



MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## MAGNETIC MEDIA: COMPUTER DISKETTES

Priority: Prolonged storage in water causes leaching of chemicals from the support. If a back-up copy is available, it is better to discard the water-soaked original.

Handling Precautions: Store diskettes upright without crowding, in cool distilled water until you are ready to attempt data recovery. Exposure to water should not extend beyond 72 hrs. If discs cannot be dried and copied within three days, the discs should be placed wet in plastic bags and frozen until drying and data recovery is possible.

### Supplies Needed

**blotter paper**  
**cheese cloth**  
**distilled water**  
**fans**  
**plastic trays**  
**scissors**

**bubble pack**  
**clothes line**  
**Falcon squeegee**  
**plastic bags**  
**rust-proof clips**  
**sponges**

**brushes (soft bristle)**  
**dehumidifier**  
**drying racks for RC prints**  
**Kodak Photo Flo solution**  
**Salthill dryer**

Preparation For Drying: 5¼" disks - remove the disk by cutting with scissors along the edge of jacket. Carefully remove the diskette and agitate the exposed disks in multiple baths of cool deionized water from the Objects Conservation Lab or distilled water to remove all visible dirt.

3½" disks - pack wet disks in plastic bags and ship overnight to a computer media recovery service vendor for data recovery (Appendix 4). Do not dry discs first: dried impurities can etch magnetic coating.

Drying Methods: 5¼" disks - dry with lint-free toweling or cheese cloth. 3½" disks - Send disks to a professional data recovery vendor. Do not attempt to copy. Damage to your hardware could result.

Data Recovery: In order to ensure the preservation of data on disks that have been wet, it is prudent to copy it to a new disk. Insert the disk which has been dried into an empty jacket made by removing a new disk. The water damaged disk which has been placed in the new jacket is inserted into a disk drive. Copy and verify that the information has transferred, then discard the damaged disk. You need only prepare one new jacket for each five to ten disks since the same jacket can be reused several times. Most diskettes can be salvaged unless the diskette itself is magnetically damaged or warped. If copying is not successful, consult computer recovery services in Appendix 4.