

Thomas Crane Public Library

Health Emergency Policy

Policy Statement

In order to ensure the continuation of its core public service activities, the Thomas Crane Public Library has established this protocol in the event of an epidemic or library health emergency. This policy differs from the Library's general emergency preparedness plan in that, unlike a building or weather emergency, when staff returns to work and recovery from the event begins almost immediately, a serious infectious disease outbreak may necessitate a slow recovery that impacts library operations for several weeks or more.

Definitions

An *epidemic* is a widespread occurrence of an infectious disease in a community at a particular time.

A *pandemic* is an outbreak of an infectious disease that is prevalent over a whole country or the world.

A *library health emergency* is when there are not enough healthy library employees to maintain normal hours of operations and a full range of library services.

Regulations

Library Closure

1. The Library may temporarily close its buildings due to an epidemic/pandemic or library health emergency in the event that there is a mandate or recommendation for closure issued by local or state public health officials.
2. The Library may temporarily close its buildings, reduce its operating hours, or limit in-person services if there is insufficient staff to maintain basic library service levels. In the event of a closure, due dates may be extended, patron holds suspended, and overdue charges waived for the duration of the closure. The Library may continue to accept materials returned in its exterior book drops.
3. In the event that the Quincy Public Schools are closed due to an epidemic/pandemic, the Library buildings will remain open unless one of the aforementioned requirements for closing are also met. Should school be canceled, library programs for children and teens will be cancelled and non-circulating materials for children may be removed from public areas during the duration of the school closure to minimize spread through surfaces frequently touched by children.

Reduction of Services

4. The availability of library staff will determine the ability to carry out services and maintain open hours. At the discretion of the Director of Libraries, the following reductions in service may be considered:
 - i. Programs and events may be cancelled, rescheduled, or presented online only.
 - ii. Meeting and study room reservations may be cancelled.
 - iii. Hours open at one or all locations may be reduced if the number of available employees falls below minimum levels
 - iv. One or more buildings may be closed for one or more days.
5. Mandates and recommendations from public health officials regarding social distancing and/or hygiene measures to reduce the transmission of disease may result in changes or reductions in service. At the discretion of the Director of Libraries, the following actions may be considered:
 - i. Public access to library buildings may be restricted to meet lower building capacity limits, or may be provided by appointment only.
 - ii. The public seating capacity of buildings may be temporarily reduced.
 - iii. Public access to physical collections may be provided without direct patron-staff contact.
 - iv. In-person programs and other group activities may be limited to comply with local or state limits on gathering size.
 - v. Personal assistance to the public may be limited to telephone and online (email, chat, screen sharing) methods only.
6. If reduced services are required, priority will be given to direct patron assistance, necessary materials processing, facility safety and cleaning/disinfecting, payroll and accounts payable, and critical communications and marketing.
7. In the event of closure or reduced services necessitated by a health emergency, the Library will immediately notify the public via building signage, the library's website and social media sites, email or text messages to patrons, and updated voicemail greetings.

Employee Scheduling & Absences

8. Employee schedules and absences during any health emergency will be subject to any Memorandums of Agreement (MOA) between the City of Quincy and the Quincy Library Staff Association (QLSA) that are in effect at the time of the emergency.
9. If, for any reason, the Director of Libraries is unable or unavailable to perform the responsibilities outlined in this policy, administrative authority for this policy and all library operations shall follow the City of Quincy Continuity of Operations plan.
10. Complaints about this policy should be addressed to the Director of Libraries.

Adopted by Vote of the Library Board of Trustees, July 13, 2020