

KNOXVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY EMERGENCY CLOSING POLICY

The Knoxville Public Library is a public organization and will make every reasonable effort to remain open during our posted open hours. However, at times, the library may have to close, shorten hours or cancel programs due to emergency conditions.

Library Closure

To ensure safety of patrons and library staff, the KPL will consider closing the library, shortening hours of operation or canceling programs based on one or more of the following:

1. Weather

A decision to close due to weather will be based on several factors that may include:

- General condition of the roads;
- Projected forecast of worsening conditions;
- Conditions of the Library's parking lot and walkways;
- Availability of staff to open and operate the Library;
- A state of emergency for the immediate area declared by local, county or state law enforcement agencies

The Director or their designee will provide timely notification and obtain at least one confirmed response from a member of the Knoxville Public Library Board of Trustees.

Upon a decision to close the library, the Library Director or their designee will update the Library's website, social media accounts and local TV and radio stations of the closure. Signs will be posted on the door of the library, if staff can get to the building safely and in a timely manner.

2. Mechanical Failures

On rare occasions it may be necessary to close the Library due to mechanical failures that last for an extended period of time, generally more than two hours. These failures may include, but are not limited to, loss of electricity, loss of heating/air conditioning, or loss of water/sewer facilities. If power or other mechanical features have not been restored in two hours or the normal closing time (whichever comes first), the building should be closed. If the Library Director is not in the building the library staff on duty will notify the director about the closing.

If the Library has been notified in advance of impending mechanical shut downs, they will post signs, update the website and social media pages to let patrons know of the closure ahead of time. Staff will report to work as normal as long it is safe to do so. If possible, Board Members will be notified in advance of the work.

3. Other Emergencies

For emergencies other than weather or power outage, staff will maintain normal operations as long as it is safe to do so for both staff and patrons.

Pandemic Response: The library will follow guidelines set by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH), and other national, state and local organizations in regards to responding to a pandemic or serious health threat. Every effort will be made to ensure the safety of staff and patrons.

Employee Absence and Pay

Library employees who report to work but are then sent home or receive notice before their shift starts, due to the emergency closing, shall receive regular pay as if they had worked their scheduled shifts.

If the library remains open but staff members feel they cannot make it to work safely or if they feel they should leave early due to worsening conditions, they can opt to use accrued leave or unpaid leave. Telework may be considered depending on what can be done from home.

Extended Closure

In a situation where the Library is closed to the public for an extended period of time, patron services will be modified or temporarily suspended during the closure:

- The Library's website will have the latest information regarding the Library's closure and reopening plans.
- All programs will be cancelled
- All meeting room rentals will be cancelled or postponed
- Late fees will not be assessed if patrons are not allowed to return library materials during the closure
- Limited hours and/or services may be temporarily different when the library reopens

For Staff

If the building is closing:

- Contact all staff scheduled to arrive at a later time
- Place signs at the entrance and update the outside sign
- Follow the normal closing procedures for the building
- Send closing messages out to local media and on library social media accounts
- Change closing message on the telephone to reflect the current situation

For an extended closure, staff to report:

- Follow the Pandemic Phased Plan
- Share resources and information with staff
- Inform the public all of the measures the Library is taking via our website, social media accounts, text message, and our phone message
- Replace in-person meetings with teleconferencing, Zoom or other virtual meetings
- Allow as many staff as possible to work from home
- Offer virtual programming if at all possible
- Suspend the charging of fines for late materials
- Continue to check in materials if possible
- Modify work schedules and shift staff duties as needed
- Offer email-reference or telephone services

The Library will re-open when it has been deemed safe to do so but hours of operation and/or service may be limited for a time. This will follow the Phased Reopening Plan.

Exposure to COVID-19 or an Infectious Disease

The library will follow guidelines set by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH), and other national, state and local organizations in regards to exposure and quarantine or when deciding to close due to a pandemic. Every effort will be made to ensure the safety of staff and patrons. Staff who refuse to comply may be given an official reprimand or be dismissed.

An exposure is considered an individual who has had close contact six feet or less for more than 15 minutes with a person who has had COVID-19 symptoms or a person who has tested positive for COVID-19. Staff who test positive will stay home for 5 days and wear a mask for the next 5 days. They should self-monitor their symptoms and avoid contact with people at higher risk for severe illness.

Approved by the Library Board of Trustees
Date: November 15, 2022