

EMMAUS PUBLIC LIBRARY
PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY POLICY

I. Purpose

To establish the protocol to be used in the event of a public health emergency, the library may be required to operate on limited staffing or take unique measures, including service restrictions, limited hours of the operation, or possible closures. Recovery from a public health emergency may be slow, as compared to a natural disaster or other physical crises. It is important to ensure that core business activities of the library can be maintained for several weeks or more with limited staff and reduced hours when necessary.

II. Definitions

Public Health Emergency Plan: A public health emergency 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 rebuilding, almost immediately after the event crisis (such as after a fire or storm, or if there is a utility shortage). Recovery from a public emergency health emergency may be slow, with limited staff, services, and hours for an extended period of time.

Appropriate Staffing Level: For the purposes of this policy, Appropriate Staffing Level refers to the minimum number of qualified staff necessary to provide service safely and efficiently as determined by the Library Director or designee.

Minimum Staffing Level: For the purposes of this policy, Minimum Staffing Level is defined as two healthy staff members available to be present at the library during all open hours for a temporary period of time.

III. Library Closure

Public Health Mandate

Emmaus Public Library will close due to a public health emergency in the event of a law, order, or recommendation for closure issued by public health or government officials.

School Closures

Local school district closures due to a public health emergency will not necessarily trigger a closure of the Emmaus Public Library.

Discretionary Service Level Changes

At the discretion of the Library Director or designee the Library may close, reduce its operating hours, or limit service temporarily in the event that there is not sufficient staff to maintain appropriate services.

The Director or designee can update staff and volunteer procedures, as needed, during a public health emergency.

In the event of closure or reduction in operating hours, the Library Director or designee will maintain necessary communication with staff, Library Board of Trustees, Friends of EPL, and patrons.

IV. Staffing

An inability to maintain a Minimum Staffing Level, or necessity to maintain this temporary minimal level for more than two consecutive days, will result in reduced hours or closing the library.

In providing service safely and efficiently, the following actions may be taken at the discretion of the Library Director or designee:

- Increased health/safety measures for staff (wearing gloves, wiping down work areas, etc.)
- Social distance practices in public areas
- Reduction of staffing
- Cancellation of programs, special events, and meeting room reservations
- Reallocation of employee responsibilities and shift/schedule changes to provide coverage during open hours
- Closure of the library.

If the Library is open, employees are expected to report to work on time as scheduled, excluding any excused absences, following the established Personnel policy or quarantine due to the public health emergency.

If the library is closed, or hours reduced, healthy employees may be assigned work-at-home tasks to be completed during their compensated hours. When appropriate, work tools (laptops, supplies, etc.) will be checked out to employees by the Library Director or designee for work-at-home assignments.

V. Communication

In the event of reduction in services, reduction in hours, or closure necessitated by a public health emergency, effective communication should be announced in a timely manner. Library staff should follow normal procedures used for any unexpected closure/program cancellation.

VI. Prioritization of Services

Priority will be given to the following essential services:

- Information services for the public online
- Payroll
- Accounts Payable
- Facility Maintenance

In the case of reduced staffing or reduced hours of operation, the Library Director or designee will prioritize service-related tasks and assign the daily work plan to staff.

Approved by Library Board of Trustees, November 17, 2020