



MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

VELLUM AND PARCHMENT: BINDINGS AND DOCUMENTS

Priority: If the textblock of the book is wet, priority should be placed on getting it dry over saving the binding, unless the binding has been assigned the higher priority by a curator.

Handling: Do not move items until a place has been prepared to receive them.
Precautions:

Supplies Needed

blotters

weights

Hollytex

Drying Procedures: Drying must take place slowly and be carefully controlled. The item needs to be restrained as it dries for it to retain its shape.

Documents that have only been exposed to high humidity should be interleaved with dry blotters and placed under weights. Blotters should be checked after about a half hour to see if they need to be exchanged for drier ones.

For drying of slightly damp documents the edges should be clipped and pinned or, at the least, weighted. As the item dries it should be checked at least every 15 minutes and the tension adjusted as necessary. Once the item is almost dry the clips or weights can be removed and the item should be placed between blotters and weighted overall to complete drying.

Vellum bindings need to be watched carefully. Blotters should be placed between the covers and text and on the outside of the cover. The book should then be weighted or put in a press. As the binding dries it may shrink and cause damage to the text block, in which case it should be carefully removed before more damage is caused.

Thermaline or cryogenic drying is a new technique that shows promise for vellum and parchment. Vacuum freeze drying is to be avoided with vellum/parchment.