



## Safe Practices for Re-Opening Public Libraries

### Safety for employees and residents is the top priority

Public Library Services is supporting NWT public libraries in developing safe practices to deliver remote access to collections/programs while working toward restoring in-person services and re-opening individual public libraries.

It will take time for public libraries to completely re-open and return to full service levels. When developing re-opening plans, libraries should consider a phased approach to the restoration of in-person services, public computing, collection browsing, and events/programs.

### Examples of some library services that public libraries in Canada are offering after re-opening and the safety precautions being considered:

- Access to library by appointment only
- Limited access to browse collection
- Access to public computers in library by appointment only
- Curb-side pickup of library material
- Home delivery of library material
- Free wifi service outside of library
- Online programming and limited outside programming
- Promotion of online resources

Each community public library must decide the level of service they are comfortable with and capable of providing. Communication with staff and patrons is important so that both understand how services have changed and what they can do to support prevention and reduce risk.

### Physical distancing:

In instances where physical distancing may not be possible, physical barriers such as Plexiglas screens may reduce exposure between staff and patrons. The effectiveness of such measures against COVID-19 may not be 100% effective. Therefore, these screens should be used in combination with good hand hygiene and regular cleaning.

### Library materials handling:

- Disposable gloves should be used by staff when moving collections into quarantine
  - Gloves do not replace good hand hygiene
- Returned library items should be left untouched in a dedicated quarantine area for at least 72 hours prior to shelving and recirculating

### Library programming activities:

- For group activities, like Story Time, physical distancing guidelines must be followed: maintain 2 metres separation between people who are not from the same household
- No food or beverages are allowed in the library
- Consider outdoor programming
- Consider Programming Kits to be provided to patrons for use at home



### Checklist for re-opening:

- Employers must ensure they comply with Chief Public Health Officer and WSCC requirements
- Determine which library services will be offered and timelines for re-opening
- Implement training for staff, providing information to staff on physical distancing and other safety protocols/guidelines
- Develop a communications plan
- The occupancy level in the library will be limited based on the space required to maintain physical distancing
- Both staff and patrons may wear non-medical masks
- Provide disposable masks for staff and patrons to use if they wish
- Make necessary modifications to library to accommodate social distancing and other safety measures
- Quarantine returned items for 72 hours
- Employees must stay home if ill with COVID-19 symptoms
- Ask people who are unwell not to attend library
- Post internal and external posters/signs indicating COVID-19 physical distancing and other safety protocols
- Cleaning and sanitizing protocols to be used to protect staff and patrons and mitigate transmission
  - Hand sanitizer must be available at entrances and exits for public and staff use
  - Staff use hand sanitizer between each patron
  - Ensure the library has the appropriate cleaning products and safety equipment to perform cleaning and disinfection
  - Washrooms must have a frequent cleaning schedule
  - Ensure thorough and regular cleaning of common surfaces, 'high touch' items and shared amenities (computers, mice, keyboards, printers, book carts, door handles, tables, chairs, etc.)
- Patrons are required to keep all personal belongings with them at all times

### Other things to consider:

- Limited open hours
- Limited number of patrons
- Limited use of public computers
- Access by appointment only
- Extra cleaning time required
- Extra cleaning products needed
- Determine vendors to purchase cleaning supplies and appropriate non-medical personal protective equipment (PPE) to ensure there is a pipeline in place for the coming weeks

### Submitting your re-opening plan\*:

The organization who manages the library and receives the contribution agreement from Public Library Services should be submitting the re-opening plan to Protect NWT: [protectnwt@gov.nt.ca](mailto:protectnwt@gov.nt.ca).

*\*Re-opening plans for libraries inside schools have been included in the school re-opening plan.*

### Useful links:

**WSCC Workplace Safety Planning for COVID-19:** <https://www.wscclnt.ca/health-safety/covid-19/forms>

**For more information, contact Janine Hoff:** [Janine\\_hoff@gov.nt.ca](mailto:Janine_hoff@gov.nt.ca)