



## Preservation Guidelines for Handling and Scanning Records

### Iraqi Jewish Archive Preservation Project National Archives and Records Administration

The following instructions provide general guidance on the proper handling of documents during imaging. In addition, specific written guidelines will cover procedures developed for the Iraqi Jewish Archives Project (IJA). Preservation training based on these guidelines and procedures will be provided before IJA staff begin to work with the IJA materials.

#### General Requirements:

- No records may be removed by IDS staff from the B400 Imaging Suite.
- Return all records, whether scanned or not, to the staging countertop at the end of each work day.
- Smoking, drinking, and eating are not permitted in the room where the work stations are located. No food, chewing gum, candy, or liquids are permitted in the work space.
- Only pencils may be used near records or records containers (such as boxes, folders, sleeves). Ballpoint pens, felt tip pens, markers, and similar items are not permitted.
- Do not write on records or their containers with pencils or any other implements.
- Do not place self-stick notes (such as "Post-It Notes") on records.
- Do not apply adhesive tapes (such as Scotch® tapes) to records or records containers.
- Nothing may be placed on top of records or their containers. This includes but is not limited to such objects as cameras and other equipment, notebooks, place holder sheets, pencils, etc.
- Do not rest, lean, or otherwise exert pressure on records or their containers.
- Do not move or drag records across other records or against surfaces (such as tables or equipment) that might abrade them or cause them to break.
- Do not place records or their containers on the floor or on chairs. Place records and their containers on tables, carts, or work surfaces.
- Keep records covered or in closed boxes or folders at all times except when being actively worked on or scanned. Use empty file folders or sheets of acid-free Permalife paper to cover records during short breaks (5 minutes or less). Return all records to their folders and containers during lunch and longer breaks (5 minutes or less). Return all records to their folders and containers during lunch and longer breaks.

- Keep records in their original order and return to their original folders or containers after imaging. Remove only one item at a time from its folder or container. Do not remove items from polyester sleeves for scanning. Sleeving is a protective preservation measure for fragile documents.
- Carefully align records on top of one another in a folder so that edges of documents do not stick out but are fully supported. Also make sure that edges of documents do not extend beyond the folder. Do not jog or tap records on end to align them.
- Keep all pull or tracking slips with the records, their folders and/or containers. This includes the work ticket.

### Handling Individual Records:

- Report any items that cannot be safely imaged and seek further guidance from Conservation staff. These include brittle or breaking items, warped or distorted objects, items that start to crack or break along weakened fold lines, rolled records, and oversized materials.
- Keep hands clean and free from any substance that could stain or damage records or their containers. This includes food, ink, toner, tobacco, hand lotion, hand sanitizer and "Tacky Finger" or similar products.
- Handle records carefully as they are removed from boxes, folders, envelopes, and other records containers. Rest the container or enclosure on a flat work surface, and then open to remove the record. Small groups of records from a single folder that are being actively worked on may be stacked on top of one another, as long as the height of the stack does not put records in jeopardy of falling.
- Make available a clear and clean "landing surface" (table or work surface) as records are being handled and moved about at the work station. The table must be larger than the records. Do not reach to place materials nor carry materials across the room without support or enclosures.
- Do not use a book cart or equipment cart as a work surface for records.
- Support records underneath with two hands, folder stock, or paperboard provided by NARA. Do not grasp items by one hand or lift by one edge or corner.
- Do not remove records from L-sleeves.
- Always wear gloves when handling photographs that are not sleeved in clear plastic.
- Do not backroll, backfold or "pop" creases in records in attempts to open and flatten them. If creases obscure text, call Conservation or flag it for conservation review later.
- Records may not overhang work surfaces. Keep records at least 3" from the edges of tables and copy boards.

## Equipment:

- Equipment shall have platens or copy boards upon which records are supported over their entire surface. No portion of the record is allowed to drape off the side or edge of the scanning platen. Tab oversize items that do not fit on the platen for scanning by NARA staff. No part of the equipment shall come in contact with records in a manner that causes friction, abrasion, or that otherwise crush or damage records.
- Do not allow pressure-sensitive adhesive tape or any other adhesive substance to come in contact with any part of a record.
- Do not allow light sources to raise the surface temperature of the record being scanned. Use a blank piece of paper or a non-record photocopy to make camera and equipment adjustments.
- Keep records covered except during scanning to limit the exposure of records to excessive light exposure. Limit the amount of time the record is uncovered to approximately 30 seconds.
- Keep all equipment surfaces clean and dry. Cleaning and equipment maintenance activities may not take place when records are present.
- Do not use aerosols or ammonia-containing cleaning solutions. Do not use dusting cloths that contain oily substances to trap dirt.
- All cleaning materials will either be provided by—or must be approved by—the Document Conservation Division.