#### National Archives and Records Administration

Federal Records Management Level 1: Maintenance and Use

Participant Guide

Module 6: Identify and Report Risk or Damage to Records

Table of Contents

[Module 6: Identify and Report Risk or Damage to Records 3](#_Toc20481617)

[Module 6 Checklist 3](#_Toc20481618)

[Name That Threat – Notes 4](#_Toc20481619)

[Task Goal 4](#_Toc20481620)

[Task Objectives 4](#_Toc20481621)

[Disasters 5](#_Toc20481622)

[Records-Related Disasters – Notes 6](#_Toc20481623)

[Risk Assessment Questions to Ask Yourself 7](#_Toc20481624)

[Practice: Recognize Risks and Damage – Notes 9](#_Toc20481625)

[Records Risk Management Procedures 9](#_Toc20481626)

[Document and Communicate 10](#_Toc20481627)

[Practice: We Have a Situation 10](#_Toc20481628)

[Reporting damage to records 13](#_Toc20481629)

[Practice: Storage Room Risks 14](#_Toc20481630)

[Module 6 Assignments 17](#_Toc20481631)

[Additional Resources 17](#_Toc20481632)

[Records Risk Contacts 18](#_Toc20481633)

# Module 6: Identify and Report Risk or Damage to Records

## Module 6 Checklist

* Complete this online lesson.
* For this module’s homework, please complete the following:
  + Find your office’s emergency plan. Is there a records emergency response plan?
  + Complete the Records Risk Contacts worksheet in the Participant guide. The worksheet will help you begin to identify the individuals and groups who could help you recognize, report, and respond to a records risk or damage situation.
  + Reflect on the situations that could pose the greatest risks to records in your program. Discuss them with your manager or agency records network as needed.

## Name That Threat – Notes

## Task Goal

In the course of duty, you will be able to follow proper procedures to mitigate risks or damage to records in a timely manner.

### Task Objectives

* Discuss the types of risks and threats to records
* Recognize risks and signs of damage
* Implement emergency procedures to address immediate threats of risk/damage
* Document situation, actions taken, and results

## Disasters

Natural

Human

Technological

## Records-Related Disasters – Notes

## Risk Assessment Questions to Ask Yourself

Location of Records

* Are records kept in a central area?
* Are the areas/methods of storage controlled or uncontrolled in terms of security, climate, etc.?
* Are fire protection systems adequate?

Information Technology

* Are IT systems secured and are strong passwords used to log in to the network?
* Are formats of electronic files and systems kept up to date, or are they approaching obsolescence?
* What safeguards are in place against telecommunications and network failures that might impact record systems?

Climate

* Is your area subject to extremes/sudden changes in temperature and humidity? Which materials may be affected by changes?
* How soon after failure of your heating or cooling system will the climate in your building exceed recommended environmental conditions?

Topography and Weather

* Is your building located in a flood plain or situated by a lake, river or ocean? Is that body of water tidal?
* What severe weather conditions are most likely for your area, and what effects are they likely to have?

Seismic Stability

* Is your area subject to earthquakes? What sort of damage would be likely to occur in your office?
* Is your area subject to volcanic action? What element of a volcanic explosion is most likely to affect your area?

Building Structure and Location

* Does the building have a flat roof, skylights, roof access doors, or internal roof drains?
* Are there water/sprinkler/sewer pipes running through records storage areas?
* Are there potential risks from collateral effects of disasters in the surrounding area? (For example, hazmat incidents on a nearby roadway, a disaster at another Federal office building next door, an accident at railroad tracks nearby.)

Hazardous Materials

* Are hazardous materials such as gas cylinders, solvents, paints, etc. stored in the building?
* Are potential hazards such as live ammunition, poisonous/flammable/reactive chemicals, etc. present?

## Practice: Recognize Risks and Damage – Notes

## Records Risk Management Procedures

* Follow guidance
* Notify

## Document and Communicate

* Specific location of the records
* Records involved (volume/dates)
* Office maintaining records/POC
* Timeline/description of occurrence
* Actions taken to retrieve/reconstruct records
* Safeguards established to prevent further loss

## Practice: We Have a Situation

As you review the Records Risk/Damage Situation Report, review the situation and consider:

* What risks/threats to records were involved in this situation?
* Whom would you contact if this happened in your organization?
* What safeguards could the office establish to prevent or minimize this risk in the future?

| **Records Risk/Damage Situation Report** |
| --- |
| * 1. **Report prepared by:** Jack Frost |
| * 1. **Date report prepared:** January 3, 2020 |
| * 1. **Preparer’s contact details:** Phone:777-555-1234,   email: Jack.Frost@agency.gov |
| * 1. **Date and time of incident:** Incident detected 8:30 a.m., January 2, 2020. Exact date and time of incident unknown (probably after 1:00 a.m. January 1, when a county-wide power outage occurred). |
| * 1. **Records involved (Description, volume and date range):** 5 cubic feet of paper contract records pertaining to various open projects. Records are dated 2018 to present. |
| * 1. **Records’ maintaining office and POC:**   Acquisitions Office,POC: Les Izmore (777-555-1200, Lester.Izmore@agency.gov) |
| * 1. **Description of incident:**   A burst pipe was discovered leaking into room 111 at approximately 8:30 AM.It is believed that the pipe burst due to freezing that occurred when the HVAC system turned off due to a power outage caused by a severe winter storm. Since there was no backup generator, the building temperatures quickly dropped below freezing.  The five boxes involved were stacked on the floor and came into contact with water that sprayed from the pipe and pooled on the floor. One box of contract files was waterlogged, and four more boxes of records were found to have been exposed to water, with the bottom of one box sitting in about 2” of water. The records were removed from the room, which is currently unusable due to water damage. |
| * 1. **Location:** Room 111, 2261 Arcadia Ave., Minneapolis, MN |
| * 1. **Security risks:** None |
| * 1. **Actions taken to safeguard, retrieve, or reconstruct records:**   Once the area was reviewed by Facilities and Security and was cleared for access, the boxes of records were removed from the space involved and taken to a conference room where wet records could be laid out on table to dry on blotter paper from our records emergency kit. Records whose boxes were wet, but whose files were dry, were re-boxed into new containers. Since Room 111 is currently unusable, the recovered records will need to be relocated to another storage area. |
| * 1. **Safeguards established:**   Facilities is handling cleanup of the room itself and will look into a backup generatorfor HVAC system. Records management staff will schedule time to talk with contracting staff about the use of electronic contracting files. Records management staff will also meet with involved staff to review existing records emergency response procedures and determine what, if any, updates to the plan should be made. |

## Reporting damage to records

Your agency is required to report any “unlawful or accidental removal, defacing, alteration, or destruction of records” to NARA.

* The process is governed by 36 CFR 1230.14.
* Report to your Agency Records Officer through your agency records management network
* Your agency will report to NARA:
  + Complete description of the records
  + Office maintaining the records
  + Description of the circumstances
  + Information about safeguards
  + Description of steps taken to salvage, retrieve, or reconstruct the records

## Practice: Storage Room Risks

You are the new Records Contact for your division. You have made excellent progress on an inventory of current records for your department. The program director has heard about this, and when she sees you in the hallway, she compliments you on your hard work and casually mentions that she has also started to work on cleaning up records. She has told her administrative assistant to get as many rolling recycling bins as she can find and has directed her assistant to throw out all the old records and other items currently stored in the old office on the fourth floor. The director wants to use the office as a conference and collaborative work space and wants all the old records that are stored there recycled ASAP.

You arrive at room 415 and find several very full filing cabinets and at least 35 boxes of varying sizes stacked throughout the room. Another staff member sees you looking at the room and says that no one really remembers what all that stuff is, but she thinks the previous program director’s files are stored there, along with some old contractor personnel files, budget information, and past program plans, data, and reports.

* What risks/threats to records are involved in this situation?
* Which people or groups would you contact if this happened in your organization?
* What safeguards could the office establish to prevent or minimize this risk in the future?

Complete the Records Risk/Damage Situation Report on the following page.

| **Records Risk/Damage Situation Report #2** |
| --- |
| * 1. **Report prepared by:** |
| * 1. **Date report prepared:** |
| * 1. **Preparer’s contact details:** |
| * 1. **Date and time of incident:** |
| * 1. **Records involved (Description, volume and date range):** |
| * 1. **Records’ maintaining office and POC:**   Program Office, Department 1234, Jayne Deaux, jane.deaux@agency.gov, 555-234-0123 |
| * 1. **Description of incident:** |
| * 1. **Location:** |
| * 1. **Security risks:** |
| * 1. **Actions taken to safeguard/retrieve/reconstruct records:** |
| * 1. **Safeguards established:** |

# Module 6 Assignments

Your assignments for Module 6 are:

* Find your office’s emergency plan. Is there a records emergency response plan?
* Complete the Records Risk Contacts worksheet in the Participant guide. The worksheet will help you begin to identify the individuals and groups who could help you recognize, report, and respond to a records risk or damage situation.
* Reflect on the situations that could pose the greatest risks to records in your program. Are there any risks you should discuss with your manager or your agency records network?

## Additional Resources

Records Emergencies - https://www.archives.gov/preservation/records-emergency

NARA Roles and Disaster Points of Contact – https://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/vital-records/disaster-pocs.html

## Records Risk Contacts

The purpose of this assignment is to help you begin to identify the people, departments, groups and services that can help you recognize, report, and respond to records risks, loss, and damage.

Locate names and contact information for as many of the following roles and groups as are appropriate for your situation:

Records Management Contacts

Emergency / Continuity of Operations Contacts

Physical and Information Security Contacts

Facilities, Maintenance, and Utilities

Records Recovery Vendors, Contractors, Specialists

Other Contacts