

Responsibilities of Volunteers and Researchers

The following procedures are designed to enable you to help implement the preservation policy whilst you are undertaking any work with the collection and ensure that you do not unwittingly damage the items you are working with. These are standard procedures in archives, libraries, art galleries and museums.

Volunteers

1. Wear gloves when handling photographs, cloth or particularly fragile papers.
Ensure hands are washed and thoroughly dried before handling papers, books and periodicals. The oils on our hands build up on papers and objects and cause damage in the long term.
2. Use pencils rather than pens when working with the collection. If you inadvertently mark something, pencil is much easier to remove. This does not apply when labelling video and other tape, the dust from pencils can damage magnetic tape so a pen must be used.
3. Keep food and drink away from any part of the collection in the workspace. No food or drink should ever be taken into the archive. Crumbs and spills could do irreparable damage.
4. Discuss the particular preservation needs of the part of the collection you are working on with other volunteers. Volunteers who are working on re-housing the collection are encouraged to liaise with professional conservators where possible and to seek advice from our suppliers. Some ALGA volunteers have professional experience in archives and museums and are eager to answer questions and point you in the appropriate direction.
5. If you find that anything in the archive has become mouldy or damp it is essential that you act immediately to isolate the item from the rest of the collection. If you are not sure what to do, alert one of your fellow volunteers to the problem.
6. If you follow the above guidelines you should feel free to go and check out any part of the collection that interests you. However be careful to not over handle items and always ensure that you return things to their rightful place.

Researchers

The Australian Lesbian and Gay Archives invests a lot of time and money to ensure that the collection is accessible to the public now and in the future. We rely on people accessing our collection to help us to ensure its survival for future researchers by upholding the following guidelines.

1. Ensure your hands are clean and dry before you handle papers.
2. Wear white cotton gloves provided by ALGA to handle objects or fragile papers.
3. Keep food and drink away from any part of the collection.
4. If you are looking at photos or badges please don't remove them from their plastic pockets. Don't handle anything unnecessarily.
5. Put things back as you got them. Do not open more than one box at a time unless it is absolutely necessary to compare two items.
6. Use pencil, not pen, to make notes while you are working with the collection.
7. If you find something is damp or mouldy, alert a volunteer. The item needs to be isolated so that the problem doesn't spread.
8. Researchers who have the time can also aid the preservation of ALGA by undertaking very basic re-housing work on items they are accessing, for example removing papers from manila folders to acid free ones, replacing metal paper clips by plastic ones.
9. Keep a daily record of all files accessed, so that if material is inadvertently misfiled, we have a means of finding misplaced material.