



Mendon Public Library Health Emergency Response Plan

Purpose:

To establish guidelines that may be used in the event of a pandemic, epidemic or other public health emergency. If there is a serious infectious disease outbreak, priority will be given to consider the safety of staff and patrons. Priority will also be given to safely providing library service to the community. During a public health emergency flexibility and common sense are key to keeping staff and patrons safe. The Library Director or the Library Board of Trustees, can modify this plan, if warranted.

Recovery from a disease outbreak may be slow, as compared to a natural disaster or some other physical crises. It is important to ensure that core business activities of the library can be maintained for several weeks or more with limited staff and reduced hours due to a public health emergency.

Definitions

"Public Health Emergency Response Plan" A public health emergency plan differs from a general emergency preparedness policy or procedure. With an emergency preparedness policy, there is an assumption that staff will return to the building, or begin rebuilding, almost immediately after the event or crisis (such as a fire or storm, or if there is a utility shortage). If there is a serious infectious disease outbreak, recovery may be slow and limited staff, services, and hours may be necessary for several weeks or more.

"Pandemic" A disease epidemic occurs when there are more cases of that disease than normal. A pandemic is a worldwide epidemic of a disease and may occur when a new virus appears against which the human population has no immunity.

Library Operations

- **Continuity of Services:** Realizing the importance of the library in the community, the Library will maintain services to the greatest extent possible, while providing safe facilities for patrons and staff and complying with orders and directives from local and state authorities.
- **Public Health Measures:** The library is committed to providing a safe facility for staff and patrons. A safe facility will be based upon recommendations and directives from state and local Health Depts, and other public health authorities. The Library may decide to:
 - Temporarily increase the frequency of cleaning and sanitizing the building
 - Post signs to encourage proper hygiene
 - Provide easy access to hand sanitizer, hand washing facilities, disinfecting wipes, and facial tissues
 - Mandate wearing of masks and/or other PPE
 - Enforce social distancing requirements, which may include rearranging furniture, or putting furniture in storage
 - Posting signage for social distancing guidance
 - Provide staff with vinyl gloves for use if warranted

- Employees will be expected to use an abundance caution with symptoms that may be interpreted as sick. If they or somebody in their immediate quarantine group are actively displaying symptoms, they will not be allowed to work
- If an employee or patron becomes sick while in the library, they will be asked to leave immediately following CDC guidelines. The Library will immediately close and reopen after the building has been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected following CDC guidelines
- Provide a means for staff to follow CDC or health department guidelines for good hygiene habits and personal responsibility in preventing the spread of disease while working at the library
 - This might include; encouraging and/or requiring staff to take time off from work so that they may care for themselves or others that may be displaying a symptom or symptoms of the disease
 - Including time in work schedule to wash hands and disinfect area frequently
- **Temporary Reduction or Suspension of Services:** During a pandemic, epidemic, or other public health emergency, public health authorities may advise that libraries and other gathering places minimize or entirely suspend situations where numerous individuals congregate in relatively confined spaces.
 - If this happens, the Director may decide to temporarily discontinue library programs, outreach, special events. Toys will be removed from the children’s area. Capacity may be limited in the library, and appointments to use the library may be instituted. Depending upon the circumstances, the book drop may be closed to minimize the spread of the virus. The Library may implement curbside pickup as an alternative to completely closing the library. Time limits may be required to minimize exposure risk to staff. Public restrooms may be reduced or eliminated. Staff schedules may be modified to comply with social distancing requirements.
- **Temporary Library Closure:** Closing of the public schools will not necessarily mean the public library is closed. Library closure will depend upon the following:
 - Mandate, order or recommendation from public health authorities
 - Sufficient staffing to maintain basic library service levels
 - Public visitation is too low to warrant keeping the library open
 - Closing of all libraries within the Monroe County Library System
 - Any other condition which may prevent the library from operating safely and effectively

Minimizing Negative Impacts on Operations and Services

The Library provides crucial resources and services to residents. The Library will strive to minimize negative impacts on access to resources and services resulting from procedures adopted in response to a public health emergency.

- **Access to Information:** The Library will work in conjunction with the Monroe County Library System to maintain access to all online resources. In addition, the Library will maintain a free high speed WiFi connection, available on library property, without a password for the community to use. Public computers may be available, although not guaranteed. The library may also provide Hot Spots.
- **Suspension of Due Dates and Fines:** If the library will be closed for a temporary or extended period of time, the library will extend all due dates, and suspend all late fees during the closure. The library may ask patrons keep materials at home until it is safe to return materials. Fines will not be accrued during this period.

Minimum Staffing Level

Personnel considered to be essential to the library are:

- Library Director
- A minimum of two staff members present in the library, when the library is open to the public or providing curbside delivery,
- Other staff with the skill level to perform tasks listed below

If the library is not able to maintain this minimal level of staffing, the library may close or reduce hours. If the library staffing is reduced, priority will be given to the following tasks:

- Cleaning and disinfecting the building
- Direct patron assistance; through phone, online, or in person assistance, depending upon recommendations from public health authorities
- Patron related-tasks: check in, incoming delivery, shelving, holds list, book return, maintenance of collection
- Communication to staff and patrons
- Essential services: payroll, processing bills for payment, Library Board meetings
- Other tasks associated with keeping a library running during a pandemic

Communication

Effective communication to the staff and the public is of utmost importance. Those that have roles in communicating to the public and the staff will be called upon to craft and distribute accurate messages. Messages will be distributed in a variety of means including, including electronic, phone, and hard copy, when appropriate.

Employee Attendance and Non-Essential Activities

General expectations of employees are outlined in the Mendon Public Library Personnel Policies. In addition, changes may be made to the schedule, workflow and tasks while in a pandemic.

- If the Library is open, healthy employees are expected to report to work, with the understanding that the work schedule may change and the tasks they typically perform may be different.
- Some employees may have tasks which are able to be completed remotely. During this period, with the Director's approval this option may be exercised.
- Timesheets documenting time worked will be submitted to the Library Director electronically.
- The Director will have access to remotely connect with Library computers.
- It is assumed that adjustments in staffing will need to be made. These adjustments will be determined by the Library Director.
- Should the Library need to close completely or greatly reduce hours, the Library Board will hold an emergency meeting to determine how and if employees will be paid.

Responsibility for Library Operations

If for any reason, the Library Director is unable to perform the responsibilities and decisions outlined in this policy, a library director designee will be named, to be the administrative authority for library operations.