

# Phased Reopening Guidelines: For Monticello Public Library

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The COVID-19 virus has had an unprecedented impact on libraries and the communities they serve. This plan explores several possible reopening phases, each dependent on factors such as recommendations from local and national health agencies, social distancing protocols, and critical community needs. The primary consideration in this plan is maintaining the safety of library patrons and staff while finding ways to provide necessary services that the library is uniquely positioned to perform. The most likely scenario may be a scaled reopening with an incremental easing of physical distancing measures.

In all of the phases, the Library will implement the following:

1. Improved disinfectant cleaning procedures for cleaning and disinfecting common areas.
2. Allowing staff to wear protective gear such as masks while administering public services.
3. Continuing to allow teleworking where it makes sense from an operational standpoint.
4. Encourage or require testing of staff for the virus when exposed to someone within 6 ft for longer than 15 min.

## **Detailed Phased Reopening Phases**

Below are a number of reopening phases divided by service area. These are determined by local recommendations, what safety measures can be instituted, and the availability of disinfectant cleaning supplies and personal protective equipment. Each service area is

divided into four phases marking different levels of restrictions:

- **Under Stay at Home Order**
  - Enacted May 5th, 2020
- **Phase 1: Gatherings of no more than 10-49 people**
  - Enacted July 1st, 2020 (Amended October 13th, 2020)
- **Phase 2: Gatherings of no more than <50 people**
  - Approved for May 3rd, 2021
- **Phase 3: No distancing or gathering limits**
  - TBA

### **Entrance and Exit into the Building**

Restrictions on those coming and going from the building will vary based on the social distancing recommendations currently in place, especially those establishing recommended limits for gatherings.

- **Under Stay at Home Order:** Entrance to the building is restricted to staff performing critical operations and staff obtaining supplies needed to work. The public is not allowed inside the building to keep risk of contamination low.
- **Phase 1:** Staff will enter and exit the building to obtain materials, and work with members of the public through the use of the entryway. The Library may allow patrons to browse the stacks at a very limited scale by appointment only. Because of the risks to staff and patrons alike, very strict social distancing procedures will need to be applied including demarcating limits for patrons and staff to ensure social distancing, restricting access to non-essential areas of the Library, disinfecting highly touched surfaces between uses, and requiring patrons and staff wear proper protective wear.
- **Phase 2:** Staff resume some desk functions. Various furnishings such as seating and toys may be pulled to discourage lingering and avoid creating high contact areas.
- **Phase 3:** Entrance to the building would not be restricted. Furnishing

returned to space.

## **Hold Pickup**

The method for holds pickup could be scaled based on the severity of social distancing recommendations.

- **Under Stay at Home Order:** No holds pick ups may take place unless explicitly outlined in the order. If permitted, traveling to the library to obtain materials is optional as long as strong social distancing structures are in place in compliance with the order.
- **Phase 1:** Holds may be picked up from a staff member at the desk across the entryway. Limits are imposed on entrance and exit to the building as well as increased disinfectant cleaning procedures.
- **Phase 2:** Normal hold pickup could take place after a 24 hour quarantine.
- **Phase 3:** Normal hold pickups occur.

## **Materials Handling**

Materials handling is one of the most complex areas of operations during a pandemic due to the potential of virus transmission on shared objects such as books and DVDs. Recommendations for a 24 hour quarantine remain at the state level.

- **Under Stay at Home Order:** Material returns may be handled with mask and gloves by staff and quarantined for a minimum of 72 hours before being wiped down and checked-in. The book drop may be used and must be monitored for proper use. Return services may be suspended if abused.
- **Phase 1:** If the Stay at Home Order is lifted, it will be possible to reopen book drop for all hours. However, materials returned will still need to be quarantined for 72 hours before being made available to the public or being handled by staff without protective measures.
- **Phase 2:** If social distancing is lessened to the point where medium sized gatherings are allowed, the library may be open for select services, including some circulation of materials. The library will develop protocols for

processing materials to be put back into circulation including quarantining items as they enter the building and disinfecting covers.

- **Phase 3:** If distancing limits are lifted completely, materials handling may commence being done in the usual fashion.

## **Checkouts**

Circulation of collections is a core function of the Library, but traditional checkout puts at risk both staff and patrons during a time of virus transition. The goal is to create a balance with restoring this core service and protecting staff and patrons.

- **Under Stay at Home Order:** Checkouts are limited to electronic services. Curbside may be offered following social distancing guidelines with access to disinfectant cleaning supplies.
- **Phase 1:** During Express Services, checkouts will be managed by a single staff member retrieving the items in closed stacks and checking them out to the patron across the entryway. During Browsing Appointments, patrons will be able to check out materials at the main desk by a single staff member. Because of the risks to staff and patrons alike, very strict social distancing procedures will need to be applied including demarcating limits for patrons and staff to ensure social distancing, restricting access to non-essential areas of the Library, disinfecting highly touched surfaces between uses, and requiring patrons and staff wear proper protective wear.
- **Phase 2:** Social distancing markers will be used near the circulation desk to encourage safe and healthy operations for patrons and staff. Disinfectant cleaning supplies will be on hand and procedures implemented for all staff who work at the circulation desk.
- **Phase 3:** Normal checkout may occur.

## **Programs**

The community views library programs as a core service, but as we have seen public gatherings have been one of the main methods by which COVID 19 is transmitted. With

that in mind, the Library needs to be cautious about when and how it reinstates programming.

- **Under Stay at Home Order:** Only virtual programs are allowed under a Stay at Home Order.
- **Phase 1:** Only virtual programs are allowed under this phase.
- **Phase 2:** The Library may consider hosting programs for small groups preferably outdoors. Larger programs utilizing wide outdoor spaces may be considered such as outdoor movies or concerts.
- **Phase 3:** If all distancing recommendations are lifted, the library could return with an active slate of programs.

### **Outreach Visits**

Visits to facilities to provide programs or other services help encourage community use of the library and assist in providing high priority services to the community, but they also pose a transmission risk.

- **Under Stay at Home Order:** Only virtual programs and outreach would be allowed under a Stay at Home Order.
- **Phase 1:** Only virtual programs and outreach would be allowed.
- **Phase 2:** Some outreach visits may occur on a facility by facility basis.
- **Phase 3:** Outreach visits and programs may resume as normal.

### **Home Delivery**

Home delivery, in many cases, is the only way in which elderly or sick patrons receive library services. It often plays an important social role as well. In a pandemic, however, it is another vector of exposure for those who are most likely to become critically ill or die from a virus.

- **Under Stay at Home Order:** No home delivery services will be offered because they are not classified as essential travel under a Stay at Home Order and pose a high risk for those using the service.
- **Phase 1:** Some home delivery may be possible on a case-by-case basis with

staff employing extra protective measures such as wearing face masks, gloves and ensuring that all distributed materials have been quarantined for an adequate length of time.

- **Phase 2:** Similar to the measures listed above, services could be provided on a case-by-case basis.
- **Phase 3:** Services could return to normal, but with increased disinfectant cleaning procedures implemented.

### **Internet Access**

Internet access is a critical resource for the community especially during times of economic distress. Patrons require internet access to apply for unemployment insurance, access social services, apply for jobs, and access educational resources. Moreover, internet access can be provided to patrons with a limited amount of danger to patrons and staff.

- **Under Stay at Home Order:** The current economic situation creates a variety of critical needs where access to the internet is essential. Under these restrictions the Library can boost wireless signals.
- **Phase 1:** Under these restrictions the Library could provide access to computers at a very limited scale by appointment only to allow for disinfecting the computer station between uses.
- **Phase 2:** Under these restrictions it may be possible to allow use of the computer stations in the main part of the library. However, to maintain recommended social distancing, computers will be placed at least 6 feet apart and disinfected between uses. Access to computers may need to be prioritized for workforce development and resource seekers through use of appointments.
- **Phase 3:** If distancing recommendations are lifted, normal use of the Library's computers could commence with improved disinfectant cleaning, including supplying access to disinfectant wipes for both patrons and staff.

## **Technology Help**

The library is frequently a place where patrons learn how to use various forms of technology. The spread of coronavirus and social distancing impose unique difficulties in providing help with devices and on public computers. Because most technology help requires patrons and staff to be at close quarters, there will be limits on how help can be provided until social distancing recommendations are lifted.

- **Under Stay at Home Order:** Though access to the internet might be provided, no technology help would be available, except over the phone or through email.
- **Phase 1:** Like under the Stay at Home Order, technology help would not be provided except in cases where social distancing can be maintained.
- **Phase 2:** Some basic technology assistance may be offered verbally by staff so long as social distancing can be achieved.
- **Phase 3:** Normal technology help recommendations could commence with improved disinfectant cleaning procedures.

## **Materials Processing and Ordering**

With physical materials not circulating, processing and ordering materials besides digital materials is of diminished importance. As services begin to scale up as restrictions are lifted, a progressive ramping up of ordering and processing will be necessary to prepare for demand once the pandemic cycle has ended or slowed.

- **Under Stay at Home Order:** Ordering may be focused on digital materials and high demand future releases for physical items. Processing of newly arrived orders may wait until some restrictions are lifted.
- **Phase 1:** Ordering may remain focused on digital materials. As the Stay at Home Order is lifted, it will be time to consider commencing to order more bestsellers and other high circulation new items in preparation for further lifting of gathering or social distancing recommendations. Processing can occur if it can be done safely while maintaining social distance in work

spaces.

- **Phase 2:** Ordering and processing of physical materials will ramp up during this period, though it still may be necessary to process materials in shifts so that social distancing can be maintained within shared staff work spaces.
- **Phase 3:** Ordering would continue as normal during this period as budgets allow.

### **Shared Materials in the Library**

Libraries frequently provide access to shared materials in their spaces ranging from office supplies such as staplers and hole punches to equipment like headphones and VR headsets. The Library also provides a wide variety of in-house games and toys. The risks of these shared items vary widely, but any shared items worn around the head and face or toys which children may put in their mouths constitute a high risk as potential vectors for disease transmission.

- **Under Stay at Home Order:** Under this order no shared items would be provided, excepting the possibility of public printers through the curbside pickup service if patrons are willing to share documents virtually for printing purposes.
- **Phase 1:** As under the Stay at Home Order, no shared materials would be offered besides public printers.
- **Phase 2:** Some shared materials could be offered under this recommendation, including shared office supplies as long they are disinfected regularly. Shared headphones, VR headsets, toys and games may not be allowed in circulation.
- **Phase 3:** Shared office supplies would be allowed, however, as long as the virus continues actively circulating it may be wise to restrict the use of shared headphones, VR headsets and toys.



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