

# ROMAN CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF HARTFORD



## OFFICE OF THE ARCHDIOCESAN ARCHIVES

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### POLICIES & PROCEDURES

#### ~Quarantining~

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*The Archdiocesan Archives (est.1976) is an administrative office of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Hartford (AOH)*

#### INTRODUCTION

- Quarantining should always be a routine protocol.
  - Separating new records/materials from existing climate controlled records/materials, ensures a reduction in exposing existing collections to such things as mold, mildew, infestations, germs, viruses, harmful bacteria, allergens, dirt/debris, leaks, hazardous chemicals/vapors, etc., which outside items could potentially be harboring and thus, cause contamination and/or permanent damage or destruction to existing collections.
    - It is equally advisable to quarantine records/materials after handling/use to prevent similar complications after exposing items to a non-climate controlled environment of airborne and surface contact contamination.
  - Quarantining provides the time needed for problems to present and/or resolve themselves prior to incorporation with existing collections thus, aiding in the prevention of unnecessary outbreaks and/or contamination, which will lead to timely and costly recovery (preservation, conservation, restoration) or complete loss of collections.

## **PROTOCOL**

### New Arrivals

- The AOH Archives will place all newly received records/materials into quarantine for a minimum of three (03) full days upon arrival in the Archives and/or its Records Center prior to assessment and accessioning.

### Released Items

- All records/materials out for preservation and/or on loan and/or otherwise temporarily released from the AOH Archives and/or its Records Center will be placed into quarantine for a minimum of three (03) full days upon their return.

### Onsite Handling/Use

- The AOH Archives will place all Archival and Records Center items that are handled/used onsite by researchers/users into quarantine for a minimum of three (03) full days after use before re-shelving.
  - Records/materials exposed for momentary review and/or minimal handling of five (05) minutes or less are exempt from quarantining – items will be promptly returned to their assigned storage.
    - A properly worn mask must be worn by all when handling/using records/materials onsite in the AOH Archives and/or its Records Center. Otherwise, a three (03) full day quarantined of the handled/used items is required.

### AOH Archivist

- Records/materials handled/used solely by the AOH Archivist in the course of daily business and not shared with anyone else are exempt from quarantining unless, the AOH Archivist has knowingly accessed items while sick/ill or knowingly exposed accessed items to unsafe conditions – items are then subject to the three (03) full day quarantine.
  - A properly worn mask must be worn by all when handling/using records/ materials onsite in the AOH Archives and/or its Records Center. Otherwise, a three (03) full day quarantined of the handled/used items is required.
  - If such items have been recently accessed by the AOH Archivist and are required for use by others shortly thereafter, the AOH Archivist is obligated to inform the researcher/user prior to their handling/use of said items and/or is authorized to impose a minimum one (01) day quarantine on said items prior to their use or release to others.

### Extensions

- The stay of records/materials in quarantine may be extended at the AOH Archivist's discretion and in accordance with recommended professional guidelines as appropriate.

## PROCEDURES

- The AOH Archivist will designate appropriate areas within the AOH Archives to serve as temporary quarantine space for all quarantine designated items.
- All quarantine items are to be placed in a container approved by the AOH Archivist and stowed in one of the two (02) quarantine designated storage sites.
- A Post-It note is to be adhered (and clearly visible) to each box placed in quarantine and denoted with the letter “Q” and the date of placement in quarantine and the anticipated date of removal from quarantine.
- Once placed in quarantine, the items are not to be touched or disturbed by anyone until the expiration date of the set quarantine period, upon which, the AOH Archivist will assess the items and determine if the items are safe for storage and/or use or, if the items require a longer quarantine period and/or additional attention.
- A properly worn mask is to be worn when working with quarantine items. Gloves and an apron are also advisable. Hands are to be thoroughly washed with soap and water after touching/handling any quarantine items.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

- With the arrival of COVID-19 and its declaration as a world-wide pandemic by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on March 11, 2020, the need for quarantining archival records/materials has become a necessity and not an option.
- The Archives profession has always recommended a standard practice for archival repositories to separate/quarantine new accessions/acquisitions and observe such items for possible outbreaks and contamination. Such a practice has not been routine or standardized across the field and has been at the discretion of the Archivist.
- Science has proven that the COVID-19 virus is able to survive in the air and on surfaces anywhere from a few hours to several days.
  - Although, modern cleansers and disinfectants have proven effective in killing the COVID-19 virus on contact, the use of such substance on archival records/materials can and will cause irreversible permanent damage and/or destruction to such items if so applied.
  - Science has also proven that the virus will die off on its own after a few hours to a few days, pending where it adheres itself (air/surfaces).
  - Hence, the only viable option for archival repositories is to quarantine items after possible exposure to the virus.
    - Thus, it is essential that Archival repositories enact quarantine practices as part of their standard operating procedures.