Basics of Archives Worksheet - Assess Your Facility

How is your archives space designed?

- A separate storage area
- A separate research area
- A separate processing area
- A separate exhibit area
- Areas combined
- Everything in one space

What is the space like?

- Heated (describe) _____________________________
- Air conditioned _______________________________
- Shelving (describe) ___________________________
- Windows (location) ____________________________
- Overhead pipes ________________________________
- Flooring ______________________________________
- Lighting ______________________________________
- Building location (floor/s) ______________________
- Access doors _________________________________
- Other _______________________________________

What protection systems are in place?

- Fire alarm
- Smoke detector
- Locks on doors
- Locks on windows
- Entry alarm system
- Emergency plan/contacts

Temperature and Humidity

- Average daily/weekly temperature monitored
- Average daily/weekly humidity monitored

General description of building in which Archives program is maintained: (type of structure materials, age, condition, etc.)

*Read: [http://www.nedcc.org/resources/leaflets/3Emergency_Management/03DisasterPlanning.php](http://www.nedcc.org/resources/leaflets/3Emergency_Management/03DisasterPlanning.php)
## Facility Assessment Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOOD</th>
<th>BETTER</th>
<th>BEST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Temperature</strong> - Maintain a steady temperature with as little daily fluctuation as possible. Use space heaters, dehumidifiers, air conditioners, fans, etc. where needed.</td>
<td>Maintain a steady temperature that <strong>doesn’t fluctuate more than 5 degrees within each 24-hour period</strong>. Monitor and track temperature periodically.</td>
<td>Maintain a <strong>steady temperature of 65 degrees Fahrenheit</strong> (plus or minus five degrees) with constant temperature monitoring and recording of results.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Relative Humidity</strong> - Maintain a steady relative humidity level with as little daily fluctuation as possible. Monitor for mold – testing may be necessary</td>
<td>Maintain a steady relative humidity level that <strong>doesn’t fluctuate more than 5% within each 24-hour period</strong>. Monitor and track relative humidity periodically.</td>
<td>Maintain a <strong>steady relative humidity level of 45%</strong> (plus or minus five percent) with constant monitoring and recording of results.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Shelving</strong> - Shelves should be constructed so they are at least 4 inches off the floor to ensure they are protected from minor flooding. Make sure shelving is stable and that the floor can handle weight of fully loaded shelving.</td>
<td>Steel shelving should be heavy duty, adjustable, and able to accommodate standard archival and records center containers. Keep shelving at least twelve inches from walls.</td>
<td>See Better section</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lighting</strong> - Maintain a low light level, keeping lights turned off as much as possible and natural sunlight out of the storage area.</td>
<td>Use UV filters on all light sources.</td>
<td>No windows or unfiltered UV light in the storage area.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Smoke alarms</strong> should be installed in every storage area and on every level of the building; they should be routinely checked</td>
<td>Fire alarm system directly connected to the local fire department. No smoking allowed in building.</td>
<td>Wet pipe sprinkler system installed.</td>
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<td><strong>Fire suppression</strong> - Extinguishers should be placed in every storage area and routinely checked; staff should be trained in how to use them. Conduct regular <strong>fire drills</strong>. Seek inspection and input from the local fire department.</td>
<td>See Good section</td>
<td>Smoke and heat detectors installed appropriately in consultation with fire professionals</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Air quality</strong> – Avoid conditions that can lead to harmful gaseous or particulate pollutants (certain woods, glues, fibers)</td>
<td>See Good section</td>
<td>Filtration devices (HVAC) to remove harmful gases, dirt, and other particulate pollutants</td>
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<td><strong>Security</strong> – Securing building perimeter and storage area, and restrict access to historical records storage area.</td>
<td>Periodically inventory your collections. Alert local security/police to alarm system or procedures in case of theft.</td>
<td>See Better section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Housekeeping</strong> - The area should be as clean as possible. No food, drink, trash, cleaning supplies, etc. should be maintained in the storage area. All attract pests such as insects and rodents to the storage area, as well as other mechanical destruction. Maintain a regular housekeeping schedule. Monitor for pests.</td>
<td>Provide a separate, secure storage area for historical records, with limited access and no food, drink, plants, etc. allowed. Avoid using sprays and repellants in vicinity of collections.</td>
<td>See Better section</td>
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<td><strong>Water</strong> - Routine monitoring for flooding, water problems. Avoid storing records in areas of overhead pipes.</td>
<td>See Good section</td>
<td>Water detectors installed</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Disaster Preparedness/Response</strong> – Have written plan to respond to disaster. Include staff and emergency contact lists, system upkeep/awareness, in-house and off-site emergency equipment, procedures and priorities for salvage of collections.</td>
<td>See Good section</td>
<td>See Good section</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Identify actions and improvements in each category that you could take to improve your storage facility

Temperature/Humidity

Shelving

Lighting

Fire Suppression

Air Quality
Security

Housekeeping/Pest Control

Water Protection

Disaster Planning/Response

Prioritize Your List of Actions and Improvements!!