

Handling Archival Material

General guidelines

- No eating or drinking
- Make sure your hands are clean and avoid using hand cream
- Do not lick your fingers when turning pages
- Avoid leaning on or touching the document
- Be careful not to mark any items
- Keep documents in the order in which you received them
- Do not remove individual items from files, volumes or boxes
- Do not attempt to re-arrange any items in your preferred order
- Staff will provide guidance for specialist handling of items such as certain photographic and audio-visual materials, maps, plans, oversize and fragile documents

While working with archival material

- Handle with care
- Carefully remove packaging and remember if possible how to replace it. If you are unsure, please ask for assistance
- Use the preservation aids provided to ensure that documents are fully supported and weights, if necessary, to hold rolled documents or tightly bound volumes open
- Ensure you are not holding items while reading
- Make sure items do not hang off the edge of your desk
- Be careful when unrolling documents - any force may crack or tear them
- Do not put items other than the special weights provided on top of any material
- Use a pencil for your notes
- Pens, highlighters, fibre tip pens, correction fluid, sticky notes are not permitted to be used when working with archives

Photographs

- Use nitrile gloves that will be provided by staff
- Hold photographs by the edges and avoid touching the image

Files

- Files consist of papers bound together in a file folder. Files may contain photographs, or folded maps and drawings (enclosures)
- Turn the pages carefully, taking particular care if bound in the top corner only with a treasury-type tag. Punched holes are particularly vulnerable and easily torn
- If pages are loose in a file, flip pages over carefully, one at a time. Do not disturb the original order of the pages
- Be careful of thin duplicate papers (flimsies) which are particularly fragile and easily torn
- Take particular care with enclosures, especially those that require unfolding.
- When you have finished tidy the pages inside the cover so that they are protected

Books and bound volumes

- Do not force books open
- Ask staff for help if a book is particularly large or heavy, or if pages are stuck together
- Use the book supports provided
- Use weights to hold down pages