What is M.E.S.T. and How Can You Get Involved?
The origins of M.E.S.T. in Richmond
Museum Emergency Support Team

Mission

Provide an active network for local museums, libraries, archives and historic sites to improve their collective emergency preparedness, better protect their collections, staff and visitors, and coordinate mutual assistance in recovery from disasters affecting cultural resources in the Greater Richmond area.
Museum Emergency Support Team

Vision

The Richmond Area M.E.S.T. will serve as a meaningful supplement to each institution’s own disaster planning efforts, including training, planning, and resources. M.E.S.T. activities will foster a culture of preparedness amongst area cultural institutions.

In the spirit of professional cooperation, participation is encouraged by both public and private institutions. M.E.S.T. shall provide a forum for communication, planning, and assistance outside of institutional structures and restrictions.

To be available as a “go-to” resource for City and County first responders in addressing emergencies affecting cultural resources.

To provide a forum in which staff of collections-based institutions can build relationships and develop awareness of one another’s locations, collections, and resources before emergency incidents, not during them. Such mutual familiarization will allow M.E.S.T. to help direct resources and assistance to those institutions most in need during an incident affecting multiple locations.
2010: New Year, New M.E.S.T.
Why We Re-organized.
This happens.....
Organization Format

- Elections held at the first meeting of every year.
- Positions rotate annually.
- Anticipated workload of a position is 1-2 hours per month, in addition to attending meetings.
- Co-chairpersons are asked to take over the corresponding chair position the following year.
- Positions include:
  - M.E.S.T. Chairperson
  - M.E.S.T. Co-chairperson
  - Committee Chairperson (one per committee)
  - Committee Co-chairperson
Meeting Schedule

- 4 meetings per year
- January (elections and committee meeting), March (training session), July (committee meeting), October (training session).
- Meetings include committee updates, tour of host facility, announcements of training opportunities, topical news items.
Communications and Supplies Committee

This committee is responsible for the MEST phone trees, communication back up plans and other methods of ensuring that in an emergency, Richmond area museums will be able to maintain communication with each other. This committee will also work with the City of Richmond and surrounding counties to create on-going dialogue and relationships between our group and the municipalities’ emergency service coordinators.

It will also work on generating a standardized list of emergency supplies for every site, a list of resources available on a state, local and federal level and will work to develop and maintain cooperative relationships with local vendors of disaster supplies on behalf of the group. This committee will also coordinate the use of the MEST Smart Box including stocking, inventory and monitoring of shelf life of supplies.
Training and Technical Assistance Committee

This committee will investigate different options for training group members and other Richmond area museum staff in disaster preparedness and response techniques. The committee will also plan training programs for meetings as needed.

This committee will also work with area museums on their disaster plans, helping organizations with no or outdated plans to get an accurate plan ready.
Membership Committee and Administrative Duties

This committee will collect Membership Forms, maintain a membership database, fine tune the Mutual Aid Agreement and recruit new members.
Importance of Balanced Membership

Collections Staff

Facilities Staff
Member Institution Participation

Museum Collection Triage

During emergency / first responder. May include removal, sorting, documentation, or packing of collections as directed by receiving institution.

Volunteers are REQUIRED to have CERT and Virginia Association of Museum’s (VAM) ERT museum training or equivalent training or experience.
Member Institution Participation

Museum Collection Salvage

Post emergency. May include removal, cleaning, packing, labeling or documenting of collections as directed by receiving institution.
Member Institution Participation

MEST Team Support

During salvage or triage. May include distribution of shared supplies, tracking of volunteer hours, coordination of assignments, distribution of food and water to volunteers, etc.
Member Institution Participation

Administrative Support

Assist with the “Continuation of Operation” needs such as temporary office space, payroll assistance, off-site phone and mail contact, etc.
Member Institution Participation

**Resources**

May include providing temporary collection storage, additional storage supplies, additional disaster supplies, loan of moving van or truck, use of freezer.
Our Members