



MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

WOOD

Priority: Begin drying within 48 hours to prevent mold growth. Polychromed objects require immediate attention; notify the Conservator.

Handling: Move items only after a place has been prepared to receive them. Lift from the bottom of an object: tables from the apron; chairs by the seat rails, not by the arms, stretchers, slats, headpiece or crest rails; trunks from the bottom, etc.

Packing Methods: Partially wetted objects can be packed with dry blotting materials such as uninked newsprint or acid free blotters to remove as much moisture as possible. Thoroughly wetted, unpainted objects should be wrapped with blotting materials, then wrapped in polyethylene sheeting to retain as much moisture as possible, since fast drying will cause irreversible damage.

Supplies Needed

soft bristle brush sponges, clean towels, paper towels fans
wooden spatula polyethylene sheeting or uninked newsprint
pallets or lumber portable dehumidifier

Preparation For Drying: Rinse or sponge with clear water to remove mud or dirt before drying. Be careful not to wipe or scour as grit will damage remaining finish. Use a soft bristle brush to clean carvings and crevices. If mud has dried, dampen with a sponge and remove with a wooden spatula; rinse. Remove wet contents and paper liners from drawers and shelves.

Drying Procedure: Absorb excess moisture with sponges, clean towels, paper towels, or uninked newsprint. Blot, do not wipe, to avoid scratching the surface.

Air dry, using fans to keep air moving without blowing directly on the pieces. Tent the objects with polyethylene sheeting to slow the drying. Raise items off the floor on trestles, pallets, or lumber to allow air to circulate on all sides. Open doors and drawers slightly to allow air to circulate inside the items.

Use portable dehumidifiers to slowly remove moisture from the area and objects. Drying quickly will cause warping and cracking. Bring relative humidity down to 50-55%.