

## 2. Salvage of Specific Materials

### 2.6 Wooden Masks, Headdresses, and Frontlets

How to dry masks, headdresses, and frontlets

#### SUMMARY

##### IN A NUTSHELL:

- If already completely wet, rinse as necessary,
- Slow dry,
- Monitor closely for mould,

##### SALVAGE PRIORITIES:

- Items with painted or attached decoration

##### WHAT TO EXPECT:

- Wooden regalia may crack and paints may lighten or change colour.
- Parts may become loose, damaged or lost depending upon how they are attached.

#### STEP 1

**Rinse masks if already completely wet, and dirty or contaminated (seawater, sewage)**

- Use a gentle flow of water from a hose, garden sprayer, or jug of water to pour or spray a stream of water to remove debris. Use a soft brush to delicately dislodge dirt.
- Dried dirt can be removed later with a vacuum and soft brush.
- Attachments present difficult choices. It's usually most important to prioritize the wood. Matted feathers, for example, can be improved or replaced later.



Feathers may look matted after drying but can be fixed or replaced after the emergency is over.



##### Caution

*Be careful touching painted and inlaid surfaces. They can be damaged during handling.*



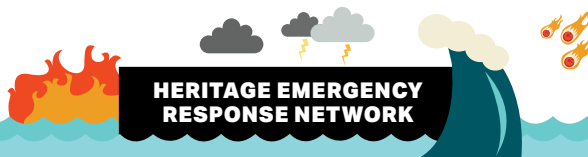
##### Tip

*If attached parts have separated from the mask, photograph them next to the mask to ensure they are documented for later reassembly.*



##### Caution

*Do not try to wipe or rub dirt off wet surfaces as you may scratch or even remove paint or other finishes.*



## STEP 2

### Remove excess water

- Tilt to allow excess water to run off and place on absorbent material to drain excess water. Avoid blotting as this may remove paint or other decorations.

## STEP 3

### Dry masks slowly

- Slow drying is best to minimize the risk of warping and cracking wood.
- Put spacers underneath to allow more airflow, promote drying, and reduce the risk of mould.
- Slow dry by draping plastic sheeting over without allowing the sheeting to come directly in contact with the surface of the mask. You can also make a larger tented drying area with other objects as needed.



A mask raised to increase air flow and covered to slow the drying

- Parts that become detached may be cleaned and dried separately.
- Check for mould growth as often as possible. *If mould is observed, see Sheet 3.3 Mould.*



#### Caution

**Slow dry wood. It may crack during drying.**



#### Tip



***If storage or display support is available, use it to hold the mask while drying.***



#### Tip

***If condensation builds up on the inside of plastic, remove the plastic and turn it over so that the wet side is out. Repeat as necessary.***



#### Tip

***You can modify a fast-drying tunnel (see Sheet 2.4.1.2 Build and Use a Tunnel to Quickly Dry Collections) to a slow drying tent by removing the fan and closing off both ends.***

## STEP 4

### Monitor the drying process

- Regularly check and take action if you see signs of mould. *See Sheet 3.3 Mould.*
- Keep air moving in the drying areas by opening windows or using fans.
- It's difficult to know when a complicated mask, frontlet, or headdress is dry. When no parts feel cool to the touch, move it to a regular air drying area for another day and then to a safe dry area.



#### Tip

##### WHEN IS IT DRY?

*Materials are dry when they no longer feel cool when touched with the back of your hand.*

## STEP 5

### Organize salvaged masks and tidy workspaces

- Complete the documentation for your institution and for your insurance provider.
- Confirm what can be discarded.
- Depending on the situation, you may need to label and pack some dry items for temporary storage or for conservation treatment.
- Move salvaged masks to permanent or temporary storage locations.
- Clean work areas and replenish supplies

CONGRATULATIONS! This marks the end of the emergency for these items – they are now safe.

## STEP 6

### Tie up loose ends

Identify and manage any outstanding priorities or remaining issues such as:

- Ensure mouldy items are dealt with. *See Sheet 3.3 Mould.*
- Further treatment steps such as cleaning and repairing can be scheduled.
- Contact a conservator for specific guidance and advice if needed.



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