

HANDLING OF 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 – rather use a paper marker to follow text
- Be careful not to mark any items
- Please keep the 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

While Working with Material

- **Handle with care**
- Carefully remove packaging and remember if possible how to replace it
- Ensure you are not holding items while reading and make sure they do not hang off the edge of your desk while reading
- 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
- Be careful when unrolling documents - any force may crack or tear them
- Do not put items 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
- Staff will provide guidance for specialist handling of items

See overleaf for instructions of handling specific types of material

Handling photographs

- Use nitrile gloves that will be provided by the staff
- Hold photographs by the edges and avoid touching them on the image
- Seek advice from the Archivist when handling glass plate negatives, 35 mm slides and film

Handling 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. The punched hole is 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 can be 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

Handling 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, and use a paper marker to follow the text

Handling maps, plans and oversize documents

- Any material larger than A3 may need to be handled by two people – you will be advised by the staff
- Make sure that you have enough space before unrolling a large document
- Use weights to hold down pages, but place them round the edge, rather than on top of the printed or drawn image