intended to be exhaustive, but emphasise the role of the Collections Specialist/Registrar while providing a general sense of the necessary processes. It is important to note that many of the supplies contained within an emergency kit can serve multiple purposes. For example, buckets may be used for catching dripping water and for rinsing, or supplies may also be dried, washed and reused to ensure a reusable resource during an emergency.

This information was compiled by the Association of Registrars and Collections Specialist (ARCS) Emergency Sub-Committee to act as a resource for those seeking to implement sustainable solutions within their emergency planning. It is meant to act as an addendum to the institutions' [Emergency Supply Program Development Manual](#) to plan for the unexpected in the event of an emergency or disaster.

### *Suggestions for Sustainable Emergency Supplies*

Custom and thoughtfully compiled kits not only allow for flexibility during stabilization and response, but are also the most cost effective. When prepared in advance it is possible to source the most sustainable solutions, including items that are reusable, biodegradable or compostable, and/or have been purchased second hand or thrifted. It is also important to remember that many items can be produced from recycled materials (e.g., high-vis vests or

hardhats) and when compiled in advance, a pre-approved list of vendors can be vetted for sustainability commitments and practices.<sup>1</sup>

If, during the isolation and sanitizing process, evidence of pests are uncovered, then refer to the ARCS' resource, [A Path Forward from Discovery: Emergency Pest Control Measures](#) to ensure that the amount of isolation time covers the time needed for adults to hatch.

### Suggested Supplies

The following is an amended list of all material that has been tested and proven successful, reusable, and multifunctional during past emergency responses at cultural institutions. Please select your supplies based on the criteria reflective of your institution and collection.

Category	Supply	Purpose	Sustainable Option
Bins/Containers	Rubbermaid 50 gal Brute Rollout Container with lid, on wheels	Storage for emergency supplies and a trash can during salvage	Reusable; can be acquired second hand
	160 L trash can with lid, on wheels	Storage for emergency supplies and a trash can during salvage	Reusable; can be acquired second hand
	Plastic storage containers, with cover	Storage for emergency supplies and carrying container for objects during salvage	Reusable; can be acquired second hand
	Large metal cabinets, on wheels	Storage for emergency supplies and transport container for objects during salvage	Reusable; can be acquired second hand
Safety	First Aid Kit	For minor injuries (some institutions require that kits NOT include pain killers)	
	Rubber boots, non-skid	Protect feet/shoes from water	Reusable; can be acquired second hand
	Work gloves	Protect hands from debris and other sharp objects	Reuseable

<sup>1</sup> Sanitization and isolation of recycled materials to be used within the collection and/or emergency kit is an important part of developing an emergency kit. For details regarding proper isolation of recycled materials see Canadian Conservation Institute *Preventing Infestations: Control Strategies and Detection Methods*, Notes 3/1.

	Hard hats	Protect heads from falling debris in unstable structures	Reuseable; can be made from recycled materials
	Safety Glasses	Two kinds: splash and impact glasses, depending if protecting from water or sharp objects	Reuseable
	Ear plugs	Protect against hearing loss due to loud noises	Reuseable <i>(single user only)</i>
	Safety shoes	Protect feet from injuries or reduce severity of injuries	Reuseable; can be acquired second hand
	Dust masks. N95 rating	Mitigates the possibility of inhaling airborne toxins, which can lead to respiratory problems	
	Safety vest, with pockets	Alerts others to an individual's presence in hazardous areas	Reuseable; can be made from recycled materials
	Aprons/body suits (plastic or Tyvek)	Protect skin and clothing from exposure to harmful toxins	Reuseable
	Nitrile coated work gloves <sup>2</sup>	Keeps contaminated objects or water from coming into contact with skin	Reuseable
	Traffic cones (collapsible)	Increases visibility to work area for extra protection	Reuseable
	Yellow caution tape	Increases visibility to work area for extra protection	Reuseable
Documentation	Notepads	Documenting object tracking and salvage operations	Can be compiled from scrap paper
	Clipboards	Firm writing surface for documentation needs	Reusable; can be acquired second hand
	Waterproof paper	Documentation in wet weather	
	Pencils in Pack, sharpened	Documenting tracking information or documenting salvage operations	
	Permanent markers in pack	Making notes in wet weather or on plastic sheeting/bags	

<sup>2</sup> Note: glove recycling programs are also available for eligible institutions, such as the *Kimtech Nitrile Glove Recycling Programmes*: <https://www.terracycle.com/en-GB/brigades/gloves>

	Camera	Documenting damage	Reuseable; rechargeable batteries; can be acquired second hand. <i>Note: can also use a camera in a cell phone.</i>
	Tablet, iPad, etc.	Documenting damage	Reuseable; can be acquired second hand.
	Tags (Tyvek or regular)	Labelling artifacts as needed	
	Red Tags	Warning tags for contaminated objects	
Salvaging & Drying	Roll plastic sheeting (6 mil)	Protection from water leak; wrapping for freezing. Can be cleaned and reused.	Reusable
	Paper towels (with no dyes)	Blotting dry; layering or padding	
	plastic bags (large and small)	Associating small pieces; preparing for freezing	
	Water dam (large and small)	Slowing the flow of water or other chemical liquids	<b>May</b> be reusable depending on materials spilled.
	Absorption pads	Absorbing water or chemical liquids in small spill	<b>May</b> be reusable depending on materials spilled.
	Sponges, large	Blotting and absorbing water; propping objects and artwork	Recommend sponges made from cellulose and other sustainable materials
	HEPA Vacuum	Vacuuming particles and mold	Reuseable
	Mesh Screen (porch screen)	Removing objects from water; creating drying hammocks; Protection layer during vacuuming	Reuseable; can be acquired second hand
	Plastic wrap	Secure packing	

	Paint brushes	Removing debris. Can be cleaned and reused.	Reuseable
	Spray bottle	Cleaning off hard to remove debris	Reuseable
	Soot sponges	Removing soot	
	Vinyl eraser	Removing discoloration (best for recovery time, not salvage)	Reuseable
	Cosmetic sponges	Removing soot or discoloration..	Recommend acquiring off-cuts from manufacturer
	<del>Cotton swabs</del>	<del>Cleaning contamination or debris; spot testing water solubility</del>	
	Towels (with no dyes)	Blotting water; padding.	Reuseable; can be acquired second hand.
	<del>Gallon(s) of water (distilled preferred)</del>	<del>Rinsing artifacts</del>	
	Micro-Fiber rag	Cleaning artifacts (do not use on ones with loose elements)	Reuseable
	Paint brush roller	To push water out of textiles	Reuseable
	Clothes pin/hangers	Hanging textiles for drying; hanging pictures and negatives for drying	Reuseable; can be acquired second hand
	Cheese cloth	To prevent dye transfer when drying textiles	Reuseable; biodegradable materials (cotton)
	Pipe insulation	Shaping textiles; padding clotheslines and fences; transporting textiles	Reusable; recommend acquiring off-cuts from manufacturer
	PVC piping	Transporting heavy, rolled textiles	Reuseable; can be acquired second hand
	Bedsheets	Carrying flat textiles; drying; padding	Reuseable; can be acquired second hand
	<del>Blue painters tape (exterior)</del>	<del>Securing freezer paper or plastic sheeting for freezer prep</del>	
	Freezer paper	Wrapping objects to be frozen	

	Aluminium tray(s)	Rinsing small artifacts	Reuseable; can be acquired second hand
	Interleaving/interfacing material	Placing between pages in books; placing between artifacts; layering between pages for drying	Biodegradable materials (cotton)
	Tarpaulins (tarps)	Work sites; water prevention;	Reuseable
	Blotter	Placing between pages in books; placing between artifacts; layering between pages for drying	Biodegradable materials (cotton)
	Remay Spunbound Polyester	Retrieving objects out of water, barrier for drying, cradle for handling wet paper or photos	Reuseable
Packing/Shipping	Twill tape	Securing objects in wrapping for shipping	Reuseable; biodegradable materials (cotton)
	Milk crate (regular or collapsible)	Securing artifacts for movement, can handle weight of wet artifacts	Reuseable; can be acquired second hand
	Cart or dolly	Transporting artifacts	Reuseable; can be acquired second hand
	Newsprint	Packing padding; shaping drying object	
	Tyvek sheeting	Wrapping objects for protection from scratching and moisture	Reuseable
	Teflon Relic Wrap	Securing objects for transport	
	Plastic wrap	Consolidates objects inside packaging material when there is not tape, plus protects from rain	
	Volara or ethafoam	Padding for transport	Reuseable
	Board (coroplast)	To stabilize objects for transport.	Reusable
Utility Tools	Plastic Bins or Tote Boxes	Boxes for transporting material from one location to another.	Reusable; can be acquired second hand
	Dust pan	Removing debris	Reuseable; can be acquired second hand

	Extension Cord	Running tools, electronics, vacuums, dehumidifiers, etc	Reuseable; can be acquired second hand
	Surge Protector	Running multiple tools, electronics, vacuums, dehumidifiers, etc	Reuseable; can be acquired second hand
	Prybar (large)	Prying open cabinets and drawers	Reuseable; can be acquired second hand
	Multi-Purpose spray cleaner	Cleaning up mold (non-artifacts)	Reuseable; recommend eco-friendly cleaning products
	<del>Large Trash bags</del>	<del>Trash and debris removal</del>	
	5-gallon buckets	Catching leaks; hauling debris; moving artifacts	Reuseable; can be acquired second hand
	Flashlights (with extra batteries)	For additional, mobile light	Hand-crank or rechargeable batteries; can be acquired second hand
	<del>Duct tape</del>	<del>Stabilization</del>	
	<del>Orange flagging tape</del>	<del>Marking hazards, setting grids</del>	
	Headlamp (with extra batteries)	For additional hands-free light	Rechargeable batteries or solar chargeable; can be acquired second hand
	Solar battery pack	Power source for flashlight, cell phones, etc.	Reuseable
	Calulator	Finance and object calculations	Reuseable
	Magnifying lenses	Condition assessments	Reuseable
	Utility knife	Opening boxes or security devices	Reuseable
Scissors	Opening boxes, cutting twine, providing access	Reuseable; can be acquired second hand	

	Doorstops	Keeping doors open for improved access	Reuseable; can be acquired second hand
	Work broom	Removing/cleaning debris	Reuseable; can be acquired second hand
	Floor squeegee	Removing water from floors	Reuseable; can be acquired second hand
	Wooden stakes	Setting grids; marking locations	Reuseable; biodegradable material
	Twine	Setting grids; securing artifacts; making clothes lines	Biodegradable materials (cotton, core, jute)
	Moisture meter	Determine how much moisture has been removed or dried for mold prevention	Reuseable
	Security Sealing tape	Protects against theft	