

GUIDANCE FOR LIBRARIES

Overview

Under current Chief Medical Officer of Health Orders, businesses and entities are required to:

- implement practices to minimize the risk of transmission of infection among attendees;
- provide procedures for rapid response if an attendee develops symptoms of illness;
- ensure that attendees maintain high levels of sanitation and personal hygiene;
- comply, to the extent possible, with the [Workplace Guidance for Business Owners](#), this guidance, and any other applicable Alberta Health guidance found at: <https://www.alberta.ca/biz-connect.aspx>.

This document has been developed to support libraries in reducing the risk of transmission of COVID-19 among attendees (including workers, visitors and the public). The guidance provided outlines public health and infection prevention and control measures, specific to libraries.

COVID-19 Risk Mitigation

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| Public Areas | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure attendees are aware of practices in place by posting signage in highly visible locations or displaying messages on digital screens that outline:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Physical distancing requirements (2 metres)○ Prohibitions on attendance by attendees who are sick or isolating○ Hand hygiene○ coughing and sneezing etiquette○ Cleaning and disinfection practices○ Library specific rules, which may include:<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Any changes to capacity and/or hours▪ Any restrictions on person items (e.g., reusable bags)• Hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol should be available at library entrances and exits and throughout the library.• Consider keeping children’s play areas closed.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Communal toys should be removed. |
| Layout and Flow | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To help ensure that attendees are able to maintain physical distancing requirements, the following strategies should be considered:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Restricting and directing the flow of attendees into, throughout and leaving the library (e.g., designate doors for entry or exit to avoid two-way traffic, designate hallways for one-way flow of attendees with signs and floor decals).○ Assigning staff to assist with distancing in high-traffic areas○ Removing or spreading out seating○ Limiting the number of attendees allowed in the library at any given time. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Supporting vulnerable populations with dedicated hours.● Post signage about any restrictions regarding elevator use to ensure distancing requirements can be met, as appropriate● Increase the cleaning of all high touch surfaces and common spaces, in particular:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Washrooms○ Water fountains. Consider encouraging attendees to bring their own water bottle or provide single use drinking vessels● Develop policies for staff masking; consider masking policies for attendees. |
| Check-out and Returns | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Consider installing acrylic shields (or equivalent) at desks, counters or points of contact between the public and library staff.● Employ the use of self-serve checkout and return services as much as possible.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Place hand sanitizer stations and sanitizing wipes near each station.○ Monitor use and frequently disinfect high touch surfaces.● If not already used, consider options for the public for borrowing materials, such as:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Accessing e-books and other virtual library borrowing services.○ Browsing library catalogues online at home.○ Encouraging the use of “holds” to reserve materials to reduce the amount of time people spend in the library.● Consider offering curbside pickup for on hold items, or if available, consider delivery or drop off services for items to residences.● Libraries should store all returned materials in a dedicated space for 72 hours and prevent handling the materials during that period.● Staff handling returned materials should always follow hand hygiene practices. |
| Programming for the Public | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● One-on-one library services may continue with appropriate physical distancing and barriers.● For adult in-person, group programming (e.g., book clubs, fundraisers, classes, workshops):<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Physical distancing (2 metres) must be applied for participants not from the same household○ Consider limiting the number of participants○ Consider hosting online or virtual activities.● Programming for children may operate in adherence with the Guidance for Day Camps. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Computers used by the public should be cleaned and disinfected between each use.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Consider options to assign computer time to an individual, scheduling cleaning time between users.○ Place hand sanitizer stations and sanitizing wipes at each computer. |
| Workplace | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a rapid response plan in case an attendee falls ill with COVID-19 related symptoms.• Ensure employees have access to hand sanitizer as required.• Allow staff to wear masks if preferred.• Stagger staff arrival and departure times, lunch times, breaks and meetings to reduce the number of individuals in one place at a given time.• Designate lockers and storage spaces to individual workers.• Provide staff with training on library practices, such as:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ New policies and procedures related to COVID-19, such as a response plan for if an attendee falls ill.○ Physical distancing, updated check-out processes, and hygiene practices.○ Updated programming policies. |
| Cleaning and Disinfecting | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In addition to the cleaning and disinfection guidance found in the Workplace Guidance for Business Owners, libraries should:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Clean high-traffic areas, checkouts (self-serve or staffed) and high-touch surfaces more frequently.○ Keep washrooms (staff and public) clean and well-stocked with soap and paper towels.○ Provide ample waste disposal options in both public and staff-only areas.○ Line waste containers with plastic bags for safer garbage disposal.○ Ensure library hours allow a deep clean of the entire library each day.○ Make sure staff are properly trained on the safe use and disposal of masks, including how to put them on and take them off safely. |