

Hollister Herbarium Emergency and Disaster Plan

Collections emergency preparedness and response plan

Administrative unit	Department of Biology, College of Arts and Sciences
Policy owner	Director and Curator, Hollister Herbarium
Approval authority	Department of Biology and Tennessee Tech
Effective date	June 1, 2026
Review cycle	Review contact information each semester and exercise the plan annually

Immediate priorities

Priority	Action
1 Life safety	Call 911 for immediate danger. Follow alarms, evacuation orders, and Tennessee Tech emergency instructions. Do not enter an unsafe area.
2 Stabilize the incident	Notify University Police at 931-372-3234 and the appropriate university emergency, facilities, safety, and departmental contacts.
3 Protect collections	Only after the area is declared safe, stop or contain the source when authorized, document conditions, and begin a coordinated collections response.
4 Recover and document	Triage, stabilize, track, and assess affected material; preserve records of decisions, costs, losses, and treatments.

Emergency contacts to maintain locally

Function	Primary contact	Alternate or after hours
University Police	931-372-3234	911 for immediate danger
Director and Curator	Shawn Krosnick, 870-949-1432	University Police
Biology Department	Steven Hayslette, Chair, 931-372-3146	Dean Daren Snider, 931-372-3146 or University Police
Facilities	931-372-3227	University Police
Environmental health and safety	David Hobbs, 931-372-6071	University Police

Function	Primary contact	Alternate or after hours
Information technology	helpdesk@tntech.edu	helpdesk@tntech.edu

Required local action Keep a dated copy of the completed contact sheet inside the collection entrance, with the Department of Biology, and in a secure off-site digital location.

Likely hazards

- Fire, smoke, sprinkler discharge, and firefighting water.
- Roof, plumbing, HVAC, window, or groundwater leaks; flooding and high humidity.
- Severe weather, tornadoes, power loss, temperature extremes, and prolonged building closure.
- Pest infestation, mold, hazardous residues, or contamination.
- Theft, vandalism, unauthorized access, cybersecurity incidents, and loss of collection data.
- Construction, renovation, cabinet movement, and accidental handling damage.

Preparedness

- Maintain clear aisles, exits, shutoff access, cabinet labels, floor plans, and staff emergency contact information.
- Keep collections above floor level where practical and do not store irreplaceable records under pipes or known leak points.
- Maintain an emergency supply cache outside the most likely affected area and inspect it annually.
- Identify priority collections based on uniqueness, rarity, historical value, active research, condition, and replaceability. Do not publicly post security-sensitive priority maps.
- Back up collection databases and critical administrative records in university-supported systems and test restoration periodically.
- Photograph collection areas and retain current inventories, insurance or property information, vendor contacts, and emergency procedures.

Response organization

Tennessee Tech emergency authorities control life safety, building access, utilities, and incident command. The Director and Curator advises on collection priorities and records. No student, volunteer, or visitor may enter or perform salvage without authorization, supervision, and appropriate training and protective equipment.

Collections response sequence

1. Confirm that the area is safe and identify hazards such as electricity, contaminated water, mold, unstable shelving, chemicals, or smoke.
2. Establish a clean staging area and a single response lead. Photograph conditions before moving material when it is safe to do so.
3. Assign unique tracking information to removed cabinets, folders, and specimens. Never separate a specimen from its label or catalog number.
4. Triage by urgency and condition, not only by perceived value. Wet and actively deteriorating materials usually require action before stable dry material.

5. Consult a conservator or experienced collections professional before large-scale drying, freezing, cleaning, soot removal, mold remediation, or treatment of chemically contaminated material.
6. Maintain daily decision, location, labor, supply, treatment, and loss records through the recovery period.

Water affected specimens

If safe and feasible, move wet material to a clean, cool, dry staging area with air movement. Keep labels and sheets supported and together. Interleave or air-dry small amounts under professional guidance. For quantities that cannot be dried promptly, freezing may prevent further mold and buy time, but the method must be selected with collections-care advice. Do not open visibly moldy packets or brush active mold without appropriate containment and protection.

Emergency supply cache

- Plastic sheeting, clean blotter or unprinted paper, waxed paper, polyester film, absorbent pads, and freezer bags.
- Nitrile gloves, protective clothing, eye protection, flashlights, batteries, clipboards, pencils, waterproof labels, and permanent markers for outer containers.
- Fans, extension cords with ground-fault protection, wet-dry vacuum, and dehumidification equipment only when approved for the hazard and power conditions.
- Camera, measuring tape, box cutters, scissors, buckets, crates, carts, clean boards, and basic hand tools.
- Copies of this plan, contact list, floor plan, priority information, inventory, and tracking forms.

After action review

After any event, document cause, response, damage, costs, treatment, data loss, and remaining risks. Update the plan, supplies, training, facility requests, and insurance or grant documentation. Report material losses or disposal through university property and collection-management procedures.