

Pandemic Response Operations

Margaret Reaney Memorial Library

Pandemic Response Operations Plan

Purpose: This Pandemic Response Operations Plan was produced in reference to the amended New York State Labor Law section 27-c and New York State Education Law paragraphs k and l of subdivision 2 of section 2801-a (as amended by section 1 of part B of chapter 56 of the laws of 2016), as applicable. These laws were amended by the passing of legislation S8617B/A10832 signed by the Governor of New York State on September 7, 2020, requiring public employers to adopt a plan for operations in the event of a declared public health emergency involving a communicable disease. The plan includes the identification of essential positions, facilitation of remote work for non-essential positions, provision of personal protective equipment, and protocols for supporting contact tracing.

This plan is a policy level document of **Margaret Reaney Memorial Library**, approved by the library Board of Trustees. This plan is pertinent to a declared public health emergency in the State of New York which may impact library operations; and it is in the interest of the safety of our employees and contractors, and the community that the library serves, that the library has promulgated this plan. This plan was developed based on information, best practices, and guidance available as of the date of publication. The plan was developed to reflect the circumstances of the current Coronavirus pandemic but may also be applicable to other infectious disease outbreaks.

1. Essential Functions and Positions

Essential functions are those that are vital to the ongoing mission of the library. Essential functions may also include those that are necessary for the ongoing business operations of the library, including payroll, bill paying, upkeep, security, maintenance, etc.

All of the services that the library provides are essential for building and maintaining community and for contributing to a culture of community development. Library services fall in four broad categories:

- The library provides access to shared resources – books, DVDs, E-resources etc.
- The library provides a clearinghouse and conduit for information of all kinds
- The library provides educational and enriching classes, programs and events
- The library provides a space and forum for community collaborations

The specific services that are prioritized in a pandemic will depend on the guidelines and protocols developed by local, state and federal health and disease control offices. The library will follow all promulgated requirements and guidelines for providing services in a pandemic. The library will consider all of the factors listed below when making specific pandemic-related decisions on library services:

- The library’s mission of serving the community
- Safety of library staff and users
- Communications, community perception & engagement
- Long-term library sustainability

Implementing specific pandemic responses will depend on the official guidance provided by local, state and federal pandemic control agencies, and on the library specific priorities identified above. Library responses are likely to fall within the following four categories:

1. Providing most usual services with a heightened emphasis on cleaning, social distancing and use of PPE
2. Providing on-site services with reduced capacity and access
3. Providing curbside access with no in-building services
4. Providing only remote and electronic services

Specific responses for PPE, cleaning, reduced capacity, etc. are outlined in the remaining sections of this plan.

Essential positions, for the purpose of this plan, are those necessary for implementing each of the service models identified above. Essential positions may include any of the following:

- Library Director
- Bookkeeper and finance staff

- Building & Security Staff
- Library Clerks and paraprofessionals

2. Remote Work Protocols

Non-essential employees and contractors able to accomplish their functions remotely will be enabled to work from home to the greatest extent possible. Working remotely requires:

- Identification of staff who will work remotely
- Approval and assignment of remote work
- Equipping staff for remote work, which may include:
 - Internet capable laptop
 - Necessary peripherals
 - Access to software and databases necessary to perform their duties
 - A solution for telephone communications

As possible, 'essential' staff may be assigned to work remotely for part of their work week to reduce exposures. Further, library work hours and office locations may be altered to best accommodate public health protective actions for employees and the public. Protective actions may include, but are not limited to occupancy restrictions, protective barriers, and increased conduct of business by internet, phone, or other means. Protective actions will be taken in accordance with County and State Health Department, and CDC guidelines and requirements.

3. Staff Density Reduction, Staggered Shifts

Implementing staggered shifts 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 ensure that employees are provided with their typical or contracted minimum work hours per week. Staggering shifts requires identification of positions for which work hours will be staggered as well as approval and assignment of changed work hours. The library may also alter the office layout to keep essential employees separated.

4. 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
- Disposable gowns and aprons

Note that 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 and work location
2. Procurement of PPE
 - a. 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
 - b. Public employers must be able to mitigate supply chain disruptions to meet this requirement
3. Storage of, access to, and monitoring of PPE stock
 - a. PPE must be stored in a manner which will prevent degradation
 - b. Employees and contractors must have immediate access to PPE in the event of an emergency
 - c. The supply of PPE must be monitored to ensure integrity and to track usage rates

5. Cleaning Protocols

CDC/public health guidelines will be followed for cleaning and disinfection of surfaces/areas. Present guidance for routine cleaning during a public health emergency includes:

1. As possible, employees and contractors will clean their own workspaces at the end of their shifts, at a minimum.

- a. High traffic/high touch areas and areas which are accessible to the public/constituents will be disinfected every two hours or after use.
 - b. The Library Director or their designee will ensure that appropriate staff clean common areas on a regular schedule to be determined based on published recommendations and need.
2. Staff tasked with cleaning and disinfecting areas will be issued and required to wear PPE appropriate to the task.
3. Soiled surfaces will be cleaned with soap and water, if warranted, before being disinfected.
4. Surfaces will be disinfected with products that meet EPA criteria for use against the virus in question and which are appropriate for that surface.
5. Staff will follow instructions of cleaning products to ensure safe and effective use of the products.

6. Staff Exposure Protocols & Leave Policy

Staff exposures are organized under several categories based upon the type of exposure and presence of symptoms. Following CDC guidelines, the library has established the following protocols:

- A. If employees or contractors are exposed to a known case of communicable disease that is the subject of the public health emergency (defined as a 'close contact' with someone who is confirmed infected, which is a prolonged presence within six feet with that person):
 1. Potentially exposed employees or contractors who do not have symptoms should remain at home or in a comparable setting and practice social distancing for the lesser of 14 days or other current CDC/public health guidance for the communicable disease in question.
 - a. As possible, these employees will be permitted to work remotely during this period of time if they are not ill.
 - b. The Library Director or their designee is responsible for communicating with all affected employees
 - c. See the section titled Documentation of Work Hours and Locations for additional information on contact tracing
- B. If an employee or contractor exhibits symptoms of the communicable disease that is the subject of the public health emergency:

1. Employees and contractors who exhibit symptoms in the workplace should be immediately separated from other employees, customers, and visitors. They should immediately be sent home with a recommendation to contact their physician.
2. Employees and contractors who exhibit symptoms outside of work should notify their supervisor and stay home, with a recommendation to contact their physician.
3. Employees should not return to work until they have met the criteria to discontinue home isolation per CDC/public health guidance and have consulted with a healthcare provider.
4. The library will not require sick employees to provide a negative test result for the disease in question or healthcare provider's note to validate their illness, qualify for sick leave, or return to work; unless there is a recommendation from the CDC/public health officials to do so.
5. CDC criteria for COVID-19 provides that persons exhibiting symptoms may return to work if at least 24 hours have passed since the last instance of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications. If the disease in question is other than COVID-19, CDC and other public guidance shall be referenced.
6. The Library Director or their designee is responsible for communicating with all affected employees

C. If an employee or contractor has tested positive for the communicable disease that is the subject of the public health emergency:

1. Apply the steps identified in item B, above, as applicable.
2. Areas occupied for prolonged periods of time by the subject employee or contractor will be closed off.
 - a. CDC guidance for COVID-19 indicates that a period of 24 hours is ideally given before cleaning, disinfecting, and reoccupation of those spaces will take place. If this time period is not possible, a period of as long as possible will be given. CDC/public health guidance for the disease in question will be followed.
 - b. Any common areas entered, surfaces touched, or equipment used shall be cleaned and disinfected immediately.
 - c. See the section on Cleaning and Disinfection for additional information on that subject.

3. Identification of potential employee and contractor exposures will be conducted
 - a. If an employee or contractor is confirmed to have the disease in question, the library director or their designee should inform all contacts of their possible exposure. **Confidentiality shall be maintained as required by law.**
 - b. Apply the steps identified in item A, above, as applicable, for all potentially exposed personnel.
 - c. The Library Director or their designee is responsible for communicating with all affected employees

Leave Policy for Affected Employees

We recognize there may be nuances or complexities associated with potential exposures, close contacts, symptomatic persons, and those testing positive. We will follow CDC/public health recommendations and requirements and coordinate with our local public health office for additional guidance and support as needed.

Public health emergencies are extenuating and unanticipated circumstances in which the library is committed to reducing the burden on our employees and contractors. The *Families First Coronavirus Response Act* provided requirements related to the COVID-19 pandemic, which form the policies outlined below. This policy may be altered based upon changes in law or regulation, as applicable.

It is our policy that employees of the library will not be charged with leave time for testing. Employees will be provided with up to two weeks of paid sick leave at the employee's regular rate of pay and maximum number of weekly hours for a period which the employee is unable to work due to quarantine (in accordance with federal, state, or local orders or advice of a healthcare provider), and/or experiencing symptoms and seeking medical diagnosis.

Further, the library will provide up to two weeks of paid sick leave at two-thirds the employee's regular rate and maximum number of weekly hours of pay if the employee is unable to work because of a bona fide need to care for an individual subject to quarantine (pursuant to federal, state, or local orders or advice of a healthcare provider), or to care for a child (under 18 years of age) whose school or child care provider is closed or unavailable for reasons related to the public health emergency, and/or the employee is experiencing a substantially similar condition as specified by the CDC/public health officials. This provision may be modified if an employee is able to effectively work remotely and the need exists for them to do so.

Contractors, either independent or affiliated with a contracted firm, are not classified as employees of the library, and as such are not provided with paid leave time by the library, unless required by law.

7. Documentation of Work Hours and Locations – Contact Tracing

In a public health emergency, it may be necessary to document work hours and locations of each employee and contractor to support contact tracing efforts. Identification of locations shall include on-site work, off-site visits, etc. This information may be used by the library to support contact tracing within the organization and may be shared with local public health officials.

The Library Director or their designee is responsible for developing a system of record for recording and maintaining that information. This system may be on paper or in electronic form.

8. Communications with staff and the community

The Library Director, their designee, or their successor holds the authority to execute and direct the implementation of this plan. Implementation, monitoring of operations, and adjustments to plan implementation may be supported by additional personnel, at the discretion of the Library Director.

Upon the declaration of a public health emergency that warrants the implementing this plan, all employees and contractors of the library shall be notified, with details provided as possible and necessary, with additional information and updates provided on a regular basis. The Library Director or their designee will maintain communications with the public and constituents as needed throughout the implementation of this plan.

The Library Director, their designee, or their successor will maintain awareness of information, direction, and guidance from public health officials and the Governor's office, directing the implementation of changes as necessary.

Upon resolution of the public health emergency, the Library Director, their designee, or their successor will direct the resumption of normal operations or operations with modifications as necessary.

The health and safety of library employees, contractors and patrons is crucial to maintaining our mission essential operations. We encourage all to use the [CDC Guidance for Keeping Workplaces, Schools, Homes, and Commercial Establishments Safe](#). The fundamentals of reducing the spread of infection include:

- Using hand sanitizer and washing hands with soap and water frequently, including:
 - After using the restroom
 - After returning from a public outing
 - After touching/disposing of garbage

- After using public computers, touching public tables, and countertops, etc.
- Practice social distancing when possible
- If you are feeling ill or have a fever, notify your supervisor immediately and go home
- If you start to experience coughing or sneezing, step away from people and food, cough or sneeze into the crook of your arm or a tissue, the latter of which should be disposed of immediately
- Clean and disinfect workstations at the end of each shift
- Other guidance which may be published by the CDC, the State Department of Health, or County health officials.

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Rebecca Sokol, Kathy Reed MSC