

Worksheet 7: Salvage Priorities Questionnaire

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Introduction

The [Emergency Response Planning Manual](#) describes four steps that provide heritage institutions with a structured framework for identifying collections response strategies. This worksheet can be used to complete step 3 called “[Identify salvage priorities](#),” which will help make the difficult job of triage during salvage somewhat easier and help ensure that the most valued objects are recovered. This worksheet can be used in conjunction with [Worksheet 6: Collections Checklist](#) and [Worksheet 8: Salvage Priorities Inventory](#).

Instructions

Give a copy of this worksheet to the people in your institution who know your collections best. Have them work as a group to select the value criteria questions that will be used to assess relative value by answering “Yes” or “No” in the left-hand column.

Ask each person to use the worksheet as follows:

- Make a copy of the worksheet for each potential salvage priority object or small group of objects.
- Characterize the value of the objects by answering “Yes,” “No” or “Depends” for each value criteria question that is being used.
- Enter the scores that correspond to each answer: Yes = 2, Depends = 1 and No = 0.
- Add up the scores to get a priority score for the objects.

The second-to-last question asks whether the object is difficult to salvage. Use the completed Worksheet 6: Collections Checklist to answer this question. The subcategories listed in the right-hand column of this worksheet are objects that may be difficult to salvage in the event of a flood (they contain soluble materials, materials prone to delamination, distortion or corrosion), fire (they contain materials that are highly combustible or likely to melt, or from which soot removal is very difficult) or earthquake or severe winds (they contain brittle materials likely to crack, tear or shatter).

Other objects will also be damaged but are more likely to be recoverable.

Instead of Worksheet 7, you may wish to use the “Questionnaire” tab in the [Salvage Priorities Assessment Tool](#) (Excel spreadsheet, 130 KB) to characterize objects for your salvage priorities list and automatically calculate the priority scores.

Before meeting as a group to decide on the final salvage priorities list, encourage people to make difficult choices by limiting the number of objects that each person will assess. If choosing is still too difficult, consider using a small subset of the value criteria questions to screen a large number of objects more quickly. Objects that pass the screening are then given the full assessment.

Worksheet

Object(s):

Accession number(s) or fonds:

Current location(s):

Salvage priorities questionnaire

Use?	Value criteria question	Answer	Score	Notes
	Is the object of historic importance?			
	Is the object of artistic, aesthetic importance?			
	Is the object of scientific or research importance?			
	Is the object of social, cultural or spiritual importance?			
	Is the provenance of the object well documented?			
	Is the context of the object well understood and documented?			
	Is the object rare or irreplaceable?			
	Is the object of high monetary value?			
	Is the object in pristine or excellent condition for its type?			
	Is the object highly relevant to the institution's mission and purpose?			
	Is the object important to visitors and the community?			
	Is the object a vital record?			
	Is salvaging the object preferable to replacing it?			
	Is the object in a format or material that is difficult to salvage?			
	Is the object on loan from another institution?			
N/A	Priority score:	N/A		N/A

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