



# Conserve O Gram

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## Salvage At A Glance Part V: Textiles

Textiles can be quickly damaged by dirty floodwaters. Those with bleeding dyes need to be treated immediately by a conservator. Textiles can increase substantially in weight when they are waterlogged, and are easily torn. Support wet textiles when they are being moved with a solid support or stretched canvas.

Begin air drying textiles as soon as possible. Rinse dye-fast textiles in clean water to remove as much dirt and debris as possible. Blot with clean, lint-free towels. Disposable baby diapers are very useful for removing large quantities of water quickly.

Proper drying techniques will reduce permanent staining. Dry textiles indoors with the lights on to inhibit mold growth. Lay flat

textiles out on polyethylene sheet-covered work surfaces so that the moisture will have to evaporate in one direction. Cover the textiles with clean toweling or sheets, and gently press the covers onto the textiles to make good contact. As the textiles dry, the water will wick into the cover cloth, depositing soils there instead of in the textile. Do not move the cover cloth until the textile is completely dry.

Textiles subject to the provisions of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) must be given special consideration when handling, packing and drying in emergency situations. Parks with Native American collections should consult with the appropriate tribes when devising an emergency plan for culturally sensitive items.

<i>Material</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Handling Precautions</i>	<i>Packing Method</i>	<i>Drying Method</i>
<b>Small Flat Textiles</b>	Treat within 48 hours. Bleeding dyes should be treated immediately by a conservator.	Gently press water out with palm or blot with lint-free towels. Do not wring or twist.	Separate with freezer or wax paper and box in small groups.	Air dry. Freeze items that cannot be dried within 48 hours and consult a conservator.
<b>Large Flat Textiles</b>	Treat within 48 hours. Bleeding dyes should be treated immediately by a conservator.	Gently press water out with palm or blot with lint-free towels. Do not wring or twist.	Keep rolled on tubes if possible. Be careful of weakened tubes.	Air dry. Freeze items that cannot be dried within 48 hours and consult a conservator.

<i>Material</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Handling Precautions</i>	<i>Packing Method</i>	<i>Drying Method</i>
<b>Embroidered or Multi-Layered Flat Textiles (Quilts)</b>	Treat within 48 hours. Bleeding dyes should be treated immediately by a conservator.	Gently press water out with palm or blot with lint-free towels. Do not wring or twist.	Keep rolled on tubes if possible. Be careful of weakened tubes.	Air dry. Freeze items that cannot be dried within 48 hours and consult a conservator.
<b>Painted or Stenciled Fabrics</b>	Treat within 48 hours.	Do not blot painted surfaces.	Separate with freezer or wax paper to prevent staining between items.	Air dry. Do Not Freeze.
<b>Framed Needlework and Silk Pictures</b>	Treat within 48 hours.	Blot gently. Remove from frame.	Interleave freezer paper and cardboard to provide support.	Air dry. Freeze items that cannot be dried within 48 hours and consult a conservator.
<b>Beadwork</b>	Treat within 48 hours.	Blot gently. Minimize movement. Provide support.	Separate with freezer or wax paper to prevent staining between items.	Air dry. Do Not Freeze.
<b>Fragile Garments (Silk Dresses)</b>	Treat within 48 hours.	Avoid handling if possible. Be aware of metal closures etc. that can tear fabric.	Separate with freezer or wax paper to prevent staining between items.	Air dry. Freeze items that cannot be dried within 48 hours and consult a conservator.
<b>Sturdy Garments (Wool Uniforms)</b>	Treat within 48 hours.	Blot gently.	Separate with freezer or wax paper to prevent staining between items.	Air dry. Freeze items that cannot be dried within 48 hours and consult a conservator.

<i>Material</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Handling Precautions</i>	<i>Packing Method</i>	<i>Drying Method</i>
<b>Tapestries</b>	Treat within 48 hours.	Blot gently. Provide support when moving.	Keep rolled on tubes if possible. Be careful of weakened tubes.	Air dry.

### **Costume Accessories**

<b>Fans and Parasols</b>	Begin drying within 48 hours to prevent mold growth.	Support if movement is required. Do not open when wet.	Wrap in freezer or wax paper. Do not layer, pack items side by side.	Air dry.
<b>Hats, Shoes, and Gloves</b>	Begin drying within 48 hours to prevent mold growth.	Gently support with absorbant material. Do not reshape hats while wet.	Wrap in freezer or wax paper for textiles or plastic sheeting for leather items. Do not layer uneven shapes.	Air dry. As hats dry they can be gently reshaped and padded with acid-free tissue or polyester batting.

## References

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Upton, M.S. and C. Pearson. "Emergency Treatment of Materials." In *Care of Collections*, edited by Simon Knell, 262-275. London: Routledge, 1994.

Minnesota Historical Society. "Salvage Procedure for Water Damaged Collections: Textiles, Costume Accessories." < [http://www.mnhs.org/preserve/conservation/reports/textiles\\_costumes.pdf](http://www.mnhs.org/preserve/conservation/reports/textiles_costumes.pdf) >.

## World Wide Web Resources

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). "Salvaging Water Damaged Textiles." < <http://www.fema.gov/rrr/salvage.shtm> >.

Francis, Kathy. "Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Recovery: Special Concerns for Museum Textile Collections." < [http://www.neirls.org/flood\\_recovery/fed\\_files.html](http://www.neirls.org/flood_recovery/fed_files.html) >.

Kite, Marion. "Conservation of Costume Accessories." < <http://www.resource.gov.uk/information/advice/conserv05.asp> >.

Minnesota Historical Society. "Salvage Procedure for Water Damaged Collections: Textiles and Clothing." < [http://www.mnhs.org/preserve/conservation/reports/textiles\\_clothing.pdf](http://www.mnhs.org/preserve/conservation/reports/textiles_clothing.pdf) >.

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