

Title: Emergency Closure Policy

Effective Date: 5/1/20

Authorized By: Library Board of Trustees

Date of Last Revision: 2/19/25

Purpose

The purpose of this policy will be to establish a set of protocols for extended closures and/or suspension of services in the case of a public emergency. In all cases, the primary goal of the Huntington City-Township Public Library will be to maintain public health and safety. State or Federal law will supersede any items outlined in this policy.

Closure

The Huntington City-Township Public Library may close temporarily for extended periods for any of the following reasons:

- A mandate, order, or recommendation for closure is issued by the Huntington County Health Department, Indiana State Department of Health or other government or health officials.
- If a current situation has caused a health or safety emergency.
- If the library cannot maintain sufficient staffing to keep the building open in a safe way.
- If the Library Director or the Board of Trustees deems it in the best interest of the public and library staff to close.
- If the Library Director or Board of Trustees deems it necessary.

The Director may close the library for up to 2 consecutive days without consulting the Library Board. Upon the approval of both the Library Board President and Vice-President, the library may close for up to 2 weeks without approval of the full Board. Any closures lasting more than 2 weeks must be approved by the full Board. The Board of Trustees may vote to allow the Director to make independent decisions regarding continued closure or reopening of the facilities.

Patrons will not be responsible for fines accrued during any time that a library building is closed. Staff may waive fines at their discretion if they have been accrued during an emergency closure.

Emergency Closure

At any time, the Director may determine the need to close the library for emergency reasons. Emergency situations may include, but are not limited to, power outages, natural disasters, public safety threats, public health concerns.

Factors for closure may include

- Threats to the safety of patrons or staff

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- Loss of power, water, or HVAC systems
- Recommendations for closure from local authorities
- Insufficient staffing to maintain safety in the building
- Inclement weather, indicated by:
 - A red or orange travel advisory released by the county
 - Severe weather warnings or alerts
 - Reports of multiple accidents or other safety incidents in the area
 - Unsafe conditions on the library grounds, including parking lots and sidewalks

In the event of an emergency closure Library staff will attempt to alert patrons through available media outlets.

Types of Closure

- Complete Closure - all buildings closed with no staff
- Closure with Essential Functions - all buildings closed with no staff, except staff needed to keep essential operations functioning. Essential operations include but are not limited to payroll, bill paying, and maintenance.
- Closure with Reduced Staffing - staff may be allowed in the building to:
 - perform library work in the building while it is closed to the public
 - provide services to the community in a remote or virtual capacity
 - clean the building
- Facility Closure with Remote Access - services may be provided via curbside pickup, virtual access or other method
- Reduction of Services - buildings may be open with limited access to services, and some areas of the library may be closed off

Compensation During Extended Closure

The goal of the Library will be to maintain regular pay during all extended closures as much as possible.

- In the event of an extended closure all employees will initially maintain their regular pay for their regularly scheduled hours as outlined in the Board approved salary schedule.

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The Library Board will regularly review the terms of compensation throughout the closure period.

- In the event of closure, some staff may be asked to work limited hours to fulfill necessary Library business. Staff may also work from home or they may choose to come into the building to work. In both cases, staff will not receive any pay differential or incentive for working during the closure.
- In the case of Reduction of Services, the Library Director may implement a requirement for a minimum number of hours per week of work on behalf of the library. Staff may continue to be paid for their entire regular schedule. The Library Board will regularly review the terms of compensation throughout the closure period.
- Staff will continue to have access to all benefits during closure.

In the Case of Pandemic/Epidemic

All provisions in this section apply only during a public health emergency as declared by local, state, or federal government. The requirements of some provisions of this section may be modified depending on the nature of the public health emergency.

- In order to encourage library staff to slow the spread of illness by isolating themselves when they are ill, the library will provide for one instance of up to two (2) consecutive weeks of additional paid sick time, at the employee's regular rate and hours, in case of a) the illness of the employee, or b) the illness of someone in the employee's household. This time will apply only to illness related to a current health emergency. This sick time will not be banked in employee accounts; rather, it will be allocated as needed. This sick time may not be used by an employee to avoid work in order to avoid illness. PTO will not be deducted from the employee's record while using this sick time.
- In order to avoid exposure, employees who are able to work from home may choose to do so with the approval of their supervisor and the Library Director for not more than 40% of their work week. Employees who can work from home and who have an elevated risk of serious illness may work at home for additional hours at the discretion of the Library Director.
- Any employee who chooses to miss work in order to avoid infection may do so. They may take their PTO or take unpaid leave. Employees will be allowed one instance of up to two consecutive weeks of time off in this case. After two weeks, employees will be

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asked to return to work. If they refuse to return to work the Library will consider this job abandonment and the employee will be terminated.

- The Library may, at any time, ask an employee who is demonstrating symptoms to go home from work. In this case the employee may not return until they have met the relevant safety guidelines established by an official health agency. The employee will be paid for days off while waiting for test results if needed. If the employee refuses to make an effort to comply with official safety guidelines, they must use PTO or unpaid leave.
- The Library may, at any time, ask an employee who has an elevated risk of exposure, as defined by an official health agency, to stay home. These employees may also elect to voluntarily self-quarantine. In these cases, employees will be required to meet the relevant safety guidelines established by an official health agency before they can return to work. The employee will be paid for days off while waiting for test results. If the employee refuses to make an effort to comply with official safety guidelines, they must use PTO or unpaid leave.
 - Employees who do not report elevated risk due to exposure may be subject to discipline if it is determined that their actions endangered staff or patrons.
 - Repeated absences for elevated risk may be subject to disciplinary action at the discretion of the Director.
- Any employee who is required to take leave due to exposure at the library while working will be paid their regular rate and hours for as long as the Director determines that it is necessary.
- Employees will be ineligible for paid leave during their introductory period (60 days). Employees who report to work with symptoms or after testing positive for relevant illness within this time may be subject to discipline. Exceptions to this rule will be made if the exposure occurs in the course of work at the library.
- Short term policies regarding safe return to work and eligibility for pay may be made by the Library Director up to the next scheduled Board meeting. At their meeting, the Library Board will approve or modify these policies at their discretion.

In the Case of Other Closure

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- For any closure other than a public health emergency, staff will be expected to return to work as soon as the library reopens.
- Staff may use PTO or unpaid leave according to existing leave policies.

Work at Home

- Any employee who has work that may be performed at home will be allowed to do so at the discretion of the Library Director.
- The Library Director may require some staff to work at home during closure.
- The Library Director may mandate that work be done at home rather than in the building.

Impact on Staff with Childcare Concerns

- The library will work with staff to adjust schedules whenever possible.
- Staff will be allowed to use PTO or unpaid leave for up to 12 weeks if their childcare is unavailable due to a widespread emergency.

Prioritization of Services

The library will attempt to provide services in any way that is deemed to be safe. Services will be prioritized as follows;

1. Essential library functions such as payroll and maintenance
2. Circulation services, including library card applications, returns, and shelving
3. Access to library materials
4. Access to public computers and document services
5. Access to professional staff for one-on-one help
6. Library programming and events
7. Community programming and events

Responsibility for Library Operations

The Library Director will be the final decision maker for all matters that are outlined by policy and approved by the Board of Trustees. In the event that the Library Director is unable to

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perform their duties the authority for library operations will extend to the Assistant Director and then to the Business Manager.

Library Board Meetings

In the case of closure due to pandemic or other emergency the Library Board will follow state statutes and guidelines and for all meeting requirements. If virtual meetings are allowed by the relevant authorities, the Board will meet virtually at their regular meeting times or for special meetings as called by the Board President. If virtual meetings occur, the Library Board will accept electronic signatures for all documents including; minutes, claims, and resolutions as long as these actions are allowed by state law.

Safety Measures

The library will actively follow all expert recommendations for safety including cleaning and sanitization. Safety guidelines will be made available to all staff and to the public.

Communication

In the event of cancellation of services, programs, community room usage or Library closures, library will:

- Notify staff by phone
- Notify Trustees and the Friends of the Library Board President by email
- Call or email scheduled program presenters, community room reservations, volunteers, interns, outreach sites, program attendees (if we have contact information) and others
- Provide information regarding the closure or cancellation on the Library's website's homepage and Facebook
- Notify local media by email or phone
- Create signage for updating patrons inside and outside the library