

## **Removing Paperclips, Staples, Pressure-Sensitive Tape, and Barcodes**

Paperclips and staples can rust and cause staining and paper deterioration. To avoid rust, the use of stainless steel staples or plastic paperclips is recommended. Staples should be opened from the back and lifted out from the front side. Paperclips may need to be bent open for removal to avoid tearing the paper.

### **1. Removing paperclips or staples**

- Regular hand-held office staple removers can be used if the paper under the staple is strong.
- Otherwise, slip a piece of Mylar underneath the staple or paperclip so that the removal tool – a sharpened microspatula – can then be inserted underneath the staple or paperclip without digging into the paper.

### **2. Removing pressure-sensitive tape and barcodes**

- Both have a carrier which can be removed mechanically.
- Remove the carrier first and then the adhesive residue.
- Depending on how new the adhesion is, the carrier will eventually fall off.

#### **Removing barcodes**

- a. Separate the plastic carrier from the paper backing by inserting a microspatula at one of the corners and delaminating the two layers. This will leave a paper layer.
- b. Use a microspatula and/or a rubber cement eraser to remove the paper layer.
- c. Use swabs/"Q"tips and water or acetone to remove the remaining adhesive and paper.

#### **Removing pressure-sensitive tape**

- a. Start at one corner and roll the tape back tightly on itself. This will leave a residue of sticky adhesive.
- b. Use a rubber cement pick up rubber to remove the remaining adhesive
- c. With swabs/Q-tips and acetone remove the remaining adhesive and paper.

The success of the removal depends on the type of material that the tape is applied to. With some materials it is impossible to remove the pressure-sensitive tape without causing excessive damage. Always test any medium before applying the acetone as this solvent can cause colors to run.

NEVER hinge photographs and drawings with pressure-sensitive tape (including masking tape, "invisible" tape, quick-release tape, "Scotch tape," double-stick tape, and the so-called "archival" tapes).

**OVER**

NEVER use rubber cement, stick glue, spray adhesives, or dry-mount adhesives.  
Do not use brown paper tape (moisture-activated gummed adhesive).

All tapes and adhesives of these types will stain the paper and may cause inks and colors to bleed. Many lose their adhesive properties and fall off with age, leaving behind a residue that is unsightly, damaging to the item, and difficult (or impossible) to remove.

If removal of such adhesives and the stains they cause is possible, the work should only be entrusted to a trained conservator. Improper treatment can damage items irrevocably, greatly reducing their beauty and value.