



Homeland Security and  
Emergency Management



FEMA

July 23, 2024

DR-4779-IA / DR-4784-IA / 4796-IA

Iowa NR 001

State Media Contact: (515) 725-3231

FEMA Media Contact: (202) 805-8799

## News Release

### Free Demonstrations on Salvaging Disaster-Damaged Family Treasures Coming to a Disaster Recovery Center Near You

**DES MOINES, Iowa** — Iowa’s recent severe storms and flooding have likely wreaked havoc on more than your house. Some of your priceless photos, books and other family treasures or heirlooms may have been damaged too.

It might be tempting to throw these mementos away. But hold on. You may be able to save them with advice from FEMA preservation professionals at various state/federal Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs) starting July 24.

The specialists will be on hand to demonstrate such tasks as cleaning photographs, preserving books, documents, electronic media and textiles. The demonstrations are free and follow this schedule:

Date	Location	Address	Time
July 24	Greenfield DRC	Nodaway Valley Elementary School, 324 NW 2 <sup>nd</sup> St. Greenfield, IA 50849	9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
July 25	Agricultural Recovery Center	Cedar County Fairgrounds, the Matthews Building, 1195 210 St. Tipton, IA 52772	12 noon to 7 p.m.
July 27	Estherville DRC	St. Patrick's Church (Gym) 903 Central Ave. Estherville, IA 51334	9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Date	Location	Address	Time
July 28 July 29	Spencer DRC	Clay County Regional Events Center- Tower Gate Pavilion 800 W 18th St, Spencer, IA 51301	9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
July 30 July 31	Rock Rapids DRC	Forster Community Center 404 1 <sup>st</sup> Ave. Rock Rapids, IA 51246	9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Aug. 1 Aug 2	Rock Valley DRC	City Park Shelter House 1013 13 <sup>th</sup> Ave. Rock Valley, IA	9 a.m. to 5 p.m. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**Survivors are asked not to bring damaged items to the DRCs to avoid a chance of causing more damage in transit.** Instead, it is recommended that you digitally photograph the item(s) about which you would like to ask the specialists for advice.

The demonstrations are sponsored by the Heritage Emergency National Task Force (HENTF), a coalition of more than 60 national organizations and federal agencies co-sponsored by FEMA and the Smithsonian Institution. HENTF works to protect cultural resources throughout the U.S. and its territories from the effects of disasters and emergencies.

If you can't make any of these events, here is an online FEMA resource for more information:  
[www.fema.gov/disaster/recover/save-family-treasures](http://www.fema.gov/disaster/recover/save-family-treasures).

If you want to try preserving items on your own, here are some basic procedures to get you started:

- If your prized possessions have been in contact with sewage or any chemicals, you will need professional help.
  - **Call IMALERT Hotline** (Iowa Museums, Archives and Libraries Emergency Response Team) at 319-384-3673. They accept calls from members of the public and can provide advice and suggest a conservator who can help you.
  - Other sources of help include the **Ford Conservation Center** in Omaha, 402-595-1180, and the **Midwest Art Conservation Center** in Minneapolis at 612-870-3120.
- Gentle air-drying indoors is best for all your treasured belongings. Hair dryers, irons, ovens and prolonged exposure to sunlight will do irreversible damage. Increase indoor airflow with fans, open windows, air conditioners and dehumidifiers.
- Use great caution in handling your heirlooms, which can be especially fragile when wet. Separate damp materials; remove the contents from drawers; take photographs out of damp albums; remove paintings and prints from frames, place paper towels between the pages of wet books.
- Gently loosen dirt and debris on fragile objects with soft brushes and cloths. Avoid rubbing, which can grind in the dirt.
- Clean photographs by rinsing them carefully in clean water. Air-dry photos on a plastic mesh screen or paper towel, or by hanging them by the corner with plastic clothespins. Don't let the image touch any other surfaces as it dries.

- You may not be able to save everything, so focus on what's most important to you, whether for historic, monetary or sentimental reasons.

For more information, visit the Heritage Emergency National Task Force pages:

**FEMA:** [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov) Type HENTF in Search box.

**Smithsonian:** <https://culturalrescue.si.edu/who-we-are-hentf> or email [HENTF@si.edu](mailto:HENTF@si.edu).

*Disaster Recovery Centers are physically accessible to people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs. They are equipped with assistive and adaptive technology such as amplified phones, caption phones, video phones, wheelchair ramps and other resources to help ensure all applicants can access resources.*

*Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, religion, nationality, sex, age, disability, English proficiency, or economic status. If you or someone you know has been discriminated against, call FEMA toll-free at 833-285-7448.*

###

*FEMA's mission is helping people before, during and after disasters.*

*HENTF's mission is to protect cultural heritage in our nation's states, tribes, territories, and local communities from the damaging effects of natural disasters and other emergencies.*

*The Smithsonian Institution is the world's largest museum, education and research complex, with 21 museums and the National Zoo – shaping the future by preserving heritage, discovering new knowledge, and sharing our resources with the world.*