

FERTILE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Pandemic Policy

I: Purpose

To establish the protocol that will be used in the event of a pandemic. If there is a serious infectious disease outbreak, the library must plan for staff to be unable to report to work. In addition, during a pandemic, businesses, social organizations or schools may be required to take unique measures to help slow the spread of the illness including closing down by order of local public health officials. Other public health measures may include limiting or canceling social and public gatherings, requiring quarantines and/or other social distancing measures. Recovery from a pandemic may be slow, as compared to a natural disaster or some other physical crises. It is important to ensure that the core business activities of the library can be maintained for several weeks or more with limited staff and reduced hours due to a pandemic.

II: Definitions

“Pandemic Plan” A pandemic 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 or crisis (such as after a fire or storm, or if there is a utility shortage). 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.

“Pandemic” A disease epidemic occurs when there are more cases of that disease than normal. A pandemic is a worldwide epidemic of disease and may occur when a new virus appears against which the human population has no immunity. If a pandemic were to occur today, we could expect the virus to spread rapidly due to the interconnected nature of the world and the high level of global travel. During a pandemic, up to 35% of employees may be absent at one time due to their own illness. An additional number may be absent for other reasons.

III: Library Closure

The Fertile Public Library will close due to pandemic in the event that

- a) The City of Fertile closes following the City of Fertile Emergency Closing Policy or
- b) A mandate order or recommendation for closure is issued by public health or government officials on the local, county, or state level.
- c) The surrounding school districts have closed.

At the discretion of the Library Director or the Library Board President, the Fertile Public Library may close, reduce its operating hours, or limit services temporarily (e.g. programming) in the event that there is not sufficient staff to maintain basic library service levels and/or for the safety of the community and staff members.

In the event of a closure, it is imperative that the Library Director or designee follow the communication procedures and submit payroll. Due dates and hold pickup dates for library materials will be adjusted so that holds do not expire on dates in which the library is closed. The book drop will be kept open and cleared periodically as long as possible.

If the Library is open, employees are expected to report to work on time as scheduled, excluding any excused absences. In the event of closure and healthy library employees are sent home, those employees shall be compensated for their regularly scheduled hours.

IV: Communication

In the event of closure necessitated by pandemic, effective communication about any reduction in services or open hours is of the utmost importance. The library director and, where possible, the library board members, should immediately begin alerting the public.

V: Prioritization of Services

If reduced staffing, open hours or services are required, employees shall perform priority responsibilities that most directly impact patrons prior to any other work tasks. Priority responsibilities shall follow this order:

1. Direct patron assistance: check out; issuing library cards; computer and reference assistance; facility and collection supervision/safety.
2. Patron related-tasks: check-in; incoming delivery; shelving.
3. Workflow tasks: holds shelf action list; picklist.
4. Essential services: payroll; processing bills for payment; Library Board meetings.

Individual responsibilities outside of those described shall be completed after these 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 in the event that they feel a responsibility not listed here requires urgent attention.

VI: 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, the administrative authority for this policy and all library operations shall follow the Responsibility for Library Operations Policy.

Adopted: March 2020