Salvaging wet materials

Conservation Unit, Cornell University
Hey—something’s leaking

Now what?
ACTION

Notify
Remediate
• Facilities
• Disaster team

Notify
• Stop the leak
• Protect dry books
• Remove and dry wet books

Remediate
• Minor: 100 books or less
• Major disaster requires assessment and tactical planning

Minor vs. Major
• Electricity
• Falling ceiling tiles

Safety first
Documentation

• Photos of the scene
• Staff time
PROCEDURES

Water coming from above or below
- Identify source of leak
- Cover books with plastic sheeting
- Use plastic sheeting to catch leak
- Remove dry books
- Start drying wet books

Water from above
• Remove dry books that are threatened
• Remove wet books and start drying process

Water from below
Drying wet books
To freeze or not to freeze
Types of freezing

- Home refrigerator freezer
- Vacuum freeze-drying
- Vacuum thermal-drying
• Water resistant paper around each book
• Spine down
• Fill each box

Pacing for freezing
Follow-up

• Check for mold in air dried books
Resources

- http://www.loc.gov/preservation/family/ftpreserv.html
- http://www.ccaha.org/publications/technical-bulletins