



NEW CASTLE • HENRY COUNTY

PUBLIC LIBRARY

Epidemic/Pandemic and Library Health Emergency Policy

Purpose

To establish a protocol that will be used in the event of an epidemic or Library 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 county or state health officials. It is important to ensure that core 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.

Pandemic – An epidemic that has spread over several countries or continents, usually affecting many persons around the globe.

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

Library minimum staffing level –The minimum number of healthy staff needed to maintain the building being open to the public.

Library Closure

The New Castle Henry-County Public Library may temporarily close because of an epidemic, pandemic or Library health emergency in the event that either of the following occurs:

- A. A mandate, order, or recommendation for closure is issued by the Henry County Health Department, Indiana State Department of Health or other government officials
- B. If a Library employee has been diagnosed with the epidemic, NCHCPL will temporarily close that location
- C. At the discretion of the Library Director

The New Castle-Henry County Public Library may temporarily close, reduce its operating hours, or limit services in the event that there is insufficient staff to maintain basic service levels or to reduce the

possible spread of the contagion. In the event of closure, overdue fines will be suspended. The exterior book drop will be kept open and cleared periodically as long as possible.

Types of Library Closures:

- Complete Closure: no staff in the building at any time
- Library Closure with Essential Services Only: staff may be required to work during closures to perform necessary duties, such as payroll, bill paying, building maintenance, emptying book drops, etc.
- Library Closure with Reduced Services – staff may:
 - be allowed to work inside the building, although the building is closed to the public
 - be assigned to provide services to patrons in newly determined ways
 - be assigned to clean the building

Minimum Staffing Level

Minimum staffing level for a temporary period of time is defined as five (5) healthy staff available to be present at the Library during all open hours with consideration and attention to Indiana State labor laws.

An inability to maintain this temporary minimal level will result in reduced hours or closing the Library. Also, the necessity to maintain this temporary minimal level for more than five consecutive days will also result in reduced hours or closing the Library

At the Library Director's discretion, this may include:

1. Cancelling programs, special events, and meeting room reservations
2. Reassigning employee duties and shifts
3. Reducing open hours if the number of employees falls below minimum levels

Compensation During an Epidemic/Pandemic

The Library will compensate an employee their regularly scheduled hours if they:

- contract the disease
- are required to care for a family member with the disease
- receive a mandated or doctor-directed self-quarantine

In the event of closure and Library employees are sent home, those employees shall be compensated for their regularly scheduled hours.

In the event the Library remains closed, employees scheduled to work shall be compensated for their regularly scheduled hours.

Communication

In the event of cancellation of services, programs, community room usage or Library closures, administration staff will:

- Notify staff, trustees, and public via email, social media and the website
- Call or email scheduled program presenters, community room reservations, outreach sites, program attendees (if we have contact information)
- Provide information regarding the epidemic/pandemic on the Library's website
- Create signage for updating patrons inside the library
- Notify local media and other government entities as deemed necessary

Prioritization of Services

If reduced staffing, hours, or services are required, employees shall perform priority responsibilities that most directly impact patrons prior to any other work tasks. Staff duties may be reassigned as needed to provide public service based on these priorities.

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

1. Submission of payroll, processing bills for payment, preparing for and holding Library Board meetings.
2. Direct patron assistance, e.g. check out, issuing Library cards, computer and information assistance.
3. Processing incoming holds, check in, incoming delivery returns, shelving.
4. Processing holds, shelf action lists, pick lists.

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.

Employee Absences

The New Castle-Henry County Public Library Employee Handbook outlines the sick leave policy. This policy shall continue to be followed in the event of an epidemic or Library health emergency. Pre-approved time off will be honored unless voluntarily cancelled.

Social Distancing

If recommended by local, state or federal health officials, Library staff will follow suggestions and directions to implement social distancing within the Library buildings.

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 be provided by the Business Office Manager.