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Professional Materials

Karen Antell, Editor

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Disaster Response and Planning for Libraries, 3rd Ed. Miriam B. Kahn. Chicago: ALA, 2012. 158 p. Paper \$60 (ISBN 978-0-8389-1151-8).

“Hope for the best, but prepare for the worst”—excellent advice for anyone, but especially for librarians. Charged with protecting and preserving valuable resources, institutions such as libraries and archives must be ready for all kinds of situations, from natural disasters to power outages. The third edition of *Disaster Response and Planning for Libraries* helps institutions form a thorough, comprehensive disaster plan, but also takes into account the possibility that they may not yet have one. As author Miriam B. Kahn observes, “Disasters come whether or not we are prepared” (xi).

Kahn has extensively revised the 2003 edition to include up-to-date procedures and forms. As in the previous editions, the manual is divided into five sections: Response, Recovering Collections and Restoring Operations, Prevention, Planning, and Response and Recovery Procedures. The first two sections focus on immediate disaster response and a quick return to normal operations. Sections Three and Four guide institutions in assessing their readiness and planning for various scenarios. Finally, Section Five covers how to deal with various material formats and situations (ozone, mold, insects, etc.). Each section is comprehensive and detailed, but unfortunately, the case studies that concluded each section of the previous edition are no longer included. These immediate “reports from the field” were useful in providing real-world examples of the importance of the concepts detailed in the volume.

The book's densely packed text does not lend itself to quick reference in times of emergency. More useful in the “heat of the moment” is Appendix A, which provides dozens of checklists and forms, ranging from basic emergency contact lists to very detailed materials recovery checklists. The author has also created a series of additional forms in three sequential phases: Phase I, “Activate Plan”; Phase II, “Assessment”; and Phase III, “Rescue and Recovery.”

Especially in the aftermath of major events such as Hurricane Katrina, the Oklahoma City bombing, and September 11th, 2001, disaster planning books, articles, and websites have proliferated, numbering in the hundreds. However, with its wealth of essential information, this new edition of *Disaster Response and Planning for Libraries* stands out as one of the best.—Jennifer A. Bartlett, Head of Reference Services, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky

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Past or Portal: Enhancing Undergraduate Learning through Special Collections and Archives. Ed. by Eleanor Mitchell, Peggy Seiden, and Suzy Taraba. Chicago: ACRL Publishing, 2012. 336 p. Paper \$60 (ISBN 978-0838986103).

This book presents a collection of individual case studies concerning education and special collections. As with any collection written by different authors, some case studies are more engaging than others, but for those with an interest in integrating special collections into educational environments,