



**ASSOCIATION *for*
MANITOBA ARCHIVES**

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PRESERVATION POLICY GUIDE

No one preservation policy will fit all institutions as they vary in size, record types, staffing levels and funding. However, certain fundamental elements provide the foundation to a successful preservation policy.

A preservation policy is generally composed of the following elements:

- Mandate/Mission Statement – the preservation policy must work within the provisions of the institution's mandate/mission statement
- Purpose – generally, the purpose of most archival collections is to provide access to, and preservation of, the records
- Standards/Commitments – outlines what the policy is actually committing the institution to do
- Role and responsibility – identifies which person(s) within the institution is responsible for implementing the policy and procedures. In smaller institutions one person will be responsible for many functions including preservation.
- Definition of terms – defines any preservation-specific terminology
- Procedures – outlines the step-by-step approach to carrying out the policy, e.g. a care and handling policy

A successful preservation policy should:

- Outline the institution's preservation aim and objectives to the governing board, staff, volunteers, and donors
- Provide staff/volunteers with directions and means to achieving the policy standards/guidelines
- Provide a gauge by which the institution can measure its performance against other like institutions
- Provide a document for ongoing/continuing integration of preservation practice within all components of archival practice
- Provide clear documentation to funding/granting agencies of an institution's commitment to long-term preservation

A basic framework for a preservation policy for a small to medium-sized archives should include a commitment to:

- The concept and practice of preventive conservation as a fundamental objective of the archives policy
- Review and update the preservation policy on a regular basis

- Establish, monitor and maintain standards for temperature, relative humidity and light levels
- Develop and update an institution-specific disaster plan
- Implement care and handling guidelines
- Provide a clean, organized storage environment of sufficient size to house the records
- Undertake a reformatting program where necessary e.g. cellulose nitrate or cellulose acetate negatives, audio cassettes, etc.
- Consult with a conservation professional before undertaking any treatment, restoration or other invasive action which may affect the record
- Establish procedures to prevent damage from vandalism, pests and other sources of damage

This guide is based on the AMA Global Preservation Assessments carried out by Rosaleen Hill c. 2002

Recommended resources for preservation policy development:

British Library Preservation Advisory Centre, *Building a Preservation Policy*:

http://www.bl.uk/aboutus/stratpolprog/collectioncare/publications/booklets/building_a_preservation_policy.pdf

National Library of Australia Preservation Policy

<http://www.nla.gov.au/policy-and-planning/preservation-policy>