



L.E. Phillips Memorial  
**Public Library**

**Number: 14**  
**Category: Administration**

**Policy Title: Epidemic and Library Health Policy**  
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The purpose of this policy is to establish protocol that will be used in the event of an epidemic or declared public health emergency. The library should plan for staff being unable to report to work in the event of a serious infectious disease outbreak. In addition, during an epidemic or health emergency organizations may be required to take measures to help slow the spread of illness such as closing by order of the President of the United States, Governor of the State of Wisconsin or Eau Claire City-County public health officials. It is important to ensure that essential business activities of the library can be maintained with limited staff and reduced hours as determined by the Library Director.

This 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 recovery work almost immediately after the event or crisis (such as after a fire or storm). 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.

Epidemic is defined as a disease affecting many persons in a specific locality at the same time, and spreading from person to person in a locality where the disease is not permanently prevalent.

Library health emergency is the state of affairs in which there are not enough healthy library staff to maintain normal hours of operation.

Employees and staffing level refer to part time and full time library staff as defined in the L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library's Employment Handbook. This does not include library Pages or volunteers. "Desk staff" refer to all library employees with the Desk Clerks classification and above.

### **1. Library Closure**

The L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library may temporarily close because of an epidemic or library health emergency in the event that any of the following occur:

- A. The City of Eau Claire offices close because of a health emergency.

- B. A mandate, order, or recommendation for closure is issued by the state library division, public health, or other government officials.
- C. The Eau Claire Area School District (ECASD) closes schools because of an epidemic.

At the discretion of the Library Director, the L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library may temporarily close, reduce its operating hours, or limit services in the event that there is insufficient staff to maintain basic service levels.

In the event of closure, due dates and holds pickup dates for library materials will be adjusted so that no overdue charges are assessed and holds do not expire on dates the library is closed. The exterior book drop may be kept open and cleared periodically as long as possible.

The Library may reopen to the public even if ECASD schools remain closed if cleared to do so by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services or Eau Claire City-County Health department, and the City of Eau Claire Risk Management Department.

## **2. Minimum Staffing Level to Remain Open**

If Eau Claire City-County public health officials allow public facilities to remain open during or reopen following a public health emergency, the Library must maintain a minimal level of staff in order to be open to the public. Minimum staffing level for a temporary period of time is defined as eight (8) healthy desk staff available to be present at the library during all open hours with a maximum of eight (8) hour workday and 40 hour workweek per employee. Thus, at least ten(10) healthy desk staff must be available to keep the library open for its regular daily hours Monday – Thursday, and at least six (6) available for regular Friday and weekend hours.

An inability to maintain this temporary minimal level will result in reduced hours or closing the library. Also, the necessity to maintain this temporary minimal level for more than five consecutive days will also result in reduced hours or closing the library.

The absence of healthy library staff will determine the ability to carry out services and maintain open hours. At the library director's discretion, this may include:

- A. Cancelling programs, special events, and meeting room reservations.
- B. Reassigning employee duties and shifts.
- C. Reducing open hours if the number of employees falls below minimum levels.
- D. Closing the library for one or more days.

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

## **3. Communication**

In the event of closure library staff should follow the Library's Emergency Closure Policy. Any changes in the library's open hours to the public will be communicated via the library's website, social media accounts, media contacts, and phone messages.

#### **4. Prioritization of Services**

If reduced staffing, hours, or services are required, employees shall perform priority responsibilities that most directly impact customers prior to any other work tasks.

Priority responsibilities shall follow this order, with safety being a priority:

- A. Communicate with customers, stakeholders, local officials, and vendors about changes to library services.
- B. Submission of payroll, processing bills for payment, preparing for and holding Library Board meetings.
- C. Secure ability for staff to work remotely.
- D. Ensure online and digital resources are accessible.
- E. Processing incoming and outgoing holds.
- F. Direct customer assistance, e.g. check out, issuing library cards, computer and information assistance.

Individual responsibilities outside of those described shall be completed after 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 to determine staffing area assignment and which individual work tasks should take priority, or in the event that they feel a responsibility not listed here requires urgent attention.

**5. Employee Absences** L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library's Employee Handbook outlines the sick leave policy. This policy shall continue to be followed in the event of an epidemic or library health emergency.

#### **6. 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, administrative authority for this policy and all library operations shall follow the library staff succession plan.