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National Diet Library Long-Term Preservation Policy for Microform Collections
(Tentative translation)

1. Purpose and Background

1-1. Purpose

This document is based on [*Preservation of the National Diet Library's Collections*](#) (formulated on Feb.27, 2003, revised on Feb.22, 2013), and aims to establish basic policies, measures and procedures to be taken for long-term preservation of microform collections owned by the National Diet Library.

1-2. Background

The National Diet Library (NDL) holds a large collection of microforms, which are suitable for long-term preservation and have been widely used for many years as a means of media conversion and document acquisition.

The long-term preservation of microforms requires a properly managed storage environment as well as periodic inspections of the condition of the microforms and other measures as determined per the results of these inspections. Microforms with a triacetyl cellulose (TAC) or other cellulose-acetate base were manufactured in Japan between 1950 and the early 1990's and are known to deteriorate due to hydrolytic generation of acetic acid if stored in an inappropriate environment. This is commonly called the "vinegar syndrome," which progresses rapidly once the levels of acetic acid reach a certain level.

In recent years, we have found microforms that have deteriorated into an unusable condition, which has necessitated the prompt implementation of continuous measures. TAC-base microforms in particular require the systematic implementation of measures that will prevent them from deteriorating beyond restoration. This is especially true, because, if left untreated, they will not only damage adjacent materials but could also have an adverse effect on the health of the library staff and equipment.

Until recently, the NDL has sporadically conducted surveys and implemented measures based on the policies set forth in the *Preservation of the National Diet Library's Collections*. It has now become necessary, however, to establish a framework for sustained inspection and preservation of these microforms.

2. Basic policy

In order to prevent deterioration and damage of microforms as well as to ensure their long-term

usability, the NDL systematically and continuously maintains an appropriate environment for storage in accordance with JIS Z6009-1994 *Silver-gelatin type microfilms - processing and storage* and related standards, conducts inspections of the condition of microforms, and implements appropriate preservation measures.

The Preservation Division of the Acquisitions and Bibliography Department works together with divisions that hold microform collections to promote preservation measures. The Preservation Division is in charge of overall coordination, while each division holding microform collections conducts inspections and implements measures for their own collection.

The NDL plans inspections and countermeasures as necessary based on the condition of the microforms as well as on cost.

3. Methods and procedures for implementing countermeasures

3-1. Maintaining a suitable storage environment

The maintenance of a suitable storage environment also serves as a preventive measure.

Avoid storing microforms in an enclosed container or space. Microforms that have deteriorated and emit gases that smell like vinegar could cause serious damage to other nearby library materials.

Such microforms should be placed in a sealed gas barrier bag and isolated as necessary.

Microforms with different kinds of base materials (TAC, polyester, etc.) should be stored separately, since microforms that have deteriorated and emit acidic gases could cause serious damage to other nearby microforms.

Negative films, irreplaceable positive films, and other films intended for long-term preservation should be stored in an environment with controlled temperature and humidity.

Boxes, sleeves, paper tags, and other packaging materials that are made of acidic paper should be swapped out for those made of acid-free paper.

Metal or other types of reels that do not allow air to circulate easily should be swapped out for perforated plastic reels.

3-2. Inspections

Divisions which hold microform collections should conduct inspections on a regular basis according to a well-formulated implementation plan.

Priority should be determined according to following criteria as well as per special reasons unique to the division.

- a) Negatives and other archival films are given priority over positives and other service copies.
- b) TAC films are given priority over polyester films.
- c) Films without backup copies are given priority over films with backup copies.
- d) Microforms that were found to be in poor condition during sampling surveys carried out

between 2014 and 2018 or collections that are known to require urgent care are given priority over other films.

e) Films that are considered high priority for either use or preservation by the divisions which hold microform collections are given priority over other films.

3-3. Measures for preservation and storage

Measures for preservation and storage should be determined based on the results of inspections. If a material is found to be damaged at the time it is used for library services, inspect all other microforms in the same collection before determining any measures.

- Separation
- Change of packaging materials
- Rewinding of reels
- Restoration
- Duplication
- Media conversion
- Others

Implementation of countermeasures should be prioritized as follows.

a) Microforms in poor condition are given priority.

b) TAC films are given priority over polyester films.

c) Films without backup copies are given priority over films with backup copies.

d) Films that are considered high priority for either use or preservation are given priority over other films.