

Poplar Bluff Municipal Library

Epidemic and Public Emergency Policy

Approved Board of Trustees on April 6, 2020

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish formal guidelines for operations during an extended epidemic or other emergency. The library district should plan for numerous staff being unable to report for work during an epidemic or disasters caused by a weather or geologic event. The library district may be required to follow orders of the County and State Health Department, law enforcement, or emergency management services (local, state, or federal) to help slow the spread of illness, respond to emergencies, or assist with recovery efforts. This may include closing library branches or other reductions in service. It may mean the library branches may have to open its doors for shelter. In any event the library district will attempt to keep core services of the library operational in any case with reduced or staggered staffing or reduced hours of operation.

Levels of operation during health emergency

1. Business as usual. During the period prior to the arrival of a declared emergency, the library director will monitor the situation and prepare stockpiles of supplies to reduce the likelihood of staff becoming infected and train staff on preventive measures to reduce the spread of infections or harm to themselves or patrons..

The CDC always recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, including:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

2. Notification of infections in the area. When we have been notified by public health officials, either directly or by broadcast media, that the illness has arrived in our area the following precautions will be taken:

- Staff with compromising preconditions will be required to contact their healthcare provider for guidance on work attendance and/or protective procedures.
- Staff will be encouraged to wear protective face masks, gloves, and eye protection when working with patrons and returned items. Hand washing for 20 seconds with hot water and soap is required immediately after removing gloves and before removing face masks and eye protection.
- Books and other items returned will be wiped down with appropriate antiseptic wipes before being re-shelved.
- Programs involving groups of people will be canceled. This includes outside groups renting meeting rooms.
- Staff who are able to work from home will be encouraged to telecommute.
- Hours of operation may be reduced by the library director if illness lowers the number of staff able to work at the front desk.
- Normal sick leave policy will be in force.

3. Notification of health emergency. Upon a declaration of a health emergency by public health officials, the library will first implement the directives of the public health officials. If the libraries are ordered closed the following procedures will take place:

- The public will be notified of the order to close by health officials via our standard procedures for closing during weather by the Director/Assistant Director or designated staff. The public will be encouraged to use our 24/7 resources for their information/reading needs.
- Staff will be notified of the closing by email and/or telephone..
- Staff will be rotated to come into branches once per day to empty the bookdrop. They may call in an assistant to help with check-in and sanitation. Staff are required to wear gloves, eye protection, aprons, and/or N-95 respirators when handling returned materials. All materials returned will be disinfected as appropriate for the item. Staff are required to wash their hands for 20 seconds in hot water with soap after removing protective gloves and before removing eye protection and masks. Staff will inspect the building for any maintenance problems that occur while being closed and inform the library director upon discovering any problems.
- All staff will continue to be paid for the duration of the emergency. Sick leave/time off will not accrue during an ordered shutdown by public health officials.
- Maintenance staff will be called in on an as needed basis to fix problems occurring during the shut-down, if allowed by local officials.
- Overdues and lost items for physical items will be suspended for the duration of the closing.

4. Re-opening. Staff will be notified by email when the library district is allowed to re-open. Provisions under step 2 may be required until the full epidemic has passed. The library director will make the appropriate determinations upon being allowed to reopen. Upon re-opening, standard sick leave and time off policies will come back in force. The library director will continue to monitor news and public official announcements in case a second wave of illness occurs.

Levels of operation during weather related or geologic emergencies

All branches will be closed until further notice. The library's disaster plan is in effect. No persons may enter the branches until the buildings are declared safe by emergency management, fire and law enforcement, and/or engineers. Once buildings are declared safe, the director, assistant director, and Facilities coordinator will assess damages and consider possible levels of operation and recovery. If possible, the library may operate with online resources only.

If a state of emergency is declared and the library is safely operational, the library will cooperate with government and social agencies to assist with computer access and daytime shelter access. Staff may report as they are able. If the library cannot provide adequate staffing and maintain security, it may close.

If the library is not operational, the library will remain closed until such times as operations may continue in its current location or may move services to another facility and will open as soon as it safe to do so. Staff will be paid for up to 60 working days and they may report to work as they are able.

In either case, with the assistance of the facilities coordinator and assistant director, the director will work to resume safe library operations as quickly as possible. If for any reason none of these staff are available to report to work, the Board of Trustees will appoint an interim director.