

# **PUBLIC HEALTH PLAN AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES POLICY**

## **I. General Guidance**

### **A. Objectives and Key Considerations**

Key Library objectives in the event of an infectious disease outbreak include:

- Reducing transmission among staff
- Protecting people who are at higher risk for adverse health complications
- Maintaining business operations
- Minimizing adverse effects on patrons and the community

Some considerations when making decisions on appropriate responses include:

- a. Disease severity (i.e., number of people who are sick, hospitalization and death rates) in the community
- b. Work-related exposure and health risks to employees and patrons and the impact of disease on employees who are vulnerable and may be at higher risk for adverse health complications
- c. Recommendations and guidelines as put out by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), New York State Department of Health (DOH) and local health officials.

To ensure that we stay up to date on the guidance that is being issued by the State, we will monitor public health communications including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Department of Health (DOH), OSHA and all applicable Executive Orders at [governor.ny.gov](http://governor.ny.gov) on a periodic basis or whenever notified of the availability of new guidance.

### **B. Preventive Actions**

Everyday preventive actions help stop the spread of germs, and lower the impact of them in the workplace. Cough, sneezing, or unclean hands spread flu and other serious respiratory illnesses. Germs are often spread when a person touches a contaminated surface and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth. For all workers, regardless of specific exposure risks, it is always a good practice to:

- Frequently wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. When soap and running water are unavailable, use an alcohol-based hand rub with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands that are visibly soiled. Additional key times to clean hands include:
  - After blowing one's nose, coughing, or sneezing.
  - After using the restroom.
  - Before eating or preparing food.
  - After contact with animals or pets.
  - Before and after providing routine care for another person who needs assistance such as a child.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.

- Practice good respiratory etiquette, including covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue (or an elbow or shoulder if no tissue is available)
- Get a flu vaccine as per CDC recommendations
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

### **C. Hand Hygiene Stations**

The Library will provide and maintain hand hygiene stations for employees and patrons, including handwashing with soap, water, and paper towels, as well as alcohol-based hand sanitizers containing 60% or more alcohol for at service points and in each department office.

### **D. Sick Employees**

Prompt identification and isolation of potentially infectious individuals is a critical first step in protecting workers, visitors, and others at the Library. Employees with flu like symptoms or symptoms of acute respiratory illness (sneezing, coughing, sore throat etc.) should stay home to help prevent spreading your illness to others. Those who had a fever, should stay home until free of fever (under 100.4°F), have no signs of a fever, or any other symptoms for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines (e.g. cough suppressants). Employees who feel sick at work should notify their supervisor as soon as possible. Supervisors should send employees who appear to have the flu or acute respiratory illness symptoms (i.e. cough, shortness of breath) home immediately. When an employee goes home sick, supervisors should ensure that any shared surfaces (computer, desk, phone etc.) are cleaned and disinfected. Supervisors may work with employees without sick time to make up their hours and will attempt to make up sick time with PT employees when possible.

### **E. Communication**

All employees will be informed and trained on new protocols and guidelines put into place in the event of an outbreak. Employees will be notified of updated information via their pmlib.org email account and the staff blog. Signage inside and outside of the Library will be posted to remind employees and patrons to adhere to proper hygiene, staying home when sick, social distancing rules, appropriate use of PPE, and cleaning and disinfecting protocols. The Library will use social media, the Library website and signage to provide patrons with updated information. Patrons and staff will be notified of Library closings and other information via the Library's Emergency Closing Procedures. Employees who may be at increased susceptibility for infection or complications should report their vulnerability to their supervisor who will attempt to make reasonable accommodations.

## **II. Outbreak Measures**

### **A. Social Distancing**

If public health officials call for social/physical distancing, i.e. minimizing exposure between employees and between employees and the public, the following measures may go into effect: modification of facilities and service programs including restrictions on library hours, occupancy, reduced access to seating areas, computer usage, and library stacks and moving to increased online services.

## **B. Remote Work and Staggered Shifts**

Assigning staff to work remotely and/or staggering work shifts may be employed to decrease crowding and density at work sites to help reduce risk.

### Remote Work Protocols

Non-essential employees able to accomplish their functions remotely will be enabled to do so at the discretion of Administration. Working remotely requires:

1. Identification of staff who will work remotely
2. Approval and assignment of remote work
3. Equipping staff for remote work, may include:
  - a. Internet capable laptop
  - b. Necessary peripherals
  - c. Access to VPN and/or secure network drives
  - d. Access to software and databases necessary to perform their duties
  - e. A solution for telephone communications
    - Note that phone lines may need to be forwarded to off-site staff

The Director, Assistant Director, and Department Heads will collaborate to identify staff/positions that can effectively work remotely. Final approval to work remotely will be given by the Director. Department Heads will be responsible for assignment and review of remote work. The Assistant Director, Network Manager and Department Heads will evaluate the equipment and software needed and available for those staff/positions approved for remote work by the Director.

The Network Manager will provide software access and maintain a list of all equipment being used by staff for remote work.

### 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, Patchogue-Medford Library will ensure that employees are provided with their contracted minimum work hours per week.

The Director, Assistant Director, and Department Supervisors will collaborate to identify positions for which work hours will be staggered. The Director will approve all temporarily changed work hours. Staggered work shifts will be between 7:00am and 9:00pm and may be inclusive of weekends.

## **C. Personal Protective Equipment**

The Library will provide an adequate supply of appropriate PPE for employees as per local guidelines, such as masks and gloves at no cost to the employee. The Library may require patrons to use face coverings or other PPE in accordance with Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention (CDC) and Department of Health (DOH) guidelines. Workers required to use PPE will be trained on how to properly put on, use, take off and care for PPE.

The Library has identified the following PPE and cleaning supplies as applicable to the needs of daily operations during a public health emergency: face shields, disposable masks, disposable gloves, washable gloves, hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, and disinfecting spray. Disposable masks and hand sanitizer are relevant to all staff, while other items are predominately relevant to the maintenance staff, but where appropriate available to all. Face masks and gloves may be made available to public to use while in the Library if supply allows. PPE are stored in locked closets in the Business Office. Access to PPE supplies will be limited to Administration Staff.

#### **D. Shared Objects and Surfaces**

In the event of an outbreak, custodians and other cleaners will clean and disinfect surface areas in offices, bathrooms, kitchens, common areas, toys and shared electronic equipment (like tablets, touch screens, copiers, keyboards, remote controls) focusing on frequently touched surfaces according to current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Department of Health (DOH) and OSHA guidelines employees should not share staplers, scissors, pens and pencils etc. and should notify the Business Office if additional supplies are needed. When in contact with shared objects or frequently touched areas, employees should wear gloves or sanitize/wash hands before and after contact. Employees should wipe commonly used surfaces/shared workspaces before and after use..

#### **E. Health Assessment Screening**

Staff and visitors may be required to submit to a health assessment screening before entering the building. Screenings will be monitored by Director/Assistant Director and Business Manager.

#### **F. Logs and Contact Tracing**

In a public health emergency, staff may be required to maintain contact logs to support the Library's contact tracing efforts and may be shared with local public health officials. The Library will confirm cases of the infectious disease and perform contact tracing as required by local health authorities. The Director/Assistant Director or Business manager is responsible for notifying state and local health departments and cooperating with contact tracing efforts, including notification of potential contacts, such as workers or visitors who had close contact with the individual, while maintaining confidentiality required by state and federal law and regulations. The Business Office will keep track of workers and other visitors.

#### **G. Library Closing and Essential Staff**

In the event of a library closing for an extended time, a schedule will be set for seeing to essential needs. These include payroll, cleaning, internal network, boiler and building checks, emptying the book drop, paying bills and banking considerations. Essential staff include Library Administration and Business Office, Tech Support (IT), Custodial, Security and Graphics Personnel and Department Heads as needed.

### **III. Symptoms and Illness**

#### **A. Staff Exposures**

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

1. If employees or contractors are exposed to a known case of communicable disease that is the subject of the public health emergency:
  - a. Potentially exposed employees 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.
  - b. As possible, these employees will be permitted to work remotely during this period of time if they are not ill.
  - c. The Business Office must be notified of exposure and is responsible for ensuring these protocols are followed.
  
2. If an employee exhibits symptoms of the communicable disease that is the subject of the public health emergency:
  - a. Employees should be immediately separated from other employees, customers, and visitors and be sent home with a recommendation to contact their physician.
  - b. Employees who exhibit symptoms outside of work should notify their supervisor, stay home, and contact their physician.
  - c. 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.
  
3. If an employee or contractor has tested positive for the communicable disease that is the subject of the public health emergency:
  - a. The Business Manager and Assistant Director will confirm cases of the infectious disease and perform contact tracing as required by local health authorities.
  - b. The Business Manager and Assistant Director will inform all contacts of their possible exposure. Confidentiality shall be maintained as required by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)
  - c. Any common areas entered, surfaces touched, or equipment used shall be cleaned and disinfected immediately.
  - d. Sick employees will need to show appropriate documentation to validate their illness, qualify for sick leave, or return to work.

#### **B. Employee Leave**

Public health emergencies are extenuating and unanticipated circumstances in which Patchogue-Medford Library is committed to reducing the burden on our employees. It is our policy that employees will not be charged with leave time for testing. Additional provisions may be enacted based upon need and the guidance and requirements in place by federal and state employment laws, FMLA, executive orders, and other potential sources.

#### **IV. Cleaning and Disinfecting**

Reducing the risk of exposure to infectious diseases by cleaning and disinfecting is an important part of maintaining healthy public spaces. The Library will adhere to hygiene and sanitation requirements from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Department of Health (DOH) and ensure appropriate local protocols and guidelines.

##### **A. Cleaning Logs**

If required, cleaning logs will be kept on site that document date, time, and scope of cleaning.

##### **B. Surface Guidelines**

Soiled surfaces will be cleaned with soap and water before being disinfected. Surfaces will be disinfected with products that meet EPA criteria for use against the virus in question and which are appropriate for that surface. High traffic/high touch areas and areas which are accessible to the public/constituents will be disinfected at least hourly. The office cleaning company will continue to provide daily cleaning of the building afterhours.

##### **C. Worker Safety**

Staff should always wear appropriate PPE for cleaning and disinfecting. Cleaning staff are required to wear disposable gloves, including when handling trash. Additional PPE might be required based on the cleaning/disinfectant products being used and whether there is a risk of splash. Gloves should be removed carefully to avoid contamination and hands washed after removing gloves. Cleaning staff should immediately report breaches in PPE such as a tear in gloves or any other potential exposures to their supervisor.

##### **D. Non-Retaliation and Discrimination**

The Library will not take any retaliatory action or discriminate against an employee for making suggestions or recommendations regarding the contents of this policy.

Resources:

- [CDC's website on Cleaning and Disinfection for Community Facilities.](#)
- New York State Department of Health
- OSHA's [Control and Prevention.](#)
- OSHA's [Training and Reference Materials Library](#)
- OSHA's [Personal Protective Equipment Safety and Health Topics](#) page
- New York Labor Law §27-c

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