

HARTLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY INFECTIOUS DISEASE OUTBREAK POLICY

I: Purpose

To establish the protocol to be used in the event of an infectious disease outbreak. If there is an infectious disease outbreak, the library may be required to operate on limited staffing or take unique measures to help slow the spread of the illness, including service restrictions, limited hours of operation, or possible closure by order of local public health officials. Recovery from an infectious disease outbreak 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 due to an infectious disease outbreak.

II: Definitions

Infectious Disease Outbreak Plan: An infectious disease outbreak 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). Recovery from an infectious disease outbreak may be slow and limited staff, services, and hours may be necessary 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 his/her designee.

III: Library Closure

Public Health

Mandate

The Hartland Public Library will close due to an infectious disease outbreak in the event of a mandate order or recommendation for closure issued by public health or government officials on the local, county, or state level.

Discretionary Service Level Changes

At the discretion of the Library Director, in consultation with the Library Board, the Library may close, reduce its operating hours, or limit services temporarily in the event that there is not sufficient staff to maintain appropriate staffing levels or if unable to maintain adequate social distancing for health and safety.

In the event of closure or reduction in operating hours, the Library Director or designee will maintain communication with staff, Library Board of Trustees, and the Town Manager.

IV: Staffing

Minimum staffing level for a temporary period of time is defined as two healthy employees available to be present at the library during all open hours. An inability to maintain this temporary minimal level or a 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 (e.g., wearing of gloves, wiping down work areas, etc.);
- Restricted access to areas in the library (e.g., closing floors or unmonitored areas for safety);
- Social distancing practices in public areas;
- Reduction of open hours;
- Cancellation of all 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. In the event of closure, employees shall be compensated for their regularly scheduled hours.

If the Library is closed, closed to the public, or hours reduced, healthy employees may work at the library or may be assigned work-at-home tasks to be completed in their compensated hours. When appropriate, work tools (e.g., 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 closure necessitated by infectious disease outbreak, effective communication about any reduction in services or open hours must be announced in a timely manner. Library staff should follow the normal procedure used for any unexpected closure/program cancellation, which includes posting on wmur.com, Facebook, and the library website.

VI: Prioritization of Services

Priority will be given to the following essential services:

- Information services for the public, both in-person and online;
- Accounting (mail collection, bill pay, etc.) ;
- 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.

VII: Reopening

The Library Director, in consultation with the Library Board of Trustees and with information from but not limited to: local health agencies, the Vermont Health Department and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, will make the decision as to when it is safe to reopen the library after an Infectious Disease Outbreak.

Approved by the Hartland Library Board of Trustees 03/13/2020