



## 1. HUMAN ACTION

Man is one of the biggest aggressors of documents, being more destructive to the cultural heritage than nature itself.

The damage caused by humans can be direct or indirect, intentional or accidental, such as:

- a) **Mishandling, neglect:** pulling a book off a shelf by the top of the spine; bend; scratching and folding sheets; opening the books so wide that forces its structure; smearing a document by handling;
- b) **Incorrect protective enclosures:** stacking large quantities of books and not cleaning them regularly; overbooking the shelves; usage very hot and humid storage spaces and with inadequate ventilation; not cleaning;
- c) **Vandalism:** political and religious censorship; racism and xenophobia; intentional destruction of documents; theft;
- d) **Disasters:** floods; fire; explosions; terrorist actions; armed conflicts.



## 2. PRESERVATION ACTIONS

Some recommendations for the conservation of documents:

- ▷ Handle the documents only with clean hands;
- ▷ Place the books preferably in a vertical position; when in horizontal position, do not stack more than three books;
- ▷ Pick up correctly the book by the spine's center when removing it from the bookcase;
- ▷ Reserve a space of three millimeters between the books to facilitate their removal and therefore avoid friction
- ▷ Promote periodic cleaning of storage spaces;
- ▷ Use metallic separators on the shelves to prevent books from falling;
- ▷ Do not use metal clips and staples, thus avoiding oxidation.



## 3. UNDERSTANDING REALITY

**Preserving what exists in the present time as a memory of the past is the most altruistic act that Man can do for future generations.**

In this practical guide we address the risks in which our documents are subjected to human action and present some viable solutions to maintain them in a safe and long-lasting way. By knowing the factors of degradation, we can preserve and prolong the life of our collections.

**Consult the PowerPoint "Manual - cleaning of documental collections":** <http://abm.madeira.gov.pt>