

# Phased Re-opening FAQ

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10/21/2020; 12/02/2020; 01/29/2021; 02/22/2021;  
07/27/2021; 10/29/2021

## General

- **Why can't staff continue to work from home and receive unexpected closure pay?** Unexpected closure leave use is defined in policy. It is for a system-wide closure or a facility closure with less than three hours left before regular closing time. It cannot be used for an employee when their work location is open, even if it is only open on a limited basis for customers.
- **Since we have secure funding, aren't we being irresponsible in having staff come back to work?** The Metropolitan Library System was created in Oklahoma state law, including the source of our public funding. Because of that we are subject to governmental guidelines. Our decision to begin Phase I, and what that includes, is based on guidance from our state and local officials.
- **Are we even legal in asking staff to come to work before May 1?** Based on the legal classification, the library is not considered an essential business. However, the Executive Order from Governor Stitt stated that non-essential businesses "shall close to the public." As long as we were not opened to the public we were in compliance.
- **(Updated August 19, 2020) Have we considered changing our time clocks to use swipe cards or proximity sensors rather than fingerprints to reduce the need for staff to touch them? If not, what are we doing to protect staff who are required to clock in and out?** Staff should use available sanitizing supplies to disinfect the timeclock after each use. Staff should wash hands for 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer following timeclock use.

## Materials:

- **Do we need to extend due dates one more time?** Yes, we've chosen to extend due dates until May 18<sup>th</sup>.
- **When will we allow customers to start placing holds?** Customer placement of holds through Discovery will start Monday, April 27<sup>th</sup> towards the end of the day. Staff probably will not start pulling holds until Wednesday afternoon or Thursday. By allowing customers to place holds a few days before we start pulling materials, there will be holds to pull.
- **When will be opening book drops up for customers to return materials?** Book drops will be opened at all locations beginning Monday, April 27<sup>th</sup>.

- **How do we handle materials returned in the book drop?** Staff wearing gloves will transport the materials to the meeting room and tables, carts, or portable shelving will need to be labeled with the date that the material was returned. Materials will be held for 72 hours before processing. Once it is time to process, staff should backdate the return date by 3 days before scanning. NOTE: The Bethany and Edmond sorters do not have an option to backdate. No materials are due before May 18<sup>th</sup> so backdating will not be required during the first two weeks.
- **What if customers need to return missing CD or DVD from an item they checked out?** If customers come to the door to return the item, staff can offer an empty case and pen and paper to add their information to it. Then, the customer can return the item in the book drop for quarantining. The **customer will be told that the item will be processed in 3 days' time.**
- **Will staff process damaged items or items missing pieces and notify customers?** Yes, staff will process these items as usual after they have been through the quarantine process. If a damaged item needs to be bagged for safety due to pests or bodily fluids, it should be done immediately as soon as the damage is noticed.
- **How does the library plan to handle fines?** We will not be taking cash initially. Customers should be encouraged to pay fines online or with a card. The "Over Threshold" limit has been increased to \$49.99 until we can return to normal operations. "Lost" items will still keep a card "Over Threshold". Once the item is returned, the customer's account should return to "Good" status. If they need to pay for the item, please ask that they do it online.
- **If material gets checked in before the 72 hours is up (or maybe the first day), how do we keep it from showing "on shelf" in the catalog?** The ILS has the option to build in a shelving delay. Initially, customers will not be coming in the library. If we are still quarantining materials once customers are allowed in the building, we may implement the shelving delay.
- **How is curbside/at the door pickup going to work?** IT has added a new option to the automated attendant menu to allow customers picking up holds to let the library know they have arrived. Staff can then find the customer's holds and deliver them to their car or take them to the door. The "Hours of Operation" message has also been modified to tell customers that we are only allowing curbside pickup of holds and what hours we will be offering the pickup service.
- **What about onsite libraries?** We will be delaying the restart of services to onsite libraries for the time being. Since many are in nursing homes and senior adult living centers, we probably could not get in to replace the collection. Additionally, we would be unable to quarantine and process materials returned from onsite libraries the same way.

- **Do we plan to restart the Books by Mail service?** Yes, this service will be restarted. Staff that normally do outreach activities or go to onsite libraries will assist with getting Books by Mail caught up. When materials are returned, they will go through the same quarantine as book drop returns as we have no way of how much time elapsed between customer mailing and our receipt of the items.
- **Are we ordering physical materials again?**  
Collection Development has begun ordering physical materials again. They regularly order titles up to five months before the publication date, so there are a number of new physical items on order that have not been received yet. Some are titles whose publication dates have been pushed back. For the rest of the fiscal year, most orders for physical materials will be for anticipated bestsellers, added copies to maintain hold ratios, and titles on current topics such as COVID.
- **Are we going to allow customers to start providing suggestions for physical materials purchases?** During Phase I, no. As we are able to have more people in the library, this will be opened back up along with increase in purchases of physical materials.
- **Will we continue ordering more digital materials for now?** Yes, Collection Development will continue to purchase new materials, including customer suggestions. They continued purchasing digital materials throughout our closure. Customers can continue to place suggestions for purchase on OverDrive. The holds ratio for OverDrive materials was temporarily lowered during the closure to 4 or 6 copies per hold, based on price. It will likely remain at this level during phases I and II. It will probably be returned to the original 6 or 8 copies per hold ratio when we reach Phase III.
- **What's happening with ILL?** Many libraries and courier services that we work with are still closed, making ILL a service that we just will not be able to provide our patrons at this time. We have been reaching out to libraries inquiring about their status and most will still be closed for a few weeks and not able to accept packages. Once our courier service and libraries start opening again, we will start processing ILL requests. Please feel free to contact Kirsten Bryson if you have any questions or concerns. Materials with ILL holds that are already at libraries may be checked out. Beginning May 15, libraries should route any ILL items that have not been picked up back to the ILL office.

## Public Technology (Phase II or later):

- **What technology will be allowed to be used by customers?** None in Phase I. In Phase II, a few computers will be in service at all libraries. IT has gone to all libraries and measured distances between computers and will put in service computers that can be used and take the rest out of service for now. Staff will probably want to put big signs on the monitors of the out of service units to explain why the units are out of service. Marketing is creating signage for the out-of-service public computers.

- **How many computers will be available at each library?** Most of this depends on the library's computer layout and distance between units. We will determine how many can be made available based on layout and the availability of cleaning supplies.
- **How will staff know which computers are available?** Computers that are available for use will look like they normally do during the day. The other computers will say "Out of Service" or something similar on the screen. IT will also provide libraries a list of numbers of the computers that can be in service.
- **What length of computer sessions will be allowed?** Computer sessions will be for one hour. Will customers be able to extend their session as long as no one is waiting? No. Due to the limited number of computers that will be available in the beginning, there will be no extension of sessions by customers.
- **What if a staff member needs to extend a session for a job searcher or someone completing their census form?** Staff can use their judgment and extend a session for a customer. Please do not extend sessions if other customers are waiting to use the computer. There will always be exceptions for extensions and that will be up to staff to decide.
- **What about iPads at the libraries that have MediaSurfers?** The iPads will not be available for checkout in Phases I and II. Since customers normally return these themselves, there will be no way to clean them between uses so they won't be in use until a later phase.
- **Will we allow customers to use the copiers for faxing and making copies?** Not during Phase I, but we are developing plans to include this in Phase II. We're still researching possible solutions that would be cost effective for the library. We do know that Kinko's is open so we can refer customers there during Phase I. The other concern of staff faxing for customers is that many times customers are faxing sensitive materials so we need to be very careful before deciding to offer to fax for the customers.

### Other Public Service Issues:

- **How will we handle Meeting rooms?** During Phase I, Phase II (and at least through the end of July), we will not be allowing rental of any library meeting rooms. The rooms will be used for quarantining book returns and we also do not want to create an environment that could encourage customers to become lax on social distancing.
- **Will sole individuals be allowed to use study rooms?** Not during Phases I and II.
- **Are we going to mark six feet distances for lines at computers, staff desks?** We will be working on a plan for this for Phase III

- **Will we want to mark one way entry and exit in the stacks when we do start allowing shelf browsing?** Yes, in a later phase when we do allow customers to begin browsing, we will use tape on the floor to show one way in the stacks.
- **How will we handle cleaning of public restrooms when we start allowing customers in the building?** Our janitorial staff will be cleaning the public restrooms every night with hospital grade disinfectants.

## Programming & Summer Reading:

- **How will Summer Reading be handled this year?** Summer Reading will be entirely online this year. EPS is launching Summer Reading training on May 6. Neighborhood Arts will be streaming programs or recorded programs with some limited replay rights.
- **When will we start having In-person programs again?** For now, the plan is it will be at least August before we start in-person programming. This will be evaluated as we get closer to that time to determine if it is yet feasible.
- **When will staff be allowed to start participating in Outreach activities again?** This will follow the same schedule as in-person programming. Once it is deemed safe to have in-person programming, outreach activities will be allowed to restart too.
- **Since all programming is going to be virtual for the next few months, can staff across the system be involved in digital programming?** Many staff across the system have been doing this, we hope to expand those opportunities for staff whose jobs normally include programming.

## Staff Use of Breakrooms:

- **Are staff going to be able to use breakrooms to eat their lunch?** In Phase I breakrooms are closed, per the most recent orders from Governor Stitt; we want to encourage social distancing as much as possible at least until the end of May and possibly longer. Also, since we are highly encouraging staff to wear masks, it would not be possible to eat in the breakroom since masks have to be removed to eat. The only exception would be entering the breakroom to use a restroom, wash hands at the sink, or use a lactation room with approval from Human Resources. In Phase II, staff may use the refrigerators, microwave and other appliances. They must practice social distancing and disinfect the handles, keypads, and any other surfaces they have touched after each use.
- **Can staff still at least use refrigerators to store their food?** Not during Phase I, but they can beginning in Phase II
- **Can staff use microwaves to heat their food?** Not during Phase I, but they can beginning in Phase II

- **Can staff use ice machines?** Ice machines are not available during Phase I or II.
- **Can the staff bathrooms in break areas be used?** Yes

## Staff Items:

- **Will staff shelve across the library or in specific sections?** During Phase I, we recommend that staff shelve specific sections to help make it easier to maintain social distancing. We will revisit as we move toward a more normal environment.
- **Are we planning on taking temperatures of staff, public?** At this time, no. Staff must stay home if they are sick. We do not want to create a false sense of safety by taking temperatures. It appears that many people are asymptomatic.
- **(Updated July 22, 2020) Are we requiring staff to wear masks?** Effective May 18, 2020, rev. July 22, 2020, employees will be required to wear cloth face coverings when handling library materials, interacting with customers and each other, performing maintenance/repair on library equipment, handling cash, moving from place to place within library buildings and cleaning and disinfecting work areas. Gloves will be required when handling library materials during the first 96 hours of receipt, handling cash and customer documents, and cleaning and disinfecting work areas. Please refer to the Mandatory Requirement for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) memorandum dated May 18, 2020, rev. July 22, 2020.
- **Will the library be providing training for the proper use of masks, other social distancing issues?** All staff have been assigned the following required training courses in EduBrite: Covid-19 ~ Safe Workplace Practices, PPE-General and PPE-Gloves.
- **(Updated July 27, 2021) Now that the library is re-opening, unexpected closure leave will no longer be an option. What options are there for staff needing to take leave other than vacation or sick leave?**  
The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), effective April 1, 2020, expired December 31, 2020, created paid leave benefits for employees affected by COVID-19. The Act provides for the following types of paid leave:
  - Emergency Paid Sick Leave paid at the employee's regular rate of pay up to 80 hours for full-time employees or for part-time employees an amount equal to their average work hours over a two-week period, provided one of the following scenarios applies:
    - The employee is under a government quarantine or stay-at-home order.
    - The employee has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine.
    - The employee is seeking a diagnosis for COVID-19 symptoms.

- Emergency Paid Family Leave up to 10 *additional* weeks paid at 2/3 of the employee's regular rate of pay, capped at specific maximums, for the number of hours per workweek that the employee would normally be scheduled, if:
    - The employee is caring for a child whose school, childcare provider or place of care is unavailable due to COVID-19; and
    - The employee has worked for MLS for at least 30 calendar days.
  - Please refer to SH 221.1 and SH 221.2 for additional information. Requests for leave under the FFCRA should be directed to HumanResources.
- **What happens if I have a condition or illness that places me in the vulnerable population category?** Please contact Human Resources for assistance on what leave options may be available to you.
- **(Updated June 29, 2020) What happens if an employee suspects or confirms having COVID-19?** Employees reporting that they suspect or confirm having COVID-19 will be sent home with instructions to contact a healthcare provider or local/state public health authority for guidance. Human Resources will conduct contact tracing (see below). If there is a confirmed case of COVID- 19, Human Resources will notify employees working at the location. In cases of potential or confirmed exposure, MLS will follow the CDC recommendations for facility use and disinfection. If necessary, a location may be temporarily closed.
- **(Added June 29, 2020) What will the Library do when an employee reports to work with COVID-19 symptoms (fever, cough, or shortness of breath)?** Employees who have symptoms when they arrive at work or become sick during the day will immediately be separated from other employees, customers, and visitors and sent home. Employees who develop symptoms outside of work should immediately notify a manager, email [humreporting@metrolibrary.org](mailto:humreporting@metrolibrary.org) and stay home. Employees should not return to work until they have met the criteria to discontinue home isolation (see below) and have consulted with a healthcare provider and state or local health department.
- **(Updated October 21, 2020) How is contact tracing conducted?** Human Resources will be responsible for conducting contact tracing and notifications. Employees should immediately notify Human Resources by sending an email to [humreporting@metrolibrary.org](mailto:humreporting@metrolibrary.org) if one of the following circumstances apply:
  - An employee may have had ***prolonged close exposure to a person suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19, if they are within approximately 6 feet (2 meters) for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period starting two days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic persons, two days prior to test specimen collection) until the time the person is isolated;***or
  - An employee is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19;or
  - An employee tests positive for COVID-19.

**(Updated July 29, 2021)** Employees who meet one of the above criteria, will be instructed to follow the CDC guidelines listed below:

- Potentially exposed employees who **have** symptoms of COVID-19 should self-isolate for a least 10 days.
- Potentially exposed employees who **do not have** symptoms should remain at home or in a comparable setting and practice social distancing for 14 days or:
  - 7 days provided the employee receives a negative test result, as determined by a PCR or rapid-response antigen test, (test must occur on day 5 or later of the 7-day period).
  - 10 days without a test if the employee self-monitors and remains non-symptomatic for the period.
  - *Note: recommendations for discontinuing isolation in persons known to be infected with COVID-19 could, in some circumstances, appear to conflict with recommendations on when to discontinue quarantine for persons known to have been **exposed** to COVID-19. CDC recommends 14 days of quarantine **after exposure** based on the time it takes to develop illness if infected. Thus, it is possible that a person known to be infected could leave isolation earlier than a person who is quarantined because of the possibility they are infected.*
- **(Updated 10/29/2021)** If you've been fully vaccinated, potentially exposed employees do not need to quarantine if you are not experiencing symptoms related to COVID-19. The CDC guideline state to get tested 5-7 days after your exposure. You must remain absent from work once you get your test and may return if your test is negative. You should isolate for 10 days if your test is positive.
- Employees confirmed to have COVID-19 will be sent home and not allowed to return to work until they meet the criteria to discontinue home isolation (see below).

As a reminder, all employees should continually self-monitor for symptoms such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath. If an employee develops symptoms, they should immediately notify a manager and send an email to [humreporting@metrolibrary.org](mailto:humreporting@metrolibrary.org). Employees should not report to work if they are sick.

- **(Updated July 22, 2020) What criteria does the Library use to discontinue home isolation?** Based upon guidance from the Oklahoma State Epidemiologist and guidelines set forth from the CDC, the library uses a symptom-based strategy. If an employee is experiencing symptoms and/or is confirmed positive with COVID-19, the employee can leave home and return to work after these three conditions have been met:
  - The employee has had no fever for at least 24 hours (changed from 72 hours to 24 hours per CDC guidelines) without the use medicine that reduces fevers; and
  - All symptoms have improved (for example, cough or shortness of breath have improved); and
  - At least 10 days have passed since their symptoms first appeared.



Persons with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 who have not had any symptoms and were directed to care for themselves at home may discontinue isolation under the following conditions:

- At least 10 days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test assuming they have not subsequently developed symptoms since their positive test. If they develop symptoms, then the symptom-based strategy will be used.
- **(Added July 10, 2020) What if I want to get tested for COVID-19 and have no symptoms and have not been exposed to anyone suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19?** If you choose to get tested, you must remain off work until your test results are received. Once negative test results are received, you must notify [humreporting@metrolibrary.org](mailto:humreporting@metrolibrary.org) and be approved to return to work.
- **(Added June 29, 2020; Updated October 21, 2020) What can employees do to protect themselves and others from exposure to COVID-19?** The best way for employees to protect themselves and others is through strict adherence to the following guidelines:
  - Practice social distancing (note: limit any time spent less than six feet apart with coworkers, customers or vendors; do not exceed 15 cumulative minutes with anyone in a 24-hour period);
  - Be aware of who you are working with and for how long (important for contact tracing);
  - Wear a cloth face covering (note: wearing a cloth face covering **does not** replace the need to practice social distancing);
  - Avoid in-person meetings and gatherings. Use Zoom, Microsoft teams, or conference calls to conduct meetings.
  - Wash your hands **frequently** using soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer with an alcohol content of at least 60%.
    - Key times to clean your hands include:
      - Before and after work shifts
      - Before and after work breaks
      - After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
      - After using the restroom
      - Before eating or preparing food
      - After putting on, touch, or removing cloth face coverings
  - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
  - Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or use the inside of your elbow, and immediately wash hands or use hand sanitizer.
  - Avoid using other employees' phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment, when possible. If you are using shared workspaces and/or equipment, clean and disinfect them before and after use.
  - Routinely clean and disinfect frequently touched objects or surfaces, including work surfaces, timeclocks, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, chairs, phones, keyboards, sinks, hand/stair railings, etc.
  - Follow the Mandatory Requirement for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
  - Stay home if you are feeling sick. If you become sick while at work, immediately notify a manager and go home.

- **(Added July 10, 2020) What should employees traveling outside of Oklahoma do before returning to work?** Employees should call the Oklahoma State Department of Health Hotline at 1.877.215.8336 or their healthcare provider for guidance before returning to work.
- **What will happen if there is not enough work for my position at the library?** Will I be furloughed? It is the library's intent to not furlough staff if at all possible. However, the unexpected closure policy is being updated to clarify what is expected of staff during unexpected closure leave and limitations.
- **What will happen if a library doesn't have enough staff to complete all their work? We will close the library as unexpected closure?** If possible, we will reassign staff from a library that may not have enough work for the staff they have or can spare a staff person for a week or more. We do not recommend sharing staff for short time periods.
- **Since staff will no longer have "Unexpected closure" leave available, will we address what is required for working from home, i.e., they have to have work they can do at home?** We will be addressing this in a telework policy and the updated unexpected closure policy.
- **Will the library allow staff to take a leave of absence if they are scared to/don't want to come to work until things are more stable?** Staff may use paid leave.

## Miscellaneous

- **(Updated August 19, 2020) What is being done to disinfect and clean buildings? Will fogging be used periodically? Are there special disinfectants? How long do staff have to stay out of the building when it is fogged?** Improper application of the disinfectant can lead to a false sense of security, an increase in health hazards and not be effective at reducing the risk of the spread of COVID-19. Before COVID-19, our janitorial service would clean with a cleaning detergent agent. Detergents contains surfactants that lift dirt. The purpose of disinfectant was to inhibit growth and/or kill microorganisms. Cleaning removes large numbers of microorganisms from a surface that would otherwise interfere with the disinfection process. After cleaning, a disinfectant was applied. Disinfectants are also referred to as a germicide, which is a disinfectant that kills organisms that can cause disease.  
Now that we are dealing with the risk of COVID-19 in libraries, cleaning is being performed with an all-purpose cleaner with an additive that is non-toxic called Hydrogen Peroxide. The janitorial service uses microfiber cloths for cleaning. This cleaning agent is included on List N: Products with Emerging Viral Pathogens AND Human Coronavirus claims for use against SARS-CoV-2 provided by the CDC.

If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in our facilities' we will follow the CDC recommendations for disinfection. This may involve temporarily closing the building.

- **Do we know the dates each phase will happen?** Since we don't have any firm dates and so much is uncertain, we are calling them Phases for now and will be following guidance from state and local officials.
- **Do we want to come up with some kind of work to assign staff to do during a closure or while we have limited services?** Staff should, as much as possible, stick to the basic functions of their job. Training, checking and responding to email as well as any other tasks approved by supervisors could be done from home.
- **Do we have a telework policy or agreement for employees working from home?** We will have a policy, and this will also be addressed in the unexpected closure policy update. All positions will be identified as either telework-eligible or not.
- **Will there be training for all staff on assisting with digital services?** This seems good time to get staff to really learn how to use/assist with these resources that many staff don't seem to know very well. It has been published on the Intranet and in the newsletter ~ currently there are 8 Libby OverDrive Courses in EduBrite. Additionally, each week there is a spotlight on Databases.
- **Do we have in-building work that will allow social distancing when shelving is done, i.e., inventory, searching various lists, etc.?** For those that don't have work to do at home, do we have things we could assign them that would allow social distancing such as inventory, catching up on the various lists they are supposed to be searching regularly, especially as we know the lists haven't been done in six weeks now. Expired Holds lists will begin on May 19<sup>th</sup>. In Transit lists can begin immediately for local searching and will begin on May 13<sup>th</sup> for requesting shelf checks at other locations. Lost lists will be run beginning with a date of March 16<sup>th</sup> to catch any Tracer items that processed off the list during the closure.
- **One of our MakerSpace 3D printers was used by Engage Learning during the closure. Is there an opportunity for staff to help out with making face shields?** We have not been notified of such an opportunity.
- **When will we say what we'll do in phases as other libraries have done?** I'm not sure we are ready to identify how many phases it will take or what they will include. If we identify those things far in advance, we lose the flexibility to respond to information from public officials and feedback from libraries.
- **Are we going to have Staff Development Day this year? What is that going to look like?** Our plan is to have a virtual Staff Development Day this year. We are in early discussions and will be providing more details as the plan develops.
- **Can staff access EduBrite from home?** Yes, EduBrite can be accessed with any WI-Fi capable device. <https://metrolibrary.edubrite.com/oltpublish/site/homeNew.do>
- **Do I have to complete the Outside Summary Event Form for remote/webinars that I attend?** Yes, all professional development opportunities outside of EduBrite need to be tracked and recorded if done on MLS paid time. Additionally, these numbers go into the Annual L&D Report.

- The form has been shortened and is now only 6 questions and is available on line~  
<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=h4TxDn-72UCNdYW8Btt47DGq0gOi-JRFq2TcPJFvLYdUOVQ5QjRQS1EyTkINUkcyQ0dCRk1JTk9ZWC4u>