

Reopening Protocol for In-Person Services in Libraries

Recent Updates:

10/16/20: Updated to clarify that libraries may remain closed, choose to reopen with limited occupancy, or offer sidewalk service only at the discretion of the library operator. The guidance below is for libraries that choose to offer in-person services.

Public Health is issuing this guidance to assist operators of libraries to remain in compliance with the County of Los Angeles Health Officer Order and Appendix B thereby lowering the risk of exposure to both library patrons and employees. Library operators should take the following actions prior to reopening for in-person services:

- Review and Complete the Protocols Checklist for Retail Establishments Opening for In-person Shopping: [Appendix B](#).
- Review [State Library guidance](#) for restoring in-person services in California's libraries.

Please note: Libraries may open **with limited patron occupancy**, offer sidewalk service only, or close at the discretion of the operator and their local government authority. Patrons are encouraged to check with their library to determine their open/closed status and current services offered prior to visiting.

This document may be updated as additional information and resources become available so be sure to check the LA County website <http://www.ph.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/> regularly for any updates to this document.

This checklist covers:

- (1) Workplace policies and practices to protect employee health
- (2) Measures to ensure physical distancing
- (3) Measures to ensure infection control
- (4) Communication with employees and the public
- (5) Measures to ensure equitable access to critical services.

These five key areas must be addressed as your facility develops any reopening protocols.

All libraries covered by this protocol must implement all applicable measures listed below and be prepared to explain why any measure that is not implemented is not applicable to the library.

Library Name:

Library Address:

Date Posted:

A. REQUIRED RESTRICTIONS

- The number of patrons in the library should be low enough to ensure physical distancing but in no case more than 25% of the library's maximum capacity.
Maximum number of patrons in the facility limited to: _____
- Library staff should monitor entrances to the library in order to track occupancy. Libraries may choose to limit the number of entrances that are open to the public during normal business hours to facilitate easier tracking. Libraries may also consider adopting an appointment system to limit the number of people in the building at a given time.
- Physical distancing of six (6) feet between patrons and employees should be maintained at all times. Areas used by the public (for example, building lobbies, study carrels, computer workstations) should be reconfigured to enable physical distancing of at least six feet. If necessary, consider closing every other computer workstation or study carrel if they cannot be moved.
- Libraries may offer access to books, movies and single-use items (such as take-home craft kits) but should limit loans of games and toys.
- If feasible, libraries should implement a contactless return system (e.g., patrons drop them into library drop boxes or during regular hours in bins outside the library). Libraries may also accept returned items in carts or other containers that can be isolated and remain untouched for at least three days before handling and re-shelving.
- Patrons arriving at the library are required to wear a face covering at all times while in the library or on the grounds of the library. This applies to all adults and to children 2 years of age and older. Only individuals who have been instructed not to wear a face covering by their medical provider are exempt from wearing one. To support the safety of employees and other visitors, libraries should consider offering a face covering to visitors who arrive without them.
- Patrons arriving at the library with children must ensure that their children stay next to a parent, avoid touching any other person or any item that does not belong to them, and should wear a face covering they are two years of age or older.
- Children's play areas are closed for use. Toys should be removed from the children's area or be covered or cordoned off if they cannot be removed.
- Symptom checks should be conducted before patrons may enter the library. Checks must include a check-in concerning cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing and fever or chills. These checks can be done in person or through alternative methods such as on-line check in systems or through [signage](#) posted at the entrance to the facility stating that visitors with these symptoms should not enter the premises.
- In-person gatherings, programs, and events of any kind are prohibited. Meeting rooms should remain closed for public use.
- Libraries should consider using physical partitions or visual cues (e.g., floor markings, colored tape, or signs) to indicate where workers and/or employees should stand in order to maintain physical distancing. In areas where employees may interact with patrons at a distance of fewer than 6 feet, such as the circulation desk or the information desk, plexiglass barriers should be installed to minimize exposure.
- If applicable, elevator capacity should be limited to the number of people that can be accommodated while maintaining a 6-foot physical distance between riders. Consider elevator sizes, number of building floors, and daily number of employees and visitors to establish physical distancing guidelines appropriate for elevator riders.
- Public restrooms should be well-stocked at all times with hand soap, paper towels, tissues, and hand sanitizer. Employee restrooms are not available for patrons' use. Water fountains remain

closed for public use.

- Hand sanitizer effective against COVID-19, tissues, and if feasible, contactless trash cans, should be made available to patrons throughout the library but especially in high-traffic areas, such as copiers, printer stations, circulation desks, computer terminals, self-check-out areas, and reception.

B. EMPLOYEE PROTECTIONS

- All employees have been told not to come to work if sick. Employees understand to follow DPH guidance for self-isolation and quarantine, if applicable. Workplace leave policies have been reviewed and modified to ensure that employees are not penalized when they stay home due to illness.
- Upon being informed that one or more employees test positive for, or has symptoms consistent with COVID-19 (case), the employer has a plan or protocol in place to have the case(s) [isolate themselves at home](#) and require the immediate [self-quarantine](#) of all employees that had a workplace exposure to the case(s). The employer's plan should consider a protocol for all for all quarantined employees to have access to or be tested for COVID-19 in order to determine whether there have been additional workplace exposures, which may require additional COVID-19 control measures. See the public health guidance on [responding to COVID-19 in the workplace](#).
- [Entry screenings](#) should be conducted before employees may enter the workspace. Checks must include a check-in concerning cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing and fever or chills and if the employee has had contact with a person known to be infected with COVID-19 in the last 14 days. These checks can be done remotely or in person upon the employees' arrival. A temperature check should also be done at the worksite if feasible.
- In the event that 3 or more cases are identified within the workplace within a span of 14 days the employer should report this cluster to the Department of Public Health at (888) 397-3993 or (213) 240-7821. If a cluster is identified at a worksite, the Department of Public Health will initiate a cluster response which includes providing infection control guidance and recommendations, technical support and site-specific control measures. A public health case manager will be assigned to the cluster investigation to help guide the facility response.
- Employees who have contact with the public or other employees during their shift (s) are offered, at no cost, an appropriate face covering that covers the nose and mouth. The covering is to be worn by the employee at all times during the workday when in contact or likely to come into contact with others. Employees who have been instructed by their medical provider that they should not wear a face covering should wear a face shield with a drape on the bottom edge, to be in compliance with State directives, as long as their condition permits it. A drape that is form fitting under the chin is preferred. Masks with one-way valves should not be used. Employees need not wear a cloth face covering when the employee is alone in a private office, or booth, or a walled cubicle with a solid partition that exceeds the height of the employee when standing.
- Employee-only spaces, such as breakrooms, storage areas, or private offices, should be reconfigured to support physical distancing. Where possible, libraries should provide outdoor break space with shade covers and seating that ensures physical distancing. In compliance with wage and hour regulations, breaks should be staggered to limit employee interactions during breaks and to enable employees to have enough space to maintain a safe physical distance.
- Employees are instructed to wear their face coverings properly and to properly wash, replace, or sanitize their face covering frequently.
- Employers should consider where disposable glove use may be helpful to supplement frequent handwashing or use of hand sanitizer; examples are for employees who are screening others for

symptoms or handling commonly touched items.

- Copies of this guidance have been distributed to all employees.

C. MAINTENANCE PROTOCOLS

- Group gatherings are prohibited, and areas where patrons or employees might congregate should be cordoned off.
- Commonly used items should be sanitized regularly.
- Commonly used equipment should be sanitized before and after each use.
- High traffic areas such as distribution areas, circulation or help desks, break rooms, restrooms and other common areas are disinfected frequently, on the following schedule:
 - Distribution area _____
 - Circulation Desk _____
 - Help Desk _____
 - Break rooms _____
 - Restrooms _____
- Public restrooms are sanitized regularly using EPA approved disinfectants and following the manufacturer's instructions for use, on the following schedule:

D. MONITORING PROTOCOLS

- Instructional and informational signage is posted throughout the library regarding infection control, physical distancing and the use of face coverings.
- Signage at the entry and/or where patrons line up should notify patrons of options for and advantages of preordering (if available).
- Online outlets of the library (website, social media, etc.) should provide clear information about library hours, required use of face coverings, policies in regard to preordering, pickup and return of library materials, and other relevant issues.

E. MEASURES THAT ENSURE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO CRITICAL SERVICES

- Libraries should consider implementing dedicated library hours for vulnerable populations, including seniors and those medically vulnerable have been instituted, if feasible, preferably at a time following a complete cleaning.
- Services that are critical to library patrons have been prioritized. Where feasible, continue to offer curbside pick-up of library items to all patrons.
- Libraries should make efforts to assure access to library materials for patrons who may have limited ability to use an online reservation system.
- Transactions or services that can be offered remotely have been moved on-line.
- Measures are instituted to assure access to goods and services for patrons who have mobility limitations and/or are at high risk in public spaces.

**Any additional measures not included above should be listed on separate pages,
which the library should attach to this document.**

**You may contact the following person with any
questions or comments about this protocol:**

Library Contact Name: _____ **Phone number:** _____

Date Last Revised: _____