Preservation of audiovisual media requires an interrelated set of actions: proper orientation, proper cleaning and housing, a controlled climate, and an understanding of how formats differ from each other.

Cleaning/Rehousing:
All media formats benefit from proper housing and cleaning. Audio and video tape should be stored in enclosed, inert plastic cases. Grooved discs are best housed in either paper or polypropylene sleeves, and should be cleaned only with deionized water, or for vinyl discs, mild detergents specifically designed for record cleaning. Motion picture film should be stored in inert, vented plastic canisters to allow airflow through the film pack, and should be cleaned only with specially designed film solvents.

Environment and Orientation:
Video tape, audio tape, CDs, DVDs, Blu-rays, and grooved discs should be stored vertically with regular shelf spacers. Motion picture film, however, should always be stored horizontally, with the largest canisters at the bottom. Film and videotape both benefit from cool storage environments, with relative humidity levels between 30 and 50%. While film can be stored in below zero environments, video tape, audio tape, grooved discs, and optical discs should never be stored below freezing.

Digitization:
In addition to the proper cleaning, housing, and storage of original analog materials, conscientious digital reformating can offer an additional layer of security to the preservation of audiovisual collections. Before undertaking any digitization project with A/V materials it is important that proper planning and research is conducted in order to make informed decisions that best fit the needs and available resources of your department. These choices are integral to both the long term preservation of the collections and their future use in instruction, research, or public outreach. For more information or consultation, please contact the University Library’s Media Preservation program.