



EPIDEMIC AND PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to establish formal guidelines for operations during an extended epidemic or other public health emergency. The library should plan for numerous staff being unable to report for work. In addition, the library will be required to follow orders of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Montana Department of Health and Human Services and/or the Lake County Public Health Department, or any other governing body to help slow the spread of illness. This may include the closing of the library or other reductions in service. The library director will keep the library trustees, staff and the public informed at each level. The Library will attempt to keep core services operational in case of reduced staff and reduced hours of operation.

Levels of operation

1. Library Services continue with additional health & safety steps

When one or more of the agencies listed above provides notice of the possible imminent arrival of an epidemic or other health emergency, the library director shall monitor the situation and prepare stockpiles of necessary supplies to reduce the likelihood of staff becoming infected, and train staff on preventive measures to reduce the spread of infections. Any staff who have traveled from an infected domestic area or abroad may be required to endure a recommended self-quarantine period to avoid the possibility of spreading the disease. CDC guidelines will be consulted for a determination on length. Cleaning and disinfecting of the library building and frequently touched surfaces will be increased. The Library will remain open to the public, but hours may be limited. Programming may be moved online, limited or cancelled. Items may be returned with usual due dates in place. Meeting room use will be limited to groups no larger than ten and no communal food or drink will be allowed.

2. Notification of public health emergency; Library Services shift to circulation only

When the Governor or other governing official declares a public health emergency, but is not requiring the public to shelter in place, the following precautions will be taken:

- Unless otherwise directed, the library will be open. However hours, services and building capacity may be limited, and time limits enacted at the director's discretion.
- The exterior book drop will remain open for return of materials, unless it is determined that returns pose a safety risk.
- All outreach services will be suspended to facilities outside the library.
- Staff with compromising preconditions will be required to contact their healthcare provider for guidance on work attendance and/or protective procedures. The director will determine whether vulnerable staff may work remotely.
- Any staff who have been exposed or potentially exposed to the contagion or are showing symptoms, or awaiting test results to determine exposure will be required to

stay home under quarantine until evidence is provided clearing them for work. The Director will determine whether they may work remotely. Accrued leave will be used during time not worked.

- Limited use of the public computers may be enforced and use may be discontinued completely. The Wi-Fi system will still be available and accessible inside and outside the building, pending any technical difficulties.
- Curbside pickup will be available for all patrons and home delivery may be available to those designated as being at higher risk, dependent on staffing levels. Materials by mail may be available to those designated as being at higher risk outside the Polson city limits.
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) will be made available to the staff as deemed necessary by the federal, state and/or local guidelines.
- Books and other items returned may be quarantined for a reasonable period of time before being cleaned and re-shelved.
- The library may provide automatic renewals on items if returning items poses a safety threat.
- Programs, meetings, or prolonged use of the library of any kind will be cancelled. This includes use of the library meeting rooms by outside groups. Programs may be moved online.
- Meetings of the Board of Trustees will continue regularly in an online forum that provides access to the public, as allowed by the State.
- At a minimum, the public will be informed about limited access and measures being taken via the library website, social media and door signs.
- Staff Leave Status:
 - **Full-time staff** will report to work at specified hours decided upon by the Director and will be expected to work a full 40-hour week. The Director will determine if remote work is available on a case-by-case basis. **Part-time staff** may be asked to work by the Director, however the number of hours and regular schedules may be altered dependent on the situation. They may use accrued vacation leave to offset a reduction in hours or may be eligible for unemployment due to reduced hours.
 - **Illness:** If a staff member is told by their healthcare provider that they cannot work, becomes ill, is caring for someone who is ill, or comes into contact or is potentially exposed to someone carrying the contagion and must quarantine, accrued sick, comp and vacation time may be used, as per the Leave section of the Employee Handbook. FMLA leave may go into effect if complications arise that create a serious health condition as defined by the FMLA. See the Employee Handbook for details on FMLA leave and use of accrued leave.
 - If a staff member is unwilling to work, they may use accrued comp time and vacation leave if approved by the director.
 - Full-time staff members who have qualified for use of accrued time off, but who do not have enough time accrued, may be allowed to go into a negative accrual up to 80 hours if allowed by state law or directive; meaning as vacation and sick time accrues it will not be available until the negative accrual is at zero. Negative accruals are subject to approval by the director on a case-by-case situation.

- Any leave accommodations that are put in place by the state or federal government that are more favorable will be followed.

3. Notification of shelter-in-place directive; Library closes to the public

When the Governor or other governing official declares a shelter-in-place emergency, the library will be closed to the public and the following procedures will take place:

- The library director will enforce the directive and confer with Library Trustees regarding the closure. If time is of the essence, the library director may close the library prior to opportunity to officially meet with Trustees, under the Hours, Holiday & Closure Policy. Public participation and opportunity to submit views will not be required as per MCA 2-3-112 when there is an issue of public health, welfare or safety. The public will be notified of the closure via library website, social media and door signs. The public will be encouraged to use the library's online resources for their information/reading needs. If it is determined to be safe to do so, keeping in mind the health and safety of staff and patrons, curbside delivery, home delivery in the Polson city limits and materials by mail to those outside the city limits but in the library district may be provided.
- Due dates will be automatically extended for checked out materials for the duration of the closing.
- Returns will not be accepted and the exterior book drop will be closed.
- Staff will be notified of the closing by email, telephone and/or text by the director.
- As a governmental entity, the library may be deemed an essential service. The library director will determine the remote work and/or work in the building schedule as appropriate for the situation. At a minimum, the director or designee will remotely monitor the heating and cooling systems and security cameras daily and visit the building at least once per week to check on the condition of the building.
- The director will confer with the janitor as to an appropriate cleaning schedule. If the building is unoccupied, services may be temporarily halted. The director will notify the janitor if this is the case and payment will be prorated dependent on actual days cleaned.
- Staff Leave Status:
 - **Full-time staff:** As essential employees, every effort will be made to keep the full-time staff working in the building 8 hours per day. In the event that it is not safe to have any staff in the building, every effort will be made to have full-time staff work from home 8 hours per day, or at a minimum the hours required by the health insurance company to maintain full-time status. If there is not enough remote work available, staff will be put on paid administrative leave for up to 14 business days (or up to 80 hours). Full-time employees who choose not to work when work is available, may use accrued comp and vacation leave, if approved by the director. Negative accruals will not be allowed to offset time not worked when working from home, unless the staff member becomes ill or is caring for someone who is ill and is unable to do remote work. If the library is closed to the staff beyond 14 business days and there is no remote work available (or beyond use of 80 hours of paid administrative leave), full-time staff will be

furloughed and may use accrued comp, sick and vacation leave, but may not go into a negative accrual. Leave will not continue to accrue during furlough. Once leave is exhausted they will be unpaid and may be able to draw unemployment.

- **Part-time staff:** Every effort will be made to keep the part-time staff working in the building for their normally scheduled number of hours. In the event that it is not safe to have any staff in the building, part-time staff will be put on paid administrative leave for up to two weeks at their regularly scheduled number of hours each day of the week. Part-time employees who choose not to work when work is offered, may use accrued vacation leave, if approved by the director, but may not go into a negative accrual. If the library is closed to the staff beyond two weeks, part-time staff will be furloughed and they may use accrued leave time, both sick and vacation, however will not continue to accrue leave during furlough. Once leave is exhausted they will be unpaid and may be able to draw unemployment.
- **Illness:** If work is available and the employee falls ill or someone they are caring for falls ill, the leave policies in section two will be in effect.

4. Re-opening to the Public; Shelter-in-place is lifted.

Staff will be notified by email, telephone and/or text when they will be required to report to the library for work. Provisions under step 2 may be required until the public health emergency is declared over. The library director will make the appropriate determinations upon fully reopening the library based on guidance from local, state and federal government. At the end of the public health emergency declaration, standard sick leave and time off policies will come back in force and the library will return to full service.

This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees every four years.

This policy was revised by the North Lake County Public Library District Board of Trustees on **February 22, 2022.**

Signed:

Clint Hoxie, Board Chair

Abbi Dooley, Library Director