



BELONGINGS REUNIFICATION GUIDE

City of Kirkland

Office of Emergency Management

Last Update: May 2021

Forward

Natural or human-caused incidents have the potential to create destruction, damage, or displacement of personal property. History has shown that reunifying, even simple personal items, with survivors can benefit their health and wellbeing, and assist in their physical and emotional recovery.

During the search for missing persons and victims or during debris management, belongings may be recovered at an incident site. The City of Kirkland Belongings Reunification Guide (Guide) incorporates lessons, best practices, and recommendations from previous reunification efforts, to provide a flexible and scalable belongings reunification concept of operations.

The Guide establishes a purposeful approach to the City's ability to manage belonging reunification during incidents. The intention is to foster a timely recovery and support the transition to the new normal.

This Guide applies to belongings reunification activities coordinated by the City of Kirkland for incidents within the City and businesses opting to participate in a City led reunification effort.

Record of Changes

Change Number	Section	Date of Change	Individual Making the Change	Summary of Change
N/A	All	05/2021	Heather Kelly	Creation of Reunification Program Guide
1				

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Note: Unless otherwise stated in the caption, photographs were taken at the reunification site established following the 2014 SR 530 landslide.

Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of the Belongings Reunification Guide (Guide) is to provide a resource to assist the City of Kirkland Government in implementing a process to reunite affected individuals (survivors, families, next of kin, and property owners) with their belongings in a respectful and compassionate manner.

Scope

This Guide may be used for incidents that directly or indirectly impact the residents, businesses, or visitors within the City.

This Guide focuses on items with perceived sentimental value, such as household items, photos, legal papers, and documents.

The Guide includes processes for collection, cleaning, tracking, identification, reunification, and disposition of belongings.

This Guide is based on the premise that catastrophic incidents require a coordinated approach in establishing a belongings reunification program.

Guiding Principles

Guiding principles will be developed specific to the incident and directed by the needs, questions and concerns of the affected individuals, especially those who have lost loved ones. Supporting affected individuals is a key priority in developing a successful reunification process as survivors may be mentally, emotionally and/or physically fragile. It is important to respect their emotions, thoughts and concerns in order to build trust and provide a safe and supported experience during reunification efforts. Identifying personal belongings can be a part of the healing process for affected individuals and may help them to achieve some sense of closure.

Situation Overview

Incident Conditions and Hazards

The City of Kirkland is vulnerable to natural and human-caused incidents on a small and large scale. Recovery and reunification of personal belongings is an important aspect of the healing process for affected individuals, especially in incidents that include fatalities and the destruction of cars, homes, buildings, schools, and/or roads.

During incident response, belongings may be gathered or collected from the incident scene or surrounding area. The City may need to establish processes to manage recovered items. Depending on the incident and types of items recovered, it may be necessary to implement a simple reunification program or a more complex system requiring categorization, cleaning, preservation, and/or disposition of items.

Limitations

The City is committed to making every reasonable effort to quickly recover and reunite personal belongings to their legal owners. However, City resources and/or systems may be overwhelmed for an unknown and possibly significant period of time. This Guide cannot guarantee that a full recovery of belongings will be practical or possible.

Assumptions

Planning assumptions that apply to reunification include but are not limited to:

- Belongings reunification will be facilitated under the Human Services Recovery Support Function.
- Communication with the affected individuals and community is critical to building trust and support in the reunification process.
- Depending on the incident size and impacts recovery to the pre-incident conditions may not be realistic, possible, or desirable.
- The ability to efficiently coordinate and support reunification efforts is critical to community recovery.
- It may be a challenge to maintain continuity of institutional knowledge as reunification staff may change over the long duration of activities.
- The engagement and/or support of the directly affected community, as well as the broader community, will be critical to successful reunification.
- Reunification is not a linear process and takes time.
- Funding reunification may be costly.
- Geographical areas may be impacted differently and require different reunification strategies/efforts.
- Ultimately jurisdictional authority will guide the reunification process.

Roles and Responsibilities

City of Kirkland

City Leadership

City Manager

Will provide elected official coordination and request support/funding from local, county, state, and/or federal representatives, support overall reunification policy direction, and appoint/designate the Disaster Recovery Manager (DRM).

City Council

Will provide funding support/allocation, approve appropriate motions, ordinances, or other required legislation to facilitate reunification, and serve as recovery advocates with local, county, state, and federal elected leaders.

Chiefs or Department Directors

Will support the reunification efforts through the allocation of staff and/or resources as requested and able.

Disaster Recovery Manager (DRM)

Will lead recovery and provide policy direction to the reunification effort.

Recovery Team Leader (RTL)

Will coordinate support to the reunification effort, including information sharing, documentation, facilitation, community outreach, and stakeholder engagement.

Personal Belongings Reunification (PBR) Manager

Will manage all functions of reunification, attend community meetings, and facilitate appointments with affected individuals for the duration of the project. The PBR Manager serves under the Human Services Recovery Support Function Lead.

Kirkland Residents, Businesses, and Community

Residents and businesses are encouraged to document their personal belongings and/or inventory in a variety of ways including, but not limited to registering and recording serial numbers, writing names on photographs, saving legal and personal documents to technology-based systems, discs, or external drives, and keeping copies of the information and documents in damage resistant storage cases, ideally off-site when possible.

County Government

King County has a role of supporting local jurisdictions through the recovery process by providing technical assistance, facilitating access to County and/or State agencies/resources, and requesting additional support on behalf of the City.

State Government

The State of Washington has a role of supporting local jurisdictions through the recovery process by providing technical assistance, facilitating access to State agencies/resources, and requesting Federal support on behalf of the City.

See the [Washington State Restoration Framework](#) for details.

Federal Government

The Federal Government has a role of supporting local jurisdictions through the recovery process by providing technical assistance and facilitating access to federal agencies/resources.

See the [National Disaster Recovery Framework](#) (NDRF) for details.

Other Agencies

Nongovernmental (NGO), Faith-Based, Volunteer Organizations, Academic Institutions, Museums, and/or Private Sector stakeholder support may provide personnel, funding, and/or other resources in support of belongings reunification efforts.

Concept of Operations

General

Incidents with a known or perceived loss of lives and/or the destruction of homes, cars, buildings/schools, etc. creates a situation in which support for belongings reunification may exist. Reunification is part of the larger recovery structure and process.

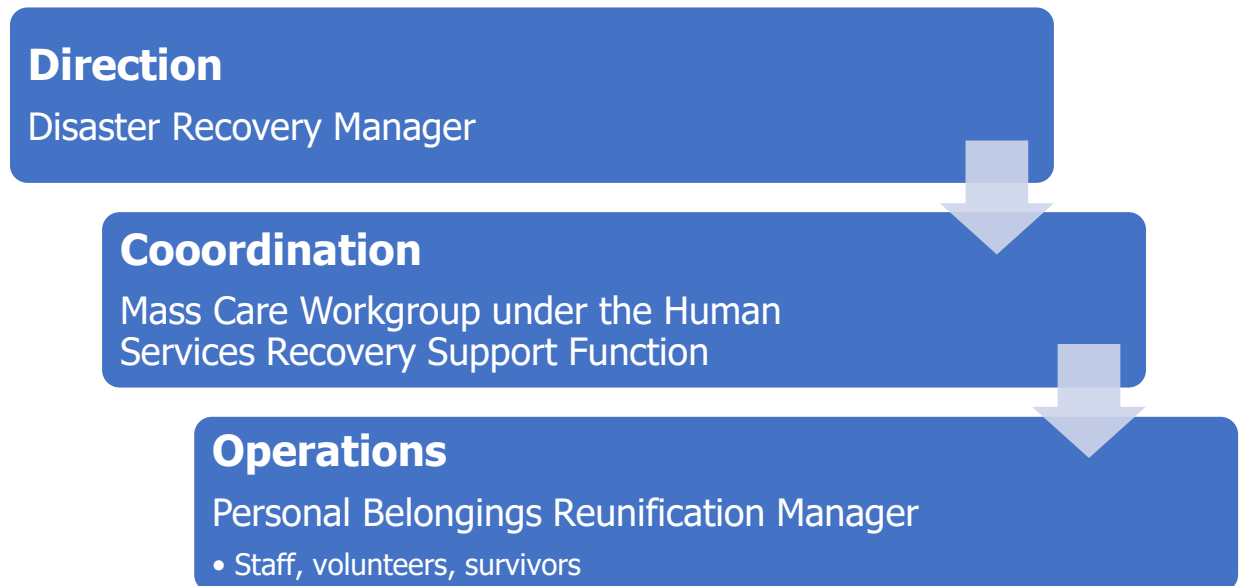


Figure 1 - PBR concept of operations flow chart

Affected individuals may feel vulnerable and exposed during the reunification process; it is important to maintain confidentiality when handling belongings and treat each item and person in a dignified and respectful manner. Belongings should be stored in a method that protects the privacy of survivors from media and potentially public exposure.

Items for reunification are identified in two categories:

- | | |
|---|---|
| Category 1:
<i>Items of perceived financial value</i> | Includes controlled items such as firearms, cash, and medications as well as items of potential value such as safes, precious metals, and jewelry with gemstones and/or diamonds. Category 1 items should be managed by the local law enforcement agency according to legal requirements. |
| Category 2:
<i>Items of perceived sentimental value</i> | Includes household items such as textiles, kitchen supplies, tools, sports equipment, memorabilia, photos, legal papers, heirlooms, family significance. Category 2 items can be managed through a belonging reunification process. |

The Guide primarily addresses Category 2 items which are referred to as "Personal Belongings". Category 1 items should be addressed by local law enforcement, typically following evidence recovery processes due to their potential value.

Building Requirements and Basic Equipment

When setting up a facility for processing, storing, and reunification of personal belongings it is recommended to have a building or warehouse, size dependent on quantity and type of belongings generated by the incident, with multiple rooms to accommodate the different tasks that will take place (Figure 2).

Space requirements include areas for:

- Processing items, this is typically a large open space.
- Storing items, this often takes the most space with multiple shelves and racks.
- Reunification appointments, this space should be large enough to not feel cramped but small enough to feel private and intimate.
- Staff work areas, at least workstations.
- Basic amenities, restrooms, lunch or break room at a minimum there should be a refrigerator, sink, and microwave.
- A quiet space for private reflection or composure.
- Adequate parking for staff, delivery vehicles, and appointments.

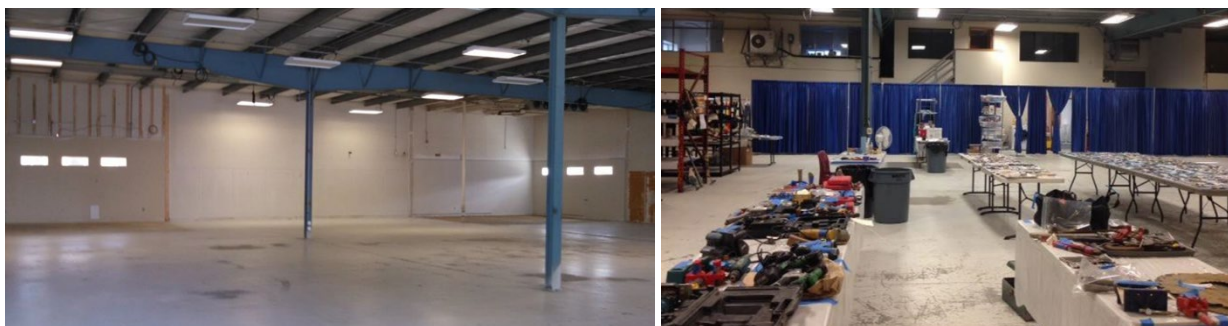


Figure 2 - Photographs of a warehouse space before being utilized for PBR and in-use with tables laid out to dry recovered personal belongings.

It is necessary to have running water for processing and cleaning items. The main floor space of the location should be used for processing the bulk of the items that come through the facility and set-up should include tables, shelves, and drying racks.

If photos are a large part of the recovery, it is helpful to have a storage room to archive cleaned, dried, and cataloged photos. For items that may contain personal information, it is necessary to have a locked/secured room to protect privacy and against identity theft.

When reuniting individuals with their personal belongings, it is very important to have a quiet space for comfort and privacy.

Basic supplies for setting up a personal belongings reunification center will vary depending on the type of incident, and the type(s) of belongings collected. The main goal is to try to preserve the integrity of items, to clean items (as needed), and process them as quickly as possible (Figure 3).

See Appendix A: Basic Supplies.

Staffing

It is important to recognize that not everyone has the right personality, emotional steadiness, or mindset to support personal belonging reunification. Selection of staff should be a thoughtful and intentional process to reduce the risk of negative mental or emotional reactions and/or long-term effects.

At a minimum, a full-time program manager and program assistant are needed throughout the duration of the project. It may be necessary to have security, contracted or law enforcement, available during operational hours to manage the safety and privacy of the site, belongings, staff, and survivors. Select volunteers may be engaged to assist with some tasks or aspects of reunification.



Figure 3 - PBR processing supplies

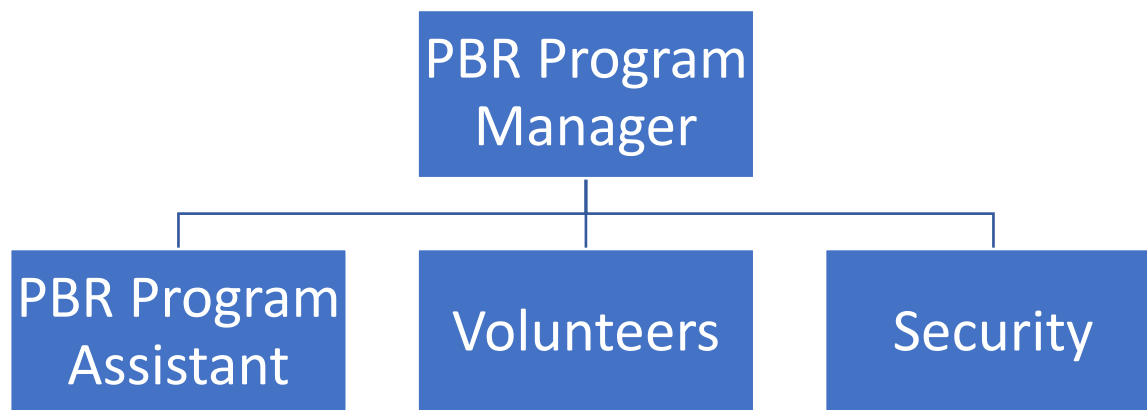


Figure 4 - PBR Organizational Chart

Personal Belongings Reunification Program Manager (PBR PM)

The PBR PM must be emotionally stable, compassionate, have volunteer management experience, and knowledge about grief, loss, compassion fatigue, and post-traumatic stress. The PBR PM responsibilities include training, managing, and supervising volunteers and staff, attending community and workgroup meetings, processing and cleaning personal belongings, and assisting individuals and families during the reunification process.

Personal Belongings Reunification Program Assistant (PBR PA)

The PBR PA should be proficient in technology, inventory management, customer service, volunteer coordination, and be emotionally stable and compassionate. PBR PA responsibilities include processing, cleaning, and cataloging personal belongings, manage data entry, coordinate volunteer schedules, and assist the program manager with reunification appointments.

Volunteers

Volunteers are a valuable resource for assisting with property reunification. Volunteers can offer a variety of skills that can be utilized in reunification efforts such as, donation management, data entry, documentation, cataloging, cleaning, and when skilled forensics. Volunteers should be registered as emergency workers, pass a criminal background check, and whenever possible be selected based on referrals or previously determined to be trustworthy and respectful.

See Appendix B: Staffing Requirements

Tracking Items

Items collected at the incident site should receive a number (ideally on a tag or other product that attaches to the item) and, if possible, documentation of the location the item was found. Field collection will vary based on the incident but should be part of a coordinated search and rescue, debris management, and/or other response/recovery effort.

When items are delivered to the reunification center, they should be looked over, photographed if possible, and documented in a tracking system. The assigned number should stay with the item throughout the reunification process, i.e. from discovery to disposition. Unless there is a confirmed name identifying the belonging, DO NOT assume ownership.



Figure 5 - Example of shelving and item storage and tracking tags.

Items should be entered into a tracking system/document, a spreadsheet for example, that includes the Item Number (Numbering should allow for expansion of inventory so start with 001, 002, 003, etc.), Last Name, First Name, and other names or identifiers (if available), Item/Content, Condition, Storage Location within the facility, Date of receipt and disposition, and the names of the person delivering, accepting, documenting, processing/cleaning, and dispositioning the item. The tracking should also include the name and contact information of the individual taking ownership of each item (Figure 5).

See Form 1 – PBR Item Log

Cleaning Process

Items recovered from an incident location will likely need some if not total cleaning and/or restoration. Based on the type of incident and items recovered, cleaning may or may not be necessary, and processes and techniques may vary. Exact needs will be identified and implemented at the time of processing; reference Appendix E: Personal Belongings Reunification: Emergency Salvage Procedures for Photos, Negatives, Books, and Documents for item-specific details.

Cleaning Supplies

Cleaning supplies will vary based on the type of incident. The main goals for cleaning personal belongings are:

- To remove as much debris or foreign material as possible to support owner identification
- Use minimal cleaning/chemical agents, as possible
- Rinse or soak in water only if needed to minimize damage to the item
- Dry as quickly as possible to prevent further damage

See Appendix A: Basic Supplies – Basic Supplies by Process section

Photos

Photos and personal documents are Photos and personal documents are often the most treasured items that may be recovered during an incident. If items have water/moisture exposure, processing and drying photos and documents should be done as quickly as possible to prevent further damage (Figure 6).



Figure 6 - Photo and document work area

See Appendix E: Personal Belongings Reunification: Emergency Salvage Procedures for Photos, Negatives, Books, and Documents or review the Northeast Document Conservation Center Leaflet: <https://www.nedcc.org/free-resources/preservation-leaflets/overview>

As with all items, but especially with photos, personal documents, and/or letters, the task is to clean and preserve for return to owners or survivors.

Hard Items

Hard items such as household objects, tools, items of metal, wood, ceramic, glass, and plastic may be easier to clean. If possible, remove any clumps of debris that may be attached and rinse with water. Small brushes, hand brooms, and toothbrushes may come in handy to remove excess debris embedded in the item.

Soft Items

There are a variety of soft items that may have sentimental value to individuals and could include things such as quilts, knitted or crocheted items, clothing, hats, backpacks, purses, and stuffed animals. If heavily soiled, many of these items can be soaked in a washtub to loosen debris, then rinsed, and washed. Having access to a washing machine, or a local dry cleaner can be ideal. Items that may be very fragile should be soaked, rinsed and excess water gently squeezed or pressed out, then draped or hung to dry to prevent damage. Fans placed near items help circulate the air and speed the drying process.

Electronics

Processing and identifying computers, cell phones, digital cameras, and other technology devices is best handled by an agency that does technology forensic investigation such as law enforcement or crime scene cleaning vendors. Processors should attempt to find an identifier such as a name, account, or document that may determine the potential owner of the device. Note, photos and legal documents tend to be what most people want to recover.

For computers, remove hard drives if possible, and pack in a plastic bag filled with rice to extract moisture. If unfamiliar with computer components, request Information Technology (IT) support.

Cell phones should also be placed in plastic bags filled with rice to extract moisture until they can be properly processed and identified.

Digital cameras should have the memory card removed as soon as possible. Use a clean cloth or cotton swab to remove dust or grit that may have accumulated inside the memory card; it can then be inserted into a different device or computer to attempt to view photos for identification.

Identifying Ownership of Personal Belongings

A variety of processes can be used to identify ownership of personal belongings.

If a name is found on an item, check to see if it matches any of the names of affected individuals. Items with positive identification can be set aside for reunification appointments. Review each item closely for names. Backpacks may contain books or schoolwork with names that can be identified for reunification. Children's artwork, sports equipment, jerseys, and hats may have names written on them.

Ask affected individuals for surnames or nicknames associated with their family. Birth certificates and personal documents may be identified by searching through public records websites, ancestry websites, and obituaries.

Some individuals may be able to, and/or be required to, provide serial numbers for items such as large tools or electronics.

When identifying photos that have a first or last name and nothing more, begin by searching the tracking system for that name. If the name is found, note the tag number as other items/photos with the same or similar tag may lead to the identification of additional items.

Social networking websites can be helpful for accessing an individual's "friends" list and finding possible relations/connections. Online accounts may have photos that could help with the identification of unmarked photos or items.

As affected individuals visit the reunification site, they may provide insight or identification of belongings of their family or neighbors as well.

Resources for Identification

The following is a list of resources that may assist in the identification process:

- Social Media, Public Records, Obituaries
- Law Enforcement Computer Forensic Investigators
- Northeast Document Conservation Center
 - www.nedcc.org/free-resources/preservation-leaflets/overview
- Washington State Archives Staff
 - www.sos.wa.gov/archives/
- Northeast Document Restoration Center
 - www.nedcc.org/free-resources/preservation-leaflets/overview
- Salvage at a Glance
 - cool.conservation-us.org/waac/wn/wn19/wn19-2/wn19-207.html
 - hosted.lib.uiowa.edu/flood/salvage_chart.html
- National Archives
 - www.archives.gov/preservation/disaster-response/salvage-procedures.html
- Genealogy
 - <http://www.ancestry.com/>
- Operation Photo Rescue
 - www.operationphotorescue.org/

Claiming Personal Belongings

To claim belongings, individuals will be asked to fill out a form that explains who they are, their relationship to the incident, i.e. property owner, family member, or survivor, and what they are looking for or believe is theirs. Forms should be distributed at affected community meetings, by email, and/or USPS mail.

See Form 2 – PBR Contact Form

Scheduling

When scheduling appointments, explain to each individual that the goal is to keep their time private with no interruptions and protect them from the media. Remind them that they will be allowed into the facility by appointment only and asked to show their identification when they arrive.

Appointments should be no more than 90 minutes maximum for a first visit. Individuals may need to step outside for fresh air, as the process and emotions are often overwhelming and hard to manage at first. Going through belongings is emotionally exhausting; allow for multiple visits.

Ask individuals if they would like to have a chaplain or mental health counselor at the appointment.

If individuals inquire about bringing their children along, they are free to make that choice but are discouraged from doing so unless they are adult children. Minors of all ages may present challenges; especially if adults are crying or upset.

Allow for flexibility in facility hours for reunification appointments in order to accommodate individuals that may have rigid work schedules or must travel a great distance to come to the facility.

Appointment Considerations

Reunification appointments may be very emotional. In order to promote a safe and secure experience for the individuals that come to the facility, proceed slowly, and as calmly as possible. Affected survivors may be in shock, appear numb, or have heightened reactions to sounds. Have loud equipment turned off or on low. Do not have volunteers on-site during reunification visits, the PBR PM should assist the individual through the process and the PBR PA should be on-site, for support or emergencies, but out of the immediate area. Due to injuries, some individuals may arrive in wheelchairs, use walkers, in bandages, or in various stages of healing physically or emotionally.



Figure 7 - Supplies and draping separating family area from work area.

Best Practices

Greet people at the door, check identification, ask them to sign in, and escort them to the reunification room.

Keep appointments to 90 minutes.

Check-in with individuals throughout the reunification appointment to see how they are doing, both physically and emotionally.

Pay attention to body language throughout the visit. People may be distracted or detached from their basic needs. Offer them water, juice, pop, etc., and if necessary, something to snack on. Give time for breaks, if needed suggest a short walk outside; fresh air can be helpful.

Do not use the word "viewing" when referring to "looking" through the belongings, especially if fatalities occurred.

Conversations related to the program and with affected individuals should be considered confidential.

Gather and display items that have positive owners identified in the reunification meeting room prior to appointments.

Most photos will not be marked with names. Due to the nature of the photo recovery and the cataloging process, remind individuals that they may see photos that aren't theirs and ask if they would mind sharing anything or one that they recognize.

Objects and photos will stimulate memories and family members may want to share.

Listen, offer privacy, and keep tissue on hand and strategically placed throughout the facility.

Keep a supply of clean boxes (banker's or moving) on hand to pack reunified items in.

Start in the reunification room and, based on the individual's reactions and emotional state, consider sharing the opportunity to visit the rest of the warehouse where they will have the opportunity to go through additional items as stored.

Explain the different processes that occurred to make the items available for them.

Have grief resources and handouts available, as well as local mental health resources.

Remind individuals 15 minutes before their scheduled time is over.

Plan time between appointments for resetting the reunification room and for staff to reenergize. Limit appointments to only a few per day during the initial phases of reunification.

Unclaimed Personal Belongings – Disposition

Throughout the incident, families and affected individuals should be informed and reminded that the facility will be in operation for a limited time. They will receive reminders and notification when the facility will be closing down, with an opportunity for "last call" to schedule appointments.

The disposition of unclaimed belongings, Category 1 and 2, will be processed in accordance with legal requirements as interpreted by jurisdictional legal counsel. Items will be properly disposed of to prevent health risks to the public and/or to prevent the possibility of exploitation or the profiting of found personal belongings. Disposition of items may include, but is not limited to, recycling material, disposal at waste collection sites, burning, decomposing, destruction, and/or other methods appropriate to health and/or legal compliance.

If an individual does not want to keep or take an item, they may choose to donate it or request the City dispose of it; this decision should include written consent for the City to complete the owner's desired action. Unclaimed American flags will be appropriately retired.

Administration

The Guide will be reviewed for updates or revisions at least every 5 years and/or after each use of the document.

Training may consist of seminars, workshops, or independent study.

Exercises should be conducted at a Table Top or Functional level, and can be in coordination with a response exercise, but should focus clearly and directly on reunification activities.

References

At the time of completion of this document there were no identified references for Personal Belongings Reunification programs; as references become known or documented those items will be listed here.

Appendix A: Basic Supplies

Basic Equipment and Supplies for Set-Up

- Laptop with Wi-Fi capability for each staff member
- Printer/Copier capability
- Telephone capability
- Internet connection, hardwired is preferred
- Thumb drives or external storage devices
- Portable fans
- Industrial fans
- Dehumidifiers
- Cooling system to prevent mold
- Freezers for very wet documents/books/letters
- Large shelves for displaying items
- Wire racks/shelving for drying and air circulation
- Tables – various sizes
- Washtub
- Washing machine if possible
- Hoses with spray nozzles
- Stiff and soft-bristled brushes
- Paper towels
- Garbage cans and plastic garbage bags
- Plastic storage bins, buckets, and tubs of various sizes, with lids
- Extension cords
- Basic tool kit, including drills and saws
- Ladder
- First Aid kit
- Pipe and Drape or partition dividing family area from main warehouse operation

Basic Supplies by Process

Display/Storage Area

- Metal shelves
- Butcher paper
- Painter's tape 1" and 2" rolls
- Drying Racks for hanging goods – various types
- Clothes Pins
- Clothes hangers
- Plastic bins
- Cardboard boxes
- Photo boxes
- Tables

Non-Document Processing Area

Wash/Dry and Tag

- Folding tables
- Wire racks
- Large garbage can
- Large/wide roll freezer paper
- 25-quart clear plastic bins (for washing)
- Painter's tape 1" and 2" wide rolls
- Permanent markers
- Scissors
- Plastic bags- quart and gallon
- File folders 9 ½ x 11 ½
- Heavy paper towels
- Firm bristle brushes
- Floor Mats
- Cotton swabs
- Clipboards
- Pens
- Pencils

Photo Processing Area

- Drying Racks
- Trays or bin lids to place wet photos on
- Rubber floor mats for standing on concrete
- Paper shop towels
- Absorbent papers (white/thick)
- Clipboard and Permanent markers
- Clothespins (to dry towels and handle negatives)
- Spray bottles for water
- Photo cleaning emulsion
- Soft bristle brush (paintbrush) and sponges
- Folding tables
- Plastic bins (sorting items at tables)
- Large garbage cans
- Waterproof aprons
- Dishwashing liquid

Photo Layout Area

- Wide Clear plastic sheeting (3' roll)
- Blue/White absorbent paper toweling for floor layout
- Painters tape
- Cord and hooks to make clothesline to hang/dry negatives
- Clothespins
- Kneepads for kneeling on the floor to place photos to dry
- Permanent markers
- Pencils
- Form 3 – Photo Archive Name Association

Archiving Areas

- Cardboard Archive Boxes
- File Folders 9 ½ x 11 ½
- Worktables
- Chairs
- Plastic storage bins
- Painters tape 1 ½ "
- Permanent markers
- Pencils
- Plastic bags (gallon size)
- Clipboards
- Plain White paper 8 ½ x 11
- Form 3 – Photo Archive Name Association
- Waxed paper sheets to place between photos for archiving
- Multi-level shelving for photo drying
- Large clear plastic sheeting
- Shop paper towels

Secure Room

- Fans for air circulation
- Wire shelving

Break Room

- Paper cups
- Drinks – Water, Juice, Soda
- Snacks
- First-aid supplies
- Garbage cans/bags
- Paper towels
- Tables
- Chairs

General Use Areas

- Fans- floor models large stationary/small oscillating
- 4 wheeled hand truck
- Various plastic bins
- Large garbage bags
- Electric extension cords
- Mops/buckets/brooms/dustpans
- Hand truck
- Hose
- Gloves
- Duct tape
- Scissors
- Paper towels
- Clean cloths
- Magnifying lens
- Clothespins
- Gallon size plastic bags
- Garbage bags
- Dust masks
- Sponges
- Paper 8 ½ x 11
- Pens/pencils
- Facial tissue
- Clear packing tape and dispenser
- Envelopes
- Large plastic bags
- Brown paper bags
- Shop towels
- Disposable exam gloves- S, M, L
- Chairs
- Computer paper
- Pencil holder
- File trays
- Stapler
- Tape dispenser
- Measuring tape

Basic Cleaning Supplies

- Disposable exam gloves- S, M, L
- Rubber gloves (sturdier than exam gloves)
- Clear face shields
- Safety goggles
- Rubber aprons
- Dust masks
- Antibacterial hand soap
- Hand sanitizer
- 5-gallon buckets
- Shop/bar rags
- Paper towels
- Scrub
- Brushes
- Duct tape

Appendix B: Staffing Requirements

Program Manager

Duties and responsibilities:

- Train, supervise, and support staff and volunteers
- Clean, process, and archive photos and documents
- Catalog and store recovered personal belongings
- Maintain communication with incident manager and/or field personnel
- Attend community meetings
- Attend Mass Care Workgroup meetings
- Contact individuals to schedule appointments for the reunification of belongings
- Arrange for mental/spiritual support during reunification visit as requested
- Support and assist individuals during reunification appointments
- Coordinate building maintenance and security

Program Assistant

Duties and responsibilities:

- Volunteer coordination and scheduling
- Train and monitor volunteers as they process items
- Receive deliveries of recovered items
- Issue tag numbers
- Log items
- Maintain tracking system of incoming and outgoing personal belongings, documents, and photos
- Sort, clean and dry items as appropriate
- Gather and stage identified personal items and photos for reunification appointments
- Schedule emotional/spiritual resources as needed
- Maintain appointment calendars of volunteers and individuals in conjunction with the PBR manager
- Maintain Emergency Worker Daily Log

Security

Duties and responsibilities:

- Protect premises from unscheduled and/or unwelcomed persons or media
- Provide staff safety support during reunification appointments

Volunteers

Duties and responsibilities:

- Maintain confidentiality
- Sign in and out each shift and document mileage to & from residence to site
- Work designated shift (recommended no more than 4 hours)
- Stand for long periods of time
- Tolerate cold indoor temperature, it may be necessary to prevent mold; dress in layers
- Be familiar with Critical Incident Stress recognition and resolution
- Bring food and water for personal use

Volunteers will receive an orientation of processes, responsibilities, and communication protocol. The volunteer schedule needs to be flexible based on the needs of the facility. Once a core group of volunteers has been trained, assign at least 1 or 2 trained volunteers per shift to assist new volunteers in processing.

Appendix C: Processing Personal Belongings from the Incident Site

Goal

The goal is to clean (as needed) and store personal items so they are recognizable and can be reunited with the owner or a designated representative.

What to Process

Category 1 items are controlled items such as firearms, cash, and medications as well as items of potential value such as safes, precious metals, and jewelry with gemstones and/or diamonds. Local law enforcement should be engaged as to how they request/recommend processing of these items per legal requirements.

Category 2 items are personal belongings with sentimental or perceived sentimental value. When in doubt, assume the item can be saved.

- photos, slides, negatives, photo albums
- personal documents i.e. birth certificates, passports, drivers licenses, credit cards
- awards/plaques, military bars/pins/patches
- jewelry, carvings, house decoration with a family name
- quilts or blankets
- wedding dress/veil, uniforms, and hats of any type (military, sports, medical, fire)
- flags (any type or condition)
- diplomas, yearbooks, computers and external hard drives, cell phones, CDs
- purses and backpacks
- small hand tools, vanity license plates
- historical or cultural artifacts
- artwork, paintings, fly rod and reels, musical instruments

What Not to Process

- torn/ripped everyday clothing or footwear
- broken records, CDs, tapes
- basic tools or appliances
- sheets/pillowcases
- empty suitcases, bags, bins
- State license plates – report and provide to law enforcement
- damaged sports equipment

Tracking the Items

Use a tag or other system to “label” the item with the following information:

- General location found, GPS is helpful but may not be realistic or required
- Who found the item
- Who tagged the item
- Date and time item was tagged
- If able, a one or two word description of the item

Field Cleaning of Items

The incident may create a situation in which the collected items could be contaminated and require an initial cleaning prior to tagging and transport from the field. Use appropriate personal protective equipment as directed by the Incident Safety Officer, most commonly latex gloves, dust mask, and/or eye protection.

Whenever possible remove as much mud, dirt, debris as able by gently brushing or shaking the item. If necessary, some items may need to be rinsed with water prior to transport. Rinse only as long as needed to remove gross materials; final cleaning will occur at the reunification center.

Things to be aware of:

- Photos and the OUTSIDE of books may be rinsed in the field
- DO NOT RINSE PAPER DOCUMENTS
- Layer photos and documents on absorbent toweling. DO NOT USE household paper towels, as they will stick to the photos.

Transport of Items

All items should be transported to the reunification center on a regular basis, it is recommended to be twice an operational shift, once in the morning and once in the early afternoon. This will help avoid items sitting in the incident environment/elements.

Transport should be by trusted government personnel as the location of the reunification center is confidential and secure. Consider the chain of custody aspects when identifying transport resources.

Appendix D: How to Process, Dry, and Archive Film and Slides

Organizing Items

Create duplicate tags and dry the following items from the same lot separately:

- Developed pictures
- Slides
- Film

Slides

How to care for slides:

- The cardboard on slides takes a longer period of time to dry than printed photos and film. Lay slides on drying towels and associate them with their item number, date, and time.
- Allow slides to dry completely **on each side**.
- When completely dry, gather slides loosely into a file folder. The file folder should be taped on both ends so the slides do not fall out.
- Do not overcrowd. If the slides are an inch or so deep, start another folder.

Film

How to care for film:

- Use clothespin to hang individual film strips from twine along the wall.
- Pin the edges of the film only. If the clip is closed on the picture itself the image will be destroyed.
- When completely dry, gather film strips loosely into a file folder. The file folder should be taped on both ends so the film strips do not fall out.
- Do not overcrowd. If the film strips are an inch or so deep, start another folder.

Storage

File the Film and Slides folders in the Photo Archive Room boxes in numerical sequence.

Ideally, if time permits, the film and slides should be separated by strips of dry waxed paper; however, this is not required.

Appendix E: Personal Belongings Reunification: Emergency Salvage Procedures for Photos, Negatives, Books, and Documents

Created by WA State Archives staff – April 2014

Cleaning Photographs, Slides, and Negatives

Supplies and Set-Up

- 1st container should be filled with 2-3 inches of tepid water. If available, pour about ½ teaspoon of PEC-12 (Archival Photographic Emulsion Cleaner) into the water. 3 drops of Dawn dishwashing liquid can also be added to this tub.
- 2nd container should be filled with 2-3 inches of tepid water
- 3rd container should be filled with 2-3 inches of tepid water



Process

- Always wear personal protective equipment (PPE), i.e. gloves, masks
- Identification of Tag Number – Confirm that numbers associated with each Tag Number are kept segregated from each other throughout the entire process.
- Gently remove items from plastic or paper.
- If items are in photo albums, gently remove them from albums by cutting or tearing the plastic covers away from the photos or slides and then place photos or slides in 1st water container.
- If negatives are in plastic sleeves, gently remove them from the sleeves by cutting or tearing the plastic covers away from the film.
- The cardboard or plastic around individual slides is not removed.



- If individual items or photos are stuck together, place them in 1st water container. Gently agitate back and forth until the debris dissolve and they will separate themselves. If they will not separate, they should be placed in the freezer (see freezing process description below).
- The paper photos are printed on will determine how well they hold up to the cleaning process.
 - Commercial photo paper (film processed in a photo lab with a commercial name on the back) is sturdy and can be soaked.
 - Photos printed on a personal printer can be soaked for a very short time and will begin to show yellowing.
 - Polaroid photos are very fragile and will be destroyed if soaked.
- Slides and negatives are fragile and should only be dipped once in the first solution and once in the clear rinse.
- Gently agitate individual items back and forth under the water until the debris is removed. It is okay to gently rub the photos or brush with a soft nylon paintbrush to remove dirt. If the emulsion layer begins to peel off the item, you are pressing too hard.
- Once excess debris is removed, place in 2nd water container and continue to agitate items.
- Place in 3rd water container for final rinsing.
- CHANGE the water periodically, especially in the 1st container.



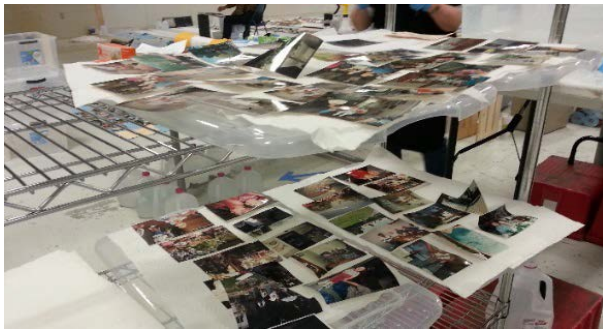
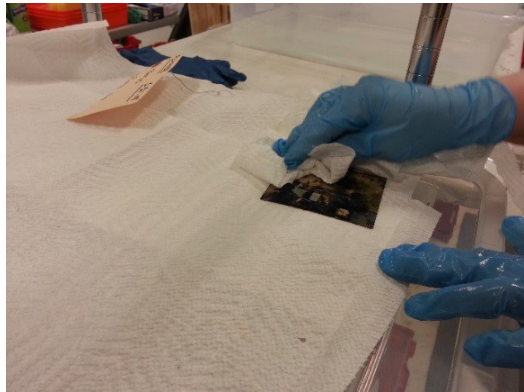
Drying

Supplies and Set-Up

- Container lids or trays covered with absorbent paper towels.
- Roll of paper towels.
- Plastic sheeting – lay out on the floor and cover with a layer of absorbent paper towels. Rolls of blue shop towels work well.
- Sharpie – use to put the Tag Number next to the items.
- Clothesline and clothespins.

Process

- Place wet photos on paper towel-covered lids or trays on shelving.
- Use paper towels to gently blot excess water from photographs or slides.
- Once a lid is full, transfer items to the space designated on the floor with the correct Tag Number, date, and time.
- Be sure no photographs touch, items MUST be completely dry before the next step.
- If needed, and as resources allow, change the absorbent towels beneath the photographs and place clean towels to absorb water.
- If the towels have been marked with Tag Numbers for a previous lot, or lines to separate one lot from another, turn the towels over and start with a clean space.
- Negatives should be hung by a clothespin on the clothesline – be careful to ensure that the pin is used on the edge of the negative only, not on the image.
- Mark the beginning and end of the negatives group with the Tag Number for that group.



Freezing

Items placed in the freezer for drying should be left in the freezer for 3-4 weeks.

Supplies

- Freezer paper
- String
- Permanent pen
- Painter's tape

Labeling

When the item is wrapped for freezing write the following documentation on the outside of the package:

- Tag Number
- Name associated with the item if known
- Contents
- Date frozen
- Condition (how wet)

Process

- Wrap the wet items in freezer paper and secure shut with either tape or string
- Label the outside of the package
- Add the item to the Inventory Log for the freezer
- Place in the freezer flat

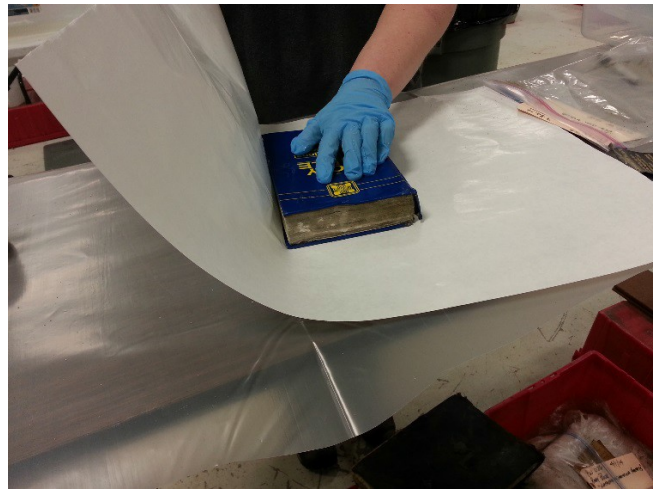


Paper and Books

If you encounter personal papers, books, yearbooks, diplomas, etc. These may be assessed on a case-by-case basis. If the book is in decent condition (you can read the title, the book is partially damp or dirty, etc.) you can use a similar process to clean as the photographs.

Process for Books

- Hold the book tightly
- Run it through the 3 different containers, gently removing dirt and debris. DO NOT OPEN THE BOOK.
- Wrap the book in freezer paper.
- Using twine, tightly tie the book closed.
- Label the outside of the package.
- Add the item to the inventory log for the freezer
- Place in the freezer



Process for Paper

- VERY gently remove as much debris as possible
- Place on absorbent paper and blot dry
- Flatten and insert the paper into a file folder
- Wrap the folder in freezer paper and secure shut with either tape or string
- Label the outside of the package
- Add the item to the Inventory Log for the freezer
- Place in the freezer flat

Communication Appendix

Background

Establishing regular consistent communications with incident survivors is critical to the recovery and healing process. It is well known that major efforts associated with incidents are newsworthy and thus media communications will be necessary.

Overview

The personal belongings reunification program will make every reasonable effort to openly and regularly communicate with persons affected by an incident which may include survivors, next of kin, property owners, residents, businesses, and the broader community. In addition, and when appropriate, media will receive program communications.

Key Media Contacts

All media inquiries related to property reunification will be referred to the following City of Kirkland staff positions to be addressed.

- City Communications Manager
- Disaster Recovery Manager or Recovery Team Leader
- Personal Belongings Reunification Program Manager
- Others as identified or designated by the City Manager

Communication with Affected Individuals

Initially, all methods available (email, postal mail, community meetings, word of mouth, social media, news outlets, reader boards, property records, etc.) may be used to reach individuals believed to be affected by an incident that created the use of the Personal Belongings Reunification Guide.

Once the affected individuals have been identified, the Personal Belongings Reunification Manager will adjust communications to fit the needs and desires of the individual whenever possible.

Communication with Media

Information regarding reunification will be provided to the media through official incident press releases, advisories, or news conferences. Media reporting on the reunification effort will be invited to view the reunification center and/or items and interview program representatives only after the reunification process has been completed with the affected individuals, or at a time identified by program leadership as appropriate.

Volunteer Orientation

Personal Belongings Reunification (PBR) Manager: _____

Facility Address: _____

Facility Hours: _____ **Shifts:** _____

Goal

- To clean and store personal items so they can be reunified
- Respect for owners and personal information is the top priority

Report to: PBR Manager

Confidentiality

- Protect and respect individuals' privacy.
- Use the "Lab Tech" mentality and resist the temptation to read letters and legal documents.
- Do not share personal identifying information related to reunification.

Media

- What to do if media comes or calls.
 - Advise them you are not authorized to talk about the project and provide them the PBR Manager's contact information.
 - If the media is on-site and aggressive call 911 and request law enforcement.

Volunteer Need-to-Know

- Bring your Emergency Worker ID or registration number with you
- Check in and check out daily
- Wear name tag
- Bring food and drinking water
- Dress in layers with good footwear
- Physical stress - rotate jobs and take breaks
- Access Critical Incident Stress relief resources
- All assignments are made through the volunteer coordinator
- Appropriate personal protective equipment will be provided

Walk-through and Organization

- Delivery times
- How items are tagged
- Property Log
- Floor plan and general job assignments

Volunteers will work a maximum of 4 hours at a time.

Draft Forms Appendix

Printed copies and digital versions of the following forms are maintained by the OEM for incident use. These forms are working documents and are intended to be adjusted to meet incident needs.

Item Log

[illegible]

Personal Belongings Reunification Program

Contact Form

This form will be used to assist in the property return process. Please provide as complete information as possible. You will be notified when the Personal Property Reunification Center is ready to schedule appointments. Please be prepared to present identification at the appointment.

About Me: (please print clearly)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Alt Phone: _____

Email: _____

Preferred Method of Contact: _____

Who is the legal contact for your family? _____

Property Owner of Record:

Name(s): _____

Address(es): _____

I am interested in this property because: *(Example: John Smith is my uncle)*

Names, subjects, or identifiers on photos: (Adults, children, pets, places, events, schools, etc.)

Description of items of interest: (Example: Service plaque with "John Doe" on it, Army uniform "Lt. Smith", pearl necklace with silver chain, blown glass blue whale 4 inches tall, etc.)

Thank you for your assistance. Please add any comments or concerns you may have on the back of this page. If you have any questions, please contact the Program Manager at

(____)-____-____ or _____@_____

Photo Archive Name Associations Form

(Use when a name is on a photo, for coordinating with other items)

[illegible]

Personal Belongings Reunification Program

Visitor Sign In Form

Date	Name	Address	Identification	Time