

Public Library Re-opening Guidelines

For general workplace guidelines, please refer to COVID-19 Workplace Information (www.saskatchewan.ca/government/health-care-administration-and-provider-resources/treatment-procedures-and-guidelines/emerging-public-health-issues/2019-novel-coronavirus/re-open-saskatchewan-plan/covid-19-workplace-information). All workplaces in Saskatchewan must be in compliance with these guidelines.

- Reopening will not mean going back to the way things were pre-COVID-19; it will mean putting in place the ‘new normal’ approach to how the library operates and serves the community.
- The precautionary measures within these guidelines will be implemented to reduce risk, and include standards for cleaning and sanitization along with measures for general operations, facilities, transportation and programming.
- As this is a highly evolving situation, the guidelines may be updated and adjusted depending on the impact of COVID-19 on our province.
- Local solutions will need to be carefully planned by municipal stakeholders, Library Boards, and Library Directors to mitigate any remaining risks for staff and library patrons and taking into account local circumstances.
- Re-opening plans for library branches located in shared facilities may need special arrangements.

General Guidelines

Re-opening Phases

- Re-opening and providing library programs and services to Saskatchewan residents can occur subject to the guidelines developed within the stages of the *Saskatchewan Re-open Plan* (www.saskatchewan.ca/government/health-care-administration-and-provider-resources/treatment-procedures-and-guidelines/emerging-public-health-issues/2019-novel-coronavirus/re-open-saskatchewan-plan).
- Library systems and branches can phase in different service levels when they are ready to offer those services in a safe manner.
- As the pandemic evolves, changes in regional situations may require that local authorities make decisions about offering and rolling back service phases.
- The phases below offer an example of how services could be phased in over time. Each library system would determine how their own phases would best be defined and communicated to their staff, stakeholders and communities.
 - **Phase 1** includes programs and services that can be provided by library staff while the library facility remains closed. This includes virtual programming, e-services, phone services and/or curbside delivery.
 - **Phase 2** includes programs and services that allow patrons to enter the library facility while some services are closed. This might include entering the building to pick up holds and/or using computers. Some libraries might provide outdoor programming.
 - **Phase 3** includes access to the materials collection. Limited browsing may be allowed, and reference services, but patrons are discouraged from staying in the library facility for long. Bathrooms would be available.

- **Phase 4** includes longer visits in the library and may include provision of some indoor programming.
- **Phase 5** would include more typical access to library programs and services. Precautions would still be taken to allow for physical distancing and more frequent cleaning.

Physical distancing

- Limit entry to the library to allow for physical distancing of two metres between individuals and family groups. Cordon off areas to control access.
- Staff should maintain physical distancing whenever possible and wear a mask (e.g. cloth or other materials) when that is not possible.
- It is recommended that older staff/seniors or those with a weakened immune system wear a mask.
- Minimize the number of entrances and exits to control the number of customers.
- Defined and divided entrance and exit points and a way to manage the number of customers that complies with all other code requirements (e.g. fire code).
- Manage line-ups in the library to meet physical distancing requirements of two metres between individuals.
- Direct traffic flow through the library using chalk or tape markings on the ground, ropes, barriers or other markers as required. Where possible, implement one-direction traffic flow to promote physical distancing.
- Establish a plan to prevent mingling of groups in washrooms, and to minimize the number of shared surfaces in washrooms.
- Plan for reduced physical contact activities and, where possible, avoid activities that require clustering around a particular item or small area.
- Post clear signs in multiple locations indicating the maximum number of public and staff the location can accommodate at one time.
- Consider monitoring the number of public and staff entering and leaving the location. Once the maximum number is reached, allow one person to enter for every one person who exits.

Cleaning and Hygiene

- The COVID-19 virus can survive for several days on different surfaces and objects. Frequent cleaning and disinfection is important to prevent spread of the disease.
- Maintain a cleaning schedule and ensure staff are adequately assigned and trained for additional cleaning, sanitizing and disinfection required for COVID-19 transmission mitigation.
- Increase cleaning and disinfection of commonly contacted areas. Common touch areas include those accessed by library patrons and/or staff. Examples of common touch surfaces include table tops, light switches, telephones (including personal cell phones), door knobs, sink taps, toilet handles, and hand sanitizer bottles/dispensers,
- Ensure washrooms are cleaned and disinfected with increased frequency, always well stocked with liquid soap and paper towels, and that warm running water is available.

- All disinfectants used must be approved by Health Canada (www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19.html) (DIN). All label instructions for disinfectants, including contact time, should be followed.
- A plan for enhanced cleaning and disinfection should be established using the current provincial guidance. Roles and responsibilities, staff training where needed, and a maintenance schedule are recommended.
- Items/objects and furniture that cannot be effectively cleaned/disinfected daily or between program sessions should be removed for the time being.
- Indoor shared spaces and structures that cannot be cleaned and disinfected between groups should not be used.
- Reading of print materials that multiple users might want to look at, especially newspapers and magazines should be discouraged within the library. Encourage viewing of electronic versions of periodicals.
- Reduce display items from public service desks to allow for easier cleaning.
- Garbage bins should be emptied frequently.

Children and Families

- Communicate that parents and caregivers should monitor their children for any signs or symptoms of illness and remain home if any known symptoms are apparent.
- Modify procedures for gathering that support physical distancing and separate groups to the greatest extent possible. Possible strategies include limiting to one parent/guardian, staggering entry or limiting the number of people in entry areas. Ensure patrons are informed of all procedures.
- For younger children, maintaining physical distance is less practical and the focus should be on minimizing physical contact instead.
- Help younger children learn about physical distancing and less physical contact by creating games that include basic principles such as 'two-arm lengths apart.'
- Children from the same household (e.g. siblings) do not need to maintain physical distance from each other.
- Where possible, tactile and STEM play should be discontinued. If necessary, it should be conducted as an individual activity (e.g. each child gets a ball of playdough and tools, or LEGO). Any items used for individual activities must be disinfected or quarantined for 72 hours before being re-used.
- Handwashing must occur before and after using shared items, children must be supervised and discouraged from touching their faces, and items must be disinfected or discarded between uses by different groups.

Access to the Physical Collection of Materials

- Opening up stacks for browsing may require decisions about monitoring, limits on access, unidirectional signage, and defined additions to cleaning and quarantining strategies.
- Rules about hand washing or sanitizer in advance of patrons handling the collection should be clearly communicated.

- Items that patrons move around the facility or read should be placed in quarantine for 72 hours. Make reshelving bins or carts available for patrons to place items that they decide not to borrow.
- Initial phases of library re-opening should encourage quick library visits that consist of finding materials and checking them out to use outside the facility. This can be done through removal of furniture and by staff assisting patrons to locate materials quickly.
- Smaller branch locations where fewer patrons visit the library and where staff are able to engage with everyone in the library can be more flexible.