

CDA Library Reopening Plan

Introduction

Governor Brad Little recently extended the “Stay Home, Safe Safe” directive to last through April 30. All libraries are classified as non-essential: therefore the CDA Library will remain closed to the public and to all non-essential staff operations through April 30, 2020 (based on action by library board).

However, at some point after April 30 the library will reopen, though it is unlikely the library will immediately resume full & regular operations since there is a high likelihood that the COVID-19 virus will still be present in the community to some degree. Therefore, the library is planning several tiers of modified operations in order to balance safety and service for staff and patrons.

The Library will employ best practices developed over the COVID-19 crisis by essential businesses, including social distancing, enhanced cleaning & disinfecting surfaces, and posted signage throughout the building reminding patrons of handwashing & keeping safe distancing from others.

This document is a guide for our gradual reopening. It uses a traffic light approach, with red, yellow, and green steps as public health guidance evolves. Red is the most restrictive, while green is meant to represent the “new normal” level of service. Within each color category, content is divided to cover the library’s four main areas of operation: facilities, collections, meetings, and services.

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Red

The red tier represents the library in shutdown mode. Community travel restrictions are in place, and the library is closed to nonessential business. Most staff are put into furlough status, and the remaining staff telecommute to maintain an online presence, do professional development and backlogged work, and plan new & alternative services. Some staff may come into the library to perform essential business, but by and large staff are working from home.

Facilities (Red)

Library facilities are completely closed to the public. Patrons are not allowed in the building. The bookdrop is closed. The facility is shut down. Some staff may need to come into the building for essential business like bringing in mail and answering reference calls & voicemails. Library bookstore remains closed.

Collections (Red)

The physical collection is closed. The courier does not run between libraries, patrons cannot drop off items or get new ones. Due dates are automatically extended and overdue/ lost items do not block patrons from accessing digital resources. Staff working from home add to and promote our online collections like Overdrive & Freegal to provide a semblance of our regular collection.

Programs & Meetings (Red)

All library programs and public use of the meeting rooms are cancelled. The city may still use library space for city events- for example, a recent city council meeting had some council members & the mayor in an otherwise empty Community Room for a Zoom council meeting. Some library programs may be offered online by staff working from home.

Services (Red)

Physical services are closed along with the facility. Staff will answer emails sent to the info & circulation accounts as necessary, and respond to voicemails when possible. Staff may or may not be in the building to answer calls to the reference desk, or calls temporarily routed to home/cell phones.

Yellow

The Yellow tier represents modified operations. The library is not open as a public space, but some services are available.

Facilities (Yellow)

The facility is closed to public use, but staff may return to work in the building. Furloughed staff may or may not be recalled at this point depending on guidance from the city. Staff will maintain social distancing, including keeping ample space at staff meetings and during the course of normal work. Staff will perform enhanced hygiene measures like wiping keyboards and workstations regularly. PPE such as masks and gloves will be made available for staff working in the building. Bookstore remains closed.

Collections (Yellow)

The physical collection is partially available. The bookdrop is open, and items are placed unchecked-in in a designated quarantine area for three days.

While there is as of yet no consensus on the best method to ensure circulated material is free of coronavirus, a conservative estimate for safe quarantine of paper & plastic material (like library books) is three days. Preliminary research indicates that time is a more effective sanitizer for coronavirus than Clorox wipes. The library has inquired with the American Library Association and the Institute of Museum and Library Services for definitive guidance. The library quarantines all returned materials for three days in the first-floor meeting rooms or other designated area.

The library fills holds for patrons. The holds feature is reactivated, and patrons may pick up items via curbside delivery or have their holds mailed to them. Physical item ordering resumes with new materials shipped to the library and made available to patrons.

Programs & Meetings (Yellow)

Programs and meetings remain closed. The city may still use library space for city events- for example, a recent city council meeting had some council members & the mayor in an otherwise empty Community Room for a Zoom council meeting. Some library programs may be offered online by staff working from home.

Services (Yellow)

Library staff are available to answer calls and work rotating shifts at the reference desk. Outreach staff, depending on city guidance for recalling furloughed employees, may resume services to select facilities. The branch libraries may or may not reopen given that schools are closed for the remainder of the year. The library will run on a M-F 8-6 modified schedule for the duration of Condition Yellow.

Green

The Green tier represents the “new normal” level of service. The doors are reopened to the public and business is more or less back on. All furloughed staff are back at work. Services see some modifications from previous standards with a nod to public health recommendations.

Facilities (Green)

The building is open to the public. The library previously welcomed, on average, over 1000 people per day. Maintaining social distancing will be important, but also extremely difficult. New signage throughout the building asks people to stay six feet apart from others and not to enter if they are sick. At all service desks, tape on the floor marks a safe distance while waiting in line for help. Doors are propped open wherever possible in order to minimize unnecessary surface contact. “Touchless” hand sanitizer units are deployed at main doors and throughout the facility. The bookstore is open.

To encourage safe use for seniors, the immunocompromised, and other sensitive users, exclusive morning hours for vulnerable populations to use the facility exclusively may be implemented.

Janitorial staff will continue enhanced cleaning & disinfecting, but library staff supplement this cleaning with a twice daily sanitation routine (morning and afternoon), sanitizing all frequently touched surfaces. This includes keyboards, screens, mice, and counters. Wipes are available for patrons to sanitize surfaces at public computer stations, and staff make regular sweeps when computers are unoccupied to wipe them down. Some public computer stations may be turned off or removed so that users maintain more physical distance from each other.

Furniture in public areas is arranged so that chairs and tables are all at least six feet apart from each other wherever possible.

Public desks may have clear acrylic screens installed to provide a cough/ sneeze barrier. PPE such as masks and gloves will be made available to staff.

Collections (Green)

The library is open for business and the courier is running. Both checkin and checkout are modified.

For checkout, barcode scanners at service desks are rotated to face patrons to eliminate touch points. Patrons scan their own cards and material, effectively making checkout at circ stations like enhanced self-check stations.

For checkin, all incoming material is added to a repository bin and regularly trucked to a quarantine space. Material won't be checked in until the quarantine period is over. Patrons with overdue items may check out or use computers with a staff override, and patrons who turn in long-overdue lost items may have those items renewed by staff & have the lost status removed.

Programs & Meetings (Green)

Library sponsored programs and outside meetings are back open. Events scheduled in library spaces require six foot separation for social distancing. This may entail removal of some chairs. Programs that used to happen in small spaces need to be held in medium sized ones to accommodate the additional space needed; those formerly in medium sized spaces need to happen in large spaces; and large programs are not possible until regional public health and professional library guidance say large events are safe to resume. The library will follow public health guidelines for maximum group size.

Staff measure the meeting rooms to determine maximum allowable group size for each room given a 6-foot distance between participants, and this information is available to reference staff booking meeting room reservations.

As noted below under Services (Green), some popular library programs may need to be reimagined or suspended to keep the library in line with current public health guidance on gathering sizes.

Services (Green)

The library is open and fully staffed. Some services are modified to respect hygiene and social distancing. Staff aren't expected to police patron social distancing unless the patrons are waiting for help at a service desk.

Assistance with computers will be limited to what staff can verbally explain to patrons, as sharing computing surfaces or space around screens cannot be accomplished within the limits imposed by social distancing. We don't want staff leaning over/ in front of patrons, or using their mouse for them.

Toys, games, puzzles, legos, art supplies and other shared materials in the children's area will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Some items, like Legos, may be effectively sanitized in a bleach solution. These items are cleaned each morning and made available. Other items, like stuffed animals, may be impossible to properly sanitize and are therefore kept in a back room until they are safe to bring out again. Individual packs of crayons and coloring sheets will be provided for children, as will "take and make" craft bags that contain everything needed to make a craft. Supplemental hands-on activities will be provided, such as a sensory container garden located outside.

Summer reading will present special challenges, as typically the library provides hundreds of children with crafts, performances and events – all of which can get crowded. Events are held in the Community Room to maximize safe space, and staff involved in a summer reading group will meet to determine what needs to be modified, reimagined, or eliminated for this year's event.

Children's programs can be modified. Online programming will remain, supplemented by a few in-person programs. Example: an outdoor Saturday with the Symphony concert or a story time at Sanders Beach. In-person programs can have a capped capacity (which requires pre-registration, something we have hesitated to do in the past). All in-person children's programs will be held in the Community Room to ensure social distancing. Hand-washing will be required for all who participate. Mask-wearing will be encouraged, with the caveat that masks should not be worn by those under the age of two. Children's programs will be planned on a month-to-month basis, rather than announcing the full summer schedule in May as we usually do.

Teen programs can be moved online, as needed. If social gathering restrictions are lifted, some programs may be able to move to the Community Room or outside to the terrace or the grassy area next to the park. Summer Reading logs will likely need to move online.

Conclusion

The library looks forward to serving Coeur d'Alene again after the "Stay Home, Stay Safe" order has been lifted. This plan covers a variety of levels of service based on anticipated changes to the regulatory environment, although like all plans this one will likely require modification due to unpredictable circumstances. Once the local health district advises, we are eager to lift the remaining restrictions and resume normal service.