



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor



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Statewide Reopening Guidance

Sector: Libraries

Specific Guidance for Libraries

Libraries have unique challenges to address in the context of this public health crisis. Libraries provide access to materials that are checked out to individuals and then returned and made available to others. In addition to library materials, library facilities provide shared resources such as study spaces, computers and equipment, programming spaces, and seating areas that are used by multiple people every day. This sharing of resources is at the heart of library service.

Libraries will make decisions regarding reopening their buildings to the public based on guidance from local health authorities and local jurisdictions. Any applicable statewide, phase 1, phase 2, or phase 3 [state-issued health and safety guidance](#) must be followed. The following recommendations provide libraries with reopening guidance to inform decision-making and operations.

Recommendations:

Physical Distancing Measures

- Limit the number of patrons in the library building and focus on maintaining at least six (6) feet of distance between all individuals. Each library should determine maximum occupancy to maintain at least six (6) feet of physical distancing, considering areas of the library prone to crowding and limit admittance accordingly. The U.S. Fire Administration has provided information about [social distancing and occupancy](#) that may be helpful in determining your maximum occupancy.

Libraries may need to consider closing or rearranging areas of the library building where people gather and required physical distancing cannot be maintained such as:

- Meeting rooms
- Study rooms
- Seating areas
- Public computers
- Children's play areas

Libraries that cannot maintain at least six feet of distance between people should not open the building to the public and may instead want to consider services such as partial or appointment-based access, holds pick-up, curbside/contactless service, or mail delivery of materials.

- Consider placing clear plastic or glass barriers at service desks or in other places where maintaining six (6) feet of physical distance between employees and patrons is more difficult.

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- Encourage one-way flow with marked entrances and exits, but do not block egress for fire exits. Use signs to direct one-way flow of traffic.
- Use signs and tape on the floor to maintain physical distancing while waiting for assistance at service desks or outside the facility when timed access or curbside/contactless services cause a line to be formed.
- Consider offering alternative order ahead and pick up options, such as curbside/contactless pickup as appropriate and applicable.

Signage

- Post [clear signs](#) listing COVID-19 symptoms, asking employees and patrons with symptoms to stay home, and listing who to contact if they need assistance.
- Use [clear signs](#) to encourage physical distancing.

Cleaning

- Frequently clean and sanitize work areas, high-traffic areas, and commonly touched surfaces in both public and employee areas of the library following the [CDC Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting](#). This includes the following:

“Surfaces frequently touched by multiple people, such as door handles, desks, phones, light switches, and faucets, should be cleaned and disinfected at least daily. More frequent cleaning and disinfection may be required based on level of use. For example, certain surfaces and objects in public spaces, such as shopping carts and point of sale keypads, should be cleaned and disinfected before each use.” In libraries, surfaces such as self-check equipment and public access computer equipment may need to be cleaned between each use.

Libraries without adequate cleaning supplies should not open the building to the public.

Collection Handling

- Follow collection safe handling recommendations from [Institute of Museum and Library Services \(IMLS\) study](#) (results expected by August 2020). Pending results of the IMLS study, the following recommendations are emerging:
 - At this time, public health and conservation experts agree that the quarantine of library materials is an effective method of disinfection.
 - There is a range of advice about the length of time needed for quarantine that depends primarily on material type. Given the variety of materials (paper and non-paper) and the resources needed to keep materials separated, many libraries are using a standard period of 72 hours to hold all materials in quarantine.
 - Libraries may consider setting up a quarantine area of the building as a materials isolation zone for returned items.

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Programming

- Remote programming options such as online and radio are recommended. Strictly follow social distancing guidelines for any in-person programming offerings. Refer to [state-issued gathering size limitations](#) when offering in-person programming. Consider limiting in-person youth programming to a maximum of 10 participants. Do not allow children to share items such as craft supplies, toys, or books during youth programming and only use items that can be easily sanitized. Refer to guidance on [summer camps](#) for youth programming that is similar in nature.
- Remove all toys from children’s areas.

Face Coverings

- Encourage or require all employees to wear cloth, paper, or disposable face coverings depending on local jurisdiction policy.
- Encourage all patrons to wear cloth, paper, or disposable face coverings. If a library sets a policy that all patrons are required to wear cloth, paper, or disposable face coverings, library management should consult with their legal counsel to determine whether such a requirement can be enforced.

Other Recommendations

- Review and implement [General Guidance for Employers](#) as applicable.
- **Contact tracing:** Libraries are encouraged to adopt policies consistent with the recommendations of the American Library Association Office of Intellectual Freedom and with libraries’ core values of privacy and confidentiality. In relation specifically to contact tracing, the ALA Office of Intellectual Freedom states:

“Collection and sharing of information about library users for purposes other than the delivery of library resources, services, and programming — such as information collected for contact tracing — is inconsistent with that mission and may violate laws protecting user privacy if done without the full and informed consent of the library user. In all cases, access to, and delivery of, library resources and services should not be conditioned on the user’s consent to the collection and use of their information for contact tracing or other purposes unrelated to library service.” – from [“Protecting Privacy in a Pandemic: A Resource Guide”](#)

Additional Resources:

- [Signs you can post](#)
- [Mask and Face Covering Guidance for Business, Transit and the Public](#)
- [OHA Guidance for the General Public](#)
- [OHA General Guidance for Employers](#)