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## Salvaging Flooded Tapes Checklist

- Do not attempt to play back wet tapes.
- Tape cases and shippers are not watertight. Exterior moisture usually means interior moisture.
- Damage to wet tapes is time sensitive. Delay in recovery is likely to destroy some tapes.
- Contaminants in the water can do more immediate harm than the water itself. The most common, dangerous contaminants found in water are salt, sugar, chlorine and sewage.
- It is sometimes possible to hold ferric oxide formulation tapes in very cold, distilled water for extended times without substantial damage. Metal Particle or Metal Evaporated tapes will oxidize and be destroyed if they remain wet too long.
- Freeze drying wet tapes is not recommended.
- Wet tapes should be decontaminated as soon as possible. Best results are obtained when professional restoration experts can begin working on the tapes while they are still wet.
- Handle wet tapes very gently. Water compromises the physical structure of magnetic tapes making them much more susceptible to stretching, tearing and edge damage.
- Prior to recovery, keep tapes in an area that is cool and well ventilated but do not freeze.
- Do not change the tape's orientation to avoid spreading water that may be trapped in the case.
- Contaminants must be rinsed off wet tape as soon as possible. Be gentle and use only cool distilled water. Never use tap water that may contain chlorine.
- In-house drying is best done by exposing the tapes to an environment of cool, dry air.
- In-house drying attempts can result in deformation of the tape and/or tape sticking to the inside of the cassette.

- All paper inserts and wet cardboard should be removed to reduce the possibility of fungal growth.
- Wet tapes should be wrapped in at least two layers of bubble wrap and packed in sturdy boxes to protect against shock and exposure during shipment.

*Peter Brothers is the CEO of SPECS BROS., LLC and is an internationally recognized expert who has spent more than twenty five years developing and applying disaster recovery procedures for magnetic tape. He has testified as a tape expert for The Library of Congress, trained museum and archive personnel in tape conservation, restored tapes from nearly every corner of the globe, given disaster recovery presentations to numerous organizations and is a contributing author on a number of National and International Standards on magnetic tape preservation. Contact Peter Brothers at: (973) 777-5055 or e-mail him at: [peter@specsbro.com](mailto:peter@specsbro.com).*