

VOORHEESVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY PANDEMIC OPERATIONS PLAN

Purpose

This plan has been developed in accordance with the amended New York State Labor Law section 27-c. This law requires public employers to adopt a plan for operations in the event of a declared public health emergency involving a communicable disease. This plan includes the identification of essential positions, facilitations of remote work for non-essential positions, provision of protective equipment (PPE), and protocols for supporting contact tracing.

Scope

This Pandemic Operations Plan was developed exclusively for and is applicable to Voorheesville Public Library. It is pertinent to a declared public health emergency in the State of New York which may impact the Library's operations. The plan considers the safety of staff and patrons, as well as continuity of library services.

Assumptions

The following assumptions have been made in the development of this plan:

- The health and safety of our employees and contractors, and their families, is of utmost importance.
- The circumstances of a public health emergency may directly impact our own operations.
- Impacts of a public health emergency will take time for us to respond to, with appropriate safety measures put into place and adjustments made to operations to maximize safety.
- The public and our constituency expects us to maintain a level of mission essential operations.
- Resource support from other jurisdictions may be limited based upon the level of impact the public health emergency has upon them.
- Supply chains, particularly those for personal protective equipment (PPE) and cleaning supplies, may be heavily impacted, resulting in considerable delays in procurement.

- The operations of other entities, including the private sector (vendors, contractors, etc.), non-profit organizations, and other governmental agencies and services may also be impacted due to the public health emergency, causing delays or other disruptions in their services.
- Emergency measures and operational changes may need to be adjusted based upon the specific circumstances and impacts of the public health emergency, as well as guidance and direction from public health officials and the governor.
- Per Labor Law §27-c, "essential employee" is defined as a public employee or contractor that is required to be physically present at a work site to perform their job.
- Per Labor Law §27-c, "non-essential employee" is defined as a public employee or contractor that is not required to be physically present at a work site to perform their job.

Authority

The Library Director, in consultation with the Board of Trustees, will have authority to restrict services and/or implement immediate procedures as deemed necessary to preserve and ensure the safety of library staff and patrons.

Restriction of services will be determined in accordance with any applicable Executive Orders from the State and Local Government.

The Library Director will be the primary spokesperson for the Library, communicating internally with the staff and Board, as well as with the public. In the event the Director is unable to carry out this responsibility, the role of spokesperson will move to the Assistant Director.

Essential Functions and Positions

When confronting events that disrupt normal operations, the Library is committed to ensuring that essential functions will be continued even under the most challenging circumstances.

Essential functions are those functions that enable an organization to:

1. Maintain the safety of employees, contractors, and our constituency
2. Provide vital services
3. Provide services required by law
4. Sustain quality operations
5. Uphold the core values of the Library

Essential functions of the Library have been identified as:

1. Facilities (building maintenance, cleaning, and security)
2. Information Technology (hardware, software, network, phone system)
3. Administrative (bills, payments, payroll, mail, deliveries, personnel files and other administrative files)
4. Communication (internal and external)
5. Public Service (access to services and collections, starting with a virtual services-only model)

Essential positions (on-site access) of the Library have been identified as:

1. Facilities Staff (daily interior and exterior building maintenance and inspection)
2. Information Technology (support on and off-site technology)
3. Administrative (retrieve bills, files, and mail)
4. Public Service (maintain circulation functions, retrieve support materials for virtual services)
5. Public Information Technician (access printing equipment)

Reducing Risk Through Remote Work and Rotating Shifts

Through assigning certain staff to work remotely and by staggering work shifts, we can decrease crowd density at work sites.

Non-essential employees and contractors able to accomplish their functions remotely will be enabled to do so to the greatest extent possible. They must provide a record of tasks completed remotely along with their bi-weekly timecard.

Equipment:

The Library will determine the appropriate technology tools (hardware and software) on a case-by-case basis. Equipment supplied by the Library will be maintained by the Library. The Library accepts no responsibility for damage or repairs to employee-owned equipment. Resources supplied by the Library are intended to be used for work-related purposes only. All company property must be returned to the Library in good condition.

The Library will supply employees with appropriate office supplies as deemed necessary. The Library may reimburse an employee for other expenses (postage, printing that cannot be done on-site) with preapproval from administration. The Library will not be responsible for costs associated with the setup, repair, or maintenance of the employee's home office.

Security:

Consistent with the organization's expectations of information security for employees working at the office, telecommuting employees will be expected to ensure the protection of organizational, member library and patron information accessible from their home office. Steps include the use of locked file cabinets and desks, regular password maintenance, locking their workstation when not in use and any other measures appropriate for the job and the environment.

Safety:

Employees are expected to maintain their home workspace in a safe manner, free from safety hazards. Injuries sustained by the employee in a home office location and in conjunction with his or her regular work duties are normally covered by the company's workers' compensation policy. Telecommuting employees are responsible for notifying the employer of such injuries as soon as practicable. The employee is liable for any injuries sustained by visitors to his or her home worksite.

Recording Time Worked:

Telecommuting employees will be required to accurately record all hours worked using the employee portal of the Library's payroll service. Hours worked in excess of those scheduled per day and per workweek require the advance approval of the telecommuter's supervisor.

Failure to comply with this requirement may result in the immediate termination of the telecommuting agreement.

Rotating Shifts

Implementing staggered shifts and rotational scheduling may be possible for personnel performing duties which are necessary to be performed on-site but perhaps less sensitive to being accomplished only within core business hours. As possible, management will identify opportunities for staff to work outside core business hours as a strategy of limiting exposure. Regardless of changes in start and end times of shifts, the Library will make every effort to ensure that employees are provided with their typical or contracted minimum work hours per week.

Staggered scheduling will be at the discretion of the Director and Assistant Director. Staff who believe they will not be able to work due to obligations or health will reach out to the Director or Assistant Director.

Housing for Essential Employees

There are circumstances within a public health emergency when it may be prudent to have essential employees lodged in such a manner which will help prevent the spread of the subject communicable disease to protect these employees from potential exposures, thus helping to ensure their health and safety and the continuity of the Library's essential operations.

If such a need arises, hotel rooms are expected to be the most viable option. If hotel rooms are for some reason deemed not practical or ideal, or if there are no hotel rooms available, the Library will coordinate with Albany County to help identify and arrange for these housing needs. The Director is responsible for coordinating this.

Personal Protective Equipment

The use of personal protective equipment (PPE) to reduce the spread of infectious disease is important to supporting the health and safety of our employees and contractors. PPE which may be needed can include:

- Masks
- Face shields
- Gloves

While cleaning supplies are not PPE, there is a related need for cleaning supplies used to sanitize surfaces, as well as hand soap and hand sanitizer. The Coronavirus pandemic demonstrated that supply chains were not able to keep up with increased demand for these products early in the pandemic. As such, we are including these supplies in this section as they are pertinent to protecting the health and safety of our employees and contractors.

Protocols for providing PPE include the following:

1. Identification of need for PPE based upon job duties work location
2. Procurement of PPE
 - As specified in the amended law, public employers must be able to provide at least two pieces of each required type of PPE to each essential employee and contractor during any given work shift for at least six months
 - Public employers must be able to mitigate supply chain disruptions to meet this requirement
3. Storage of, access to, and monitoring of PPE stock
 - PPE must be stored in a manner which will prevent degradation
 - Employees and contractors must have immediate access to PPE in the event of an emergency
 - The supply of PPE must be monitored to ensure integrity and to track usage rates

The Library will procure all equipment following its purchasing policy. Supplies will be purchased in bulk and stored on location. The Library will make every effort to maintain a two-month supply of PPE and cleaning supplies. All facilities staff will have immediate access to supplies. PPE will be monitored by the Administrative and Facilities staff.

Staff Exposures, Cleaning, and Disinfecting

If an employee has been exposed to a communicable disease, is exhibiting symptoms, or otherwise suspects an infection, that employee must stay home from work. The Library Director or Assistant Director must be made aware of the situation. The employee must seek a medical diagnosis, and request medical documentation for the Library. The Library Director or Assistant Director will contact the Albany County Department of Health for further guidance.

In order to return to work, the employee must communicate testing results for the disease in question to the Library Director or Assistant Director before returning to work. Approval to return to work will be based on the information provided alongside current guidance from the local, state, and federal health agencies.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

Staff are trained daily on safety and cleaning protocols. The building is cleaned every day prior to opening to staff and visitors. All materials available for circulation have been quarantined for a minimum of 72 hours or current recommended period of time. Official health recommendations for employee wellness screening will be followed with zero tolerance for sick workers reporting to work. All employees will continue to practice healthy hand hygiene. Hand sanitizers will remain accessible in all common areas to encourage hand hygiene among staff and visitors. Barriers may be placed in areas to ensure physical distancing.

Universal Safety Precautions to be followed at all times:

- If you are sick, or if you have had a fever within 24 hours of your scheduled shift, stay home.
- Wash your hands regularly for at least 20 seconds.
- Dry your hands thoroughly after washing.
- If you are not able to wash your hands, use hand sanitizer, rubbing into hands for at least 20 seconds.
- Cough or sneeze into a tissue or into the bend of your arm, not your hands. If using a tissue, discard after using.
- Avoid touching your eyes, mouth, and nose.
- Limit or avoid physically touching others.

Guidelines for Working and Visiting On-site

Physical distancing will be practiced in the library building as well as outdoors on library property. Physical distancing is keeping 6 feet between persons, whenever possible. Upon entering the library, the employee or visitor's temperature will be taken. If the temperature is 100 degrees or higher, or if any symptoms are exhibited, the person may be asked to leave. Face masks must be worn over the entire mouth and nose for the duration of the visit or work day. Employees may remove their mask when working alone or on a meal break in a designated area. Face shields, gaiters, scarves, and bandanas are not substitutes for masks. An entry screening questionnaire may be required based on local, state, or federal guidelines.

Communication

The Library Director will be the primary spokesperson for the Library, communicating internally with the staff and Board, as well as with the public. In the event the Director is unable to carry out this responsibility, the role of spokesperson will move to the Assistant Director.

To ensure the Library and its employees comply with communication requirements, the Library will:

- Post signage throughout the site to remind personnel to adhere to proper hygiene, social distancing rules, appropriate use of PPE, and cleaning and disinfecting protocols.
- Establish a communication plan for employees, visitors, and patrons with a consistent means to provide updated information.
- Maintain a continuous log of every person, including workers and visitors, who may have close contact with other individuals at the work site or area; excluding deliveries that are performed with appropriate PPE or through contactless means; excluding customers, who may be encouraged to provide contact information to be logged but are not mandated to do so.

If a worker tests positive for the communicable disease, the Library will immediately notify state and local health departments and cooperate with contact tracing efforts, including notification of

potential contacts, such as workers or visitors who had close contact with the individual, while maintaining confidentiality required by state and federal law and regulations.

Phased Reopening Plan

General Recommendations: Based on and informed by all the available guidance and resources, the Library will plan for a gradual, phased approach to re-opening and not plan to simply open its doors. The reopening plan is designed to protect the health and safety of both employees and patrons using the library, its collections, and its services. The Library will take every effort to coordinate reopening dates with all other member libraries in the Upper Hudson Library System (UHLS), and particularly with neighboring libraries. A gradual, phased plan allows forward and backward movement between service levels as local conditions change and government directives are made.

The Library's phased re-opening plan will be:

1. **Safe**—Safe reopening means that the health and safety of Library staff and the public **MUST** be the highest priority when planning for reopening. The Library must be fully prepared before offering any services, with policies, procedures and training to ensure the safety of the staff, when working with each other and when working with the public. The Library must have sufficient supplies (masks, gloves, basic cleaning supplies) to ensure a safe working environment. The Library must prepare/reconfigure service desks, staff spaces, public spaces, and collections to accommodate social distancing measures and the gradual reintroduction of library services, based on the Library's reopening plan.
2. **Smart**—Smart reopening means the library monitors and adheres to the current guidance from both governmental and scientific authorities for providing safe library service and for the safe handling of library materials. The Library shall make thoughtful staffing and service decisions in order to limit staff exposure, protect the public, and control risk and liability.
3. **Gradual**- The Library shall plan to gradually re-acclimate library employees to their new working environment and all of the changes in their library, their workspaces, and their services. Employees will need to spend time devoted to developing and training in new protocols and practices. Sufficient time should also be allowed for employees to prepare the collections and manage the impact of the restart of the UHLS delivery service, all before the Library offers any public services. The reintroduction of library services to the public should also be planned as a phased approach, gradually adding services as the staff and public become familiar with new routines and practices. It is always easier to slowly expand services rather than offer too much, too soon and have to then curtail services soon after reopening.
4. **Flexible**- The Library shall prepare their organization to be flexible and to be able to make service and policy changes rapidly as dictated by internal and external factors. The Library shall prepare plans and procedures to be able to close the Library to the public once again, in the event of a resurgence of the communicable disease and a return to essential service and workforce restrictions. The Library shall expect to move forward

and backward between these recommended reopening levels of service based on Government directives and guidance.

Timeline for Reopening: A timeline for reopening will be determined largely by the reopening plan for Albany County and the State of New York.

Employees and patrons must follow library procedures for curbside service, transactional-service only, or any other service model offered during the phased-in reopening plan. Services may be temporarily limited or unavailable in alignment with safety recommendations, including, but not limited to, public bathrooms, public computers, and common seating areas. Guidelines for all services will be shared with the public through all regular communication channels.

Examples of phased reopening steps:

Phase 1: Virtual library services only, only essential staff in building

Phase 1a: Staff in building, virtual services continue, curbside check and bookdrop returns resume

Phase 2. Curbside services continue with limited browsing by appointment

Phase 2a: Limited computer use by appointment, in addition to all other reintroduced services

Phase 3: Curbside services continue, patron visits are limited by a strict headcount

Phase 3a: Regular hours resume with strict headcount

Phase 4: Regular hours resume with fewer or no headcount restrictions, Limited in-person programming resumes

Phase 5: Resume all regular library services

Library Service During Public Health Risks Policy (approved on 6/1/2020)

Purpose

During public health risks, it may be necessary for the Library to alter its normal modes of service to ensure the safety and overall well-being of people in our community and of our staff. Changes to service will be implemented in the least disruptive ways possible to our patrons.

Definitions

A “public health risk” is something that is (or is likely to be) hazardous to human health or could contribute to a disease or an infectious condition in humans.”

An “elevated public health risk” is when public health officials have indicated a likelihood of occurrence of actual incidents or outbreaks. During these times, there is an elevated need for intervention due to an outbreak of an infectious disease.

“Library Management” shall mean the Director and Assistant Director.

Authority

The Library Director, in consultation with the Board of Trustees, will have authority to restrict services and/or implement immediate procedures as deemed necessary to preserve and ensure the safety of library Staff and Patrons.

Restriction of services will be determined in accordance with any applicable Executive Orders from the State and Local Government.

The Library Director will be the primary spokesperson for the Library, communicating internally with the staff and Board, as well as with the public. In the event the Director is unable to carry out this responsibility, the role of spokesperson will move to the Assistant Director.

Scope

Library Management shall develop and promulgate procedures to address the specific health risks and the severity of a given public health risk situation. Health risks range from a typical flu season to a state of emergency due to a pandemic, epidemic, or local/regional public health issues. Procedures will include measures to allow for continuation of services, both external and internal, up to and including steps to suspend services and close the Library.

Changes to service and restrictions made under the Library Service During Public Health Risks policy will take precedence and override conflicting policies during a state of emergency, including patron code of conduct.

Responsibility and Procedures

All staff will be responsible for following procedures developed to address the specific health risk. It is also the responsibility of staff to follow prescribed communication channels to stay up-to-date on any changes to procedures and services. In most circumstances, e-mail will be the primary source of communication to staff.