



## **Epidemic and Library Health Policy**

Adopted: 4/15/2021  
Reviewed: 12/5/2024

### **Purpose**

To establish a protocol that may be used in the event of a pandemic or declared public health emergency. The library should plan for staff being unable to report to work in the event of a serious infectious disease outbreak. In addition, during an epidemic or health emergency organizations may be required to take measures to help slow the spread of illness, such as closing by order of the President of the United States, Governor of the State of Wisconsin or Pierce County public health officials. It is important to ensure that essential business activities of the library can be maintained with limited staff and reduced hours as determined by the Library Director.

### **Definitions**

This 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 recovery work almost immediately after the event or crisis (such as after a fire or storm). 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.

Epidemic – A disease affecting many persons in a specific locality at the same time, and spreading from person to person in a locality where the disease is not permanently prevalent.

Library health emergency – The state of affairs in which there are not enough healthy library staff to maintain normal hours of operation

### **I. Library Closure**

The Prescott Public Library may temporarily close because of an epidemic or library health emergency in the event that any of the following occur:

- The City of Prescott offices close because of a health emergency.
- A mandate, order, or recommendation for closure is issued by the state library division, public health, or other government officials.
- The Prescott School District (PSD) closes schools because of an epidemic.

At the discretion of the Library Director, the Prescott Public Library may temporarily close, reduce its operating hours, or limit services temporarily in the event that there is insufficient staff to maintain basic service levels.

In the event of closure, due dates and holds pickup dates for library materials will be adjusted so that no overdue charges are assessed and holds do not expire on dates in which the library is closed. The outdoor book drop may be kept open and cleared periodically as long as possible.

The Library may reopen to the public even if PSD schools remain closed if cleared to do so by the Wisconsin Health Department or Pierce County Public Health Department.

## **II. Minimum Staffing Level to Remain Open**

If Pierce County public health officials allow public facilities to remain open during or to reopen following a public health emergency, the library must maintain a minimal level of staff in order to be open to the public. An inability to maintain a temporary minimal level will result in reduced hours or closing the library.

The absence of healthy library staff will determine the ability to carry out services and maintain open hours. At the library director's discretion, this may include:

- Cancelling programs and special events.
- Reassigning employee duties and shifts.
- Reducing open hours if the number of employees falls below minimum levels.
- Closing the library for one or more days.

If the library is open, employees are expected to report to work on time as scheduled, excluding any absences following the library's sick leave policy. In the event of sudden closure and healthy library employees are sent home from work, those employees shall be compensated for their regularly scheduled hours.

## **III. Communication**

Any changes in the library's open hours to the public will be communicated via the library's website, social media accounts, media contacts, and phone messages.

## **IV. Patron Behavior**

Safety of our patrons and staff is our number one priority. The Prescott Public Library is taking precautions to help prevent any exposure or infection but cannot guarantee that the library is virus free. Anyone not following established safety policies set forth may be asked to leave the

facility. If public health orders made at the state or local level apply to the library setting, non-compliance from patrons will result in being asked to leave. If you or members of your household are not feeling well, please remain home for the safety of everyone.

## **V. Prioritization of Services**

If reduced staffing, hours, or services are required, employees shall perform priority responsibilities that most directly impact customers prior to any other work tasks.

Priority responsibilities shall follow this order, with safety being a priority:

1. Communicate with customers, stakeholders, local officials, and vendors about changes to library services.
2. Submission of payroll, processing bills for payment, preparing for and holding Library Board meetings.
3. Secure ability for staff to work remotely.
4. Ensure online and digital resources are accessible.
5. Processing incoming and outgoing holds.
6. Direct customer assistance, e.g. checkout, issuing library cards, computer and information assistance.

Individual responsibilities outside of those described shall be completed after prioritized tasks if time permits, performing those duties with a deadline or significant impact first. Employees should consult with the Director or designated administrative authority to determine staffing area assignment and which individual work tasks should take priority, or in the event that they feel a responsibility not listed here requires urgent attention.

Temporary amendments to existing circulation and services policies might include:

- Reduced hours when the library is open to the public, to allow for more thorough cleaning, quarantining, and shelving, as well as limiting exposure.
- Reduced hours for returning materials and accessing book drops.
- Dedicated hours for higher-risk individuals.
- Limited services available by appointment only.
- Time or capacity limits to remain in the library.
- Continuation of alternative services, to help mitigate the demand for in-person services, such as virtual programs and services and curbside service.

## **VI. Library Personnel**

The Prescott Public Library is taking precautions to help prevent any exposure or infection but cannot guarantee that the library is virus free. Staff shall comply with all requirements outlined below.

- Staff shall not report to work when sick.
  - Staff are encouraged to monitor temperature and symptoms prior to coming to work.
  - If a staff member develops symptoms at work, they should immediately notify their supervisor and leave.
  - Staff members who have any symptoms consistent with an outbreak should self-isolate and follow CDC recommended steps. If testing is available, it is recommended.
  - Staff members living in a household where individual members have symptoms (either untested or tested positive) consistent with an outbreak should remain at home or in a comparable setting and practice social distancing for 14 days.
  - Potentially exposed employees who have symptoms consistent with an outbreak should self-isolate and follow CDC recommended steps. Potentially exposed employees who do not have symptoms should remain at home or in a comparable setting and practice social distancing for 14 days.
    - The requirement for a doctor's certificate shall be waived
  - Staff with a confirmed diagnosis must remain in home isolation if they do not need to be hospitalized. Staff may return to work when they have met the CDC criteria to discontinue home isolation and have consulted with a healthcare provider or their local health department in the county of residence.
  - Staff members are required to report to their supervisor any air, train and bus travel or, travel in a method or to a destination that will put you in close contact with more people than the mass gathering recommendations. Staff members may not be permitted to return to work after such travel for 14 days following their return.
  - All staff are expected to telework during self-quarantine periods unless they themselves are sick and unable to work.
- Staff must maintain social distancing with other staff and users of the library except for immediate family.
- Staff shall wear masks or face coverings at all times when interacting with the public.
- Staff must wash hands with soap and warm water and/or use hand sanitizer, frequently and/or throughout their shift.
- Adjustments may be made to work environments, such as teleworking, depending on public health recommendations.
- Accommodations will be made for staff in high risk situations (either staff or family).
  - Limit or eliminate patron interaction
  - Provide work from home option

## **VII. Responsibility for Library Operations**

If, for any reason, the Library Director is unable or unavailable to perform the responsibilities and decisions outlined in this policy, administrative authority for this policy and all library operations shall fall to the Library Board President.

#### **Appendix A: Patron Behavior Specific to COVID-19**

Safety of our patrons and staff is our number one priority. The Prescott Public Library is taking precautions to help prevent any exposure or infection but cannot guarantee that the library is virus free. Anyone not following established safety policies set forth may be asked to leave the facility. If public health orders made at the state or local level apply to the library setting, non-compliance from patrons will result in being asked to leave. If you or members of your household are not feeling well, please remain home for the safety of everyone.

- A face covering is required for anyone over the age of 2.
- Six feet social distancing must be maintained with anyone who is not a member of your household.
- Patrons should wash hands and/or use hand sanitizer prior to entering the library, before and after using computers, and after contact with high touch areas.
- Prolonged socializing is not permitted at this time.
- We will operate at a reduced capacity to comply with social distancing requirements.
- Restrictive tape or barriers of any kind may not be removed to accommodate access.
- Time limits for scheduled appointments and internet access will be enforced.