

Public or Library Health Emergencies Policy

River Falls Public Library

Approved by the River Falls Public Library Board of Trustees

Approved: 06/01/2020

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish protocol in the event of a declared public health emergency, as well as in the event of such a widespread infectious disease outbreak among library staff that basic library operations cannot be maintained. In the event of a serious infectious disease outbreak, recovery may be slow with limited staff, services or hours for several weeks or more. There may also be cyclical phases of an outbreak that require responsive changes to service levels.

Definition

Public health emergency – A city, county, state or federal declaration of a public health crisis.

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

Closure due to public health emergency

To close or reopen the library building due to a public health emergency, the library board must convene in an open public meeting and pass a resolution to do so. The library board can make a motion to reopen with limited services. In which case, the library director will determine what those limited services will be.

The River Falls Public Library may temporarily close because of an epidemic or public health emergency in the event any of the following occur:

- 1) The City of River Falls offices close because of a health emergency.
- 2) A mandate, order, or recommendation for closure is issued by the Pierce County Health Department, Wisconsin Department of Health Services, or U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Public Health, or other government official.
- 3) The River Falls Area School District closes because of an epidemic.

The Library may reopen to the public even if the River Falls Area Schools remain closed if cleared to do so by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services or Pierce County Health Department.

If the library building is closed by the library board due to a public health emergency, and an emergency declaration does not restrict non-contact library services the director may determine whether or not:

- 1) Curbside pickup of library material is feasible.
- 2) To place limits on the number of library materials that can be checked out per patron.
- 3) To accept material returns in the library's exterior drop-box

If the library board makes a resolution to remain open or reopen with limited services during a public health emergency, the library director will determine what those limited services may be. In consultation with the Pierce and St. Croix Health Departments as well as the IFLS Library System Director, the director may determine the limits of library service relating to:

- 1) Programming.
- 2) Special events.

- 3) Meeting room usage.
- 4) Open hours.
- 5) Which areas of the library are open or closed for public use.
- 6) Availability of library furniture in the public service area.
- 7) Patron time limit on computer use and/or time in the building.

The library director will implement official health department recommendations to prevent and contain the spread of disease. This may include but is not limited to:

- 1) Requiring employees to follow recommended health guidelines.
- 2) Encouraging patrons to follow recommended health guidelines.
- 3) Requiring employees to wear personal protective equipment when possible.
- 4) Encouraging patrons to wear personal protective equipment when possible.
- 5) Restricting the number of staff who can be in the building.
- 6) Restricting the number of patrons who can be in the building.
- 7) Identifying and restricting employee work areas.
- 8) Installing sneeze guards at all service desks.

Closure due to library health emergency

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

If the library is open during or after a public health emergency, a minimum level of staffing is required. While open to the public, at least one healthy librarian must be present along with two healthy service desk staff during all established shifts. Another combination would be two healthy librarians and one healthy service desk staff member or three healthy librarians. This does not include staffing of the gallery or continuation of programming. This minimum level of staffing is not sustainable beyond two days since other staff are needed to handle returns, holds, system loans and shelving of returned material.

The availability of healthy library staff will determine the capacity to carry out services and maintain established open hours. At the library director's discretion, temporary remedies may include:

1. Cancelling programs, special events, and meeting room reservations.
2. Reducing open hours.
3. Closing the library for one or more days.

Circulation changes during public and/or library health emergencies

In the event of closure, due dates and hold pick up 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 exterior book drop may be kept open and cleared periodically.

In the event of any cancellation or closing, communication to the public will be made via the Library's:

1. Website.
2. Digital sign on Main St.
3. Social media accounts.
4. Local media contacts.
5. Phone messages.