

Town of Manchester, Connecticut

Town Clerk's Office

Records Vault Emergency Response and Water Damage Prevention Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish mandatory procedures for the protection, preservation, and proper handling of official records maintained within the Town Clerk's vault in the Town of Manchester, Connecticut, particularly in the event of water-related incidents such as leaks, flooding, or moisture intrusion.

Scope

This policy applies to all Town Clerk's Office personnel and any authorized individuals with access to the vault storage area, including all physical (analog) and digital records maintained within the vault.

Policy Statement

Water damage is the most common cause of records loss. All personnel with access to the Town Clerk's vault are required to take proactive and immediate action to prevent, mitigate, and respond to water-related risks including fire, in order to preserve the integrity of official records and ensure compliance with applicable records management laws.

Policy Requirements

1. Preventive Measures

All authorized personnel shall:

- Store all records, boxes, and equipment **off the vault floor** using shelving or pallets.
 - Keep records away from **walls, pipes, ceilings, or areas with known or potential leak risks**.
 - Routinely inspect the vault for **signs of water intrusion**, including ceiling stains, condensation, or dampness.
 - Pay particular attention to **previously repaired areas** and monitor for recurring issues.
 - Use **protective coverings** for records and equipment in any area identified as vulnerable.
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2. Emergency Preparedness

The Town Clerk's Office shall ensure:

- Emergency response supplies are maintained within or immediately accessible to the vault area, including:
 - Tarps

- Absorbent socks and towels
 - Buckets
 - Plastic sheeting
 - Supplies are stored in a **clearly marked and accessible location**.
 - An up-to-date **emergency contact list** is maintained, with:
 - A copy kept onsite
 - A copy maintained offsite by designated personnel
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3. Response to Water-Related Incidents

In the event of a water leak or moisture-related incident within or affecting the vault:

- Staff shall take immediate action to **protect records from further exposure**, including covering shelving and relocating materials if safe to do so.
 - Reasonable steps shall be taken to **contain or minimize the source of water intrusion** (e.g., placing buckets, using absorbent materials).
 - The incident must be **reported immediately to the Town Clerk or designee**.
 - Facilities personnel shall be contacted promptly to address the source of the issue.
 - Must report any damages or loss of records to the office of the Public Administrator.
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4. Records Management Compliance

All personnel must adhere to the following requirements:

- All damage or loss of records must be **reported immediately** to the Office of the Public Records Administrator.
 - All reasonable efforts must be made to **recover and preserve records** that have not met their approved retention schedules.
 - No records may be **destroyed, discarded, or otherwise disposed of without prior written authorization** from the Office of the Public Records Administrator, regardless of condition.
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Roles and Responsibilities

Town Clerk: Oversees implementation of this policy, ensures compliance, and serves as the primary point of contact during an incident.

Assistant Town Clerks / Staff: Carry out preventive measures, monitor vault conditions, and respond to incidents in accordance with this policy.

Facilities Department: Responds to reported issues involving leaks, structural concerns, or environmental risks impacting the vault.

Compliance and Enforcement

Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action and may constitute a violation of state public records laws and retention requirements.

Review and Updates

This policy shall be reviewed annually by the Town Clerk's Office and updated as necessary.

Effective Date

4.6.2026