

Cariboo Regional District Library: plan for restoring library services during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

On March 17, 2020 all branches of the Cariboo Regional District Library closed their doors to the public to help limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus. This closure is for an indefinite period. All in-person library services were halted. Staff continued to work in their assigned locations but had to learn how to do so while social distancing and following other health and safety guidelines dictated by B.C. health authorities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Shortly after closing their facilities to the public, library staff realized that certain library services could continue to operate in a digital or virtual format. The CRD Library Management Team has been working on a plan to gradually restore library services in the Cariboo. The first stage of the plan involved public access to digital collections and the delivery of virtual programming.

Since mid-March, members of the library sector in British Columbia have met at weekly online meetings to share information about the virus as it relates to library work, what each library in the province is doing during the crisis, and what plans are being made to restore library services. Public libraries in BC are agreed on the principle of reintroducing library services to the public in a careful and thoughtful way that addresses both public and staff safety. As the Province of BC introduces Phase 2 of its re-opening plan on May 19th, most public libraries in BC agree that it is time to move to the next step in restoring library services to the public. Between May 19 and June 1, most public libraries in B.C. will begin to make their physical collections available to the public through a holds pickup service that will take place outside the library in the library parking lot or on the sidewalk (sometimes called 'Curbside Holds Pickup' or 'Library Takeout') or through home delivery.

Public access to library buildings and the introduction of other in-person services will be made very gradually and will follow guidelines provided by WorkSafeBC and provincial and regional health authorities.

Plan for restoring library services in the Cariboo during the COVID-19 pandemic

	Initial Closure	Stage 1
Start Date	March 17, 2020	Late March to end of May
Library building status	All library buildings closed to the public	All library buildings closed to the public.
Library staff status	Staff working, except Student Pages. No Casual call-ins. Community Branch staff send a 'checking in' email to the MOLS each time they start a shift.	Staff working, except Student Pages. No Casual call-ins.
Library services offered	Digital services to current library card holders.	Work on in-house projects continues. Virtual programming via Facebook begins. Public encouraged to make use of the library's digital resources.

		Library services via telephone begins in all Branches. Virtual registration for new library cards begins in Area Branches.
Measures taken regarding library services	<p>All in-person library services halted. Book drops closed. Interlibrary loan and Interlibrary Connect services suspended.</p> <p>Public service staff begin work on in-house special projects.</p> <p>Acquisitions and Materials Processing continue.</p> <p>Protocol established for safe handling of returned library materials and forwarded to all library branches.</p> <p>Public encouraged not to return library material through book drops.</p> <p>Emergency closure procedures activated in Sitka. All due dates for library material moved to a future date to avoid overdue fees being charged during the closure.</p> <p>All library card expiry dates extended for one year.</p> <p>Weekly ZOOM meetings with ABCPLD librarians across the province begin.</p> <p>Monthly ZOOM meetings with NCLF librarians begin.</p> <p>CRD Library management team moves COVID-19 planning to Teams platform.</p>	'Initial closure' measures continue.
Health & welfare	Crew talks held to advise staff of the CRD's COVID Response Plan.	Staff continue to follow WorkSafeBC and B.C. health authority guidelines regarding personal hygiene (frequent hand washing, avoiding touching their face), social distancing, and cleaning of surfaces.
Risk Assessment	Low	Low

Restoring Library Services during COVID-19, continued...

	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
Start Date	May 25 or June 1, 2020	No date set	No date set
Library building status	All library buildings closed to the public.	Limited public access to library buildings.	Full public access to library buildings.
Library Staff status	Same as Stage 1. Summer students begin work.	All staff working, including Student Pages. Casual call-ins resume, as required.	Full return to pre-COVID staffing levels and schedules.
Library services offered	Stage 1 services continue. Planning for virtual Summer Reading Club begins. Lending of physical materials via curbside holds pickup begins. Public permitted to return library material using library book drops.	Stage 1 services continue. Limited access to public computers. Limited access to public washrooms. Limited access to physical collections.	Curbside holds pickup discontinued. Full access to physical collections restored.
Measures taken re: library services	'Initial closure' measures continue. Protocol developed for curbside holds pickup.	'Initial closure' measures continue. Most chairs removed to encourage physical distancing and short visits. Plexiglass shields attached to circulation counters. Number of public computers limited to encourage physical distancing and help with frequent cleaning. Time on public computers limited to 30 minutes – no extensions permitted. Limited number of people permitted to be present at any time. All board games, toys, magazines, newspapers, and other difficult to clean items removed.	Stage 3 restrictions to continue until 'all-clear' given by WorkSafeBC and BC health authorities. At that time, remove plexiglass barriers, restore all library services to pre-COVID levels.

		Only disposable, library-supplied earbuds permitted (no headphones). Some parts of buildings will remain closed to the public due to unavoidably crowded spaces and extremely high-touch collections.	
Health and welfare	Initial Closure and Stage 1 protocols continue. Staff reminded of protocol re: the safe handling of returned library material. Protocol for safe delivery of Curbside Holds Pickup service implemented.	Initial Closure and Stage 1 protocols continue. Hand sanitizer dispensers installed at each entrance. Staff to replenish supply on a regular basis. Staff to clean public computer stations in between customers. Staff clean plexiglass barriers hourly. Expanded cleaning by janitors required daily.	All protocols detailed in previous Stages to continue until 'all-clear' given by WorkSafeBC and BC health authorities. At that time, restore cleaning protocols to pre-COVOD levels. Retain hand sanitizer dispensers permanently.
Risk Assessment	Low	Medium to High	High without vaccine

Note: Health and welfare protocols for Stage 3 and 4 may be expanded or contracted depending on WorkSafeBC and provincial/regional health authority recommendations and orders in effect at that time.

Appendices:

- a. Staff protocol for Cariboo Regional District Library Branches (March 15, 2020)
- b. Protocol for handling library materials returned to library branches in the Cariboo Regional District (March 20, 2020)
- c. Protocol for curbside pickup of checked out library materials (May 21, 2020)

References:

Cariboo Regional District COVID Response Plan

WorkSafeBC guidelines for libraries:

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/covid-19-returning-safe-operation/arts-and-cultural-facilities>

Province of BC re-start plan:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support/bc-restart-plan>

Respectfully submitted,

CRD Library Management Team (Wanda Davis, Manager of Library Services; Anton Dounts, Williams Lake Branch; Heather Lee, Quesnel Branch; Shelby Powell, 100 Mile House Branch)

Appendix A:

COVID-19 Staff Protocol for Cariboo Regional District Library Branches

March 15, 2020

Library Services will be guided in its response to the current COVID-19 pandemic by recommendations from official health authorities and the Cariboo Regional District.

In addition to general instructions issued by the Cariboo Regional District regarding staff protocol during the COVID-19 pandemic, the instructions below are specific to Cariboo Regional District Library Branches.

This protocol is for library staff. There will be separate messaging for members of the public. Posters will be provided for use in public areas. This protocol is an internal document that is not meant to be distributed to the public.

Masks

The use of N-95 masks is not recommended at this time. These masks must be properly fitted in order to work, and are uncomfortable to wear for lengthy periods of time. Wearing a mask may cause you to touch your face even more than usual as verbal communication will be difficult. Touching your face has been shown to be one of the easiest ways of contracting the virus.

Gloves

The use of disposable nitril or latex gloves is not recommended because they cannot be easily cleaned and may cause you to transfer germs from one object to another. Frequent and proper handwashing is a better alternative.

Cleaning vs Sanitizing

As well as maintaining the same levels of daily cleanliness in the library as usual; library staff should follow additional cleaning protocols.

Library staff should be aware of the difference between disinfecting/sanitizing and cleaning. Disinfecting/sanitizing kills germs. Disinfecting requires that cleaning products be left to sit on surfaces for 3-5 minutes before being wiped off. That time period allows the product time to do its work. Cleaning removes germs from surfaces and objects but does not kill germs. It is not practical for staff to maintain disinfected/sanitized surfaces in the library during opening hours. For this reason, the goal of the cleaning protocol for library staff will be to clean surfaces frequently in an effort to remove as many germs as possible from surfaces and objects during the hours the Branch is open to the public.

Surfaces

Surfaces that are touched by multiple people, such as the circulation counter, should be cleaned frequently during opening hours by library staff. Avoid the use of sprays and cloths because germs can be transferred from one place to another by the cloth. Instead, use disposable wipes and dispose of them after each use. If you choose to wear nitril or latex gloves while handling wipes, dispose of them along with the wipes.

Objects

Soft objects that cannot be easily cleaned, such as puppets and stuffed animals, should be removed from public areas and stored for the duration of the pandemic.

Other objects that cannot be easily cleaned, such as board games and pieces, should be removed from public areas and stored away from the public for the duration of the pandemic. If you have Lego and Duplo pieces that you are not cleaning regularly, you should remove those items from public areas and store them away for the duration of the pandemic.

If you already clean your Lego pieces regularly (Lego pieces can be cleaned in a dishwasher on the hot or sanitize cycle), and choose to continue to offer Lego programmes, it might be wise to assign a collection of clean Lego pieces to each participant and limit them to using only those pieces (no sharing). All pieces should be cleaned (in a hot dishwasher) before letting another group use them. If you are unable or unwilling to follow this protocol please pack your Lego pieces away for the duration of the pandemic.

Please follow a similar protocol for other objects that are shared during programming, such as markers, pencils, scissors, etc. That is, make sure each item is cleaned in between uses.

Food at Programming Events

Either hand food and drink out in individually packaged 'packs' or eliminate food and drink from your programming altogether. An individual 'pack' means a separate package for each person that includes a snack and a drink (like a boxed lunch).

Social Distancing

Social distancing should be practiced at all public programming events. Social distancing is defined as maintaining a 6 ft. distance between people. Please arrange chairs at all events to maintain proper social distancing. This may mean that fewer people can participate in a programme.

Public computers and keyboards

It may not be possible for staff to maintain clean surfaces on public computers and keyboards. Members of the public should be encouraged to wash their hands immediately after using public computers and not to touch their faces until they do so. If possible, staff should use

disposable wipes on keyboards, computer tables and the hard surfaces on chairs in between customers. We recognize that public computer access is an important public service and will attempt to continue this service as long as possible.

Books, DVDs, and CDs

Please clean the outside covers of books, DVD cases, and CD cases as they are returned to the library prior to returning them to the shelves.

Overdue Fines

No overdue fines will be charged for any person who is required to be in isolation or quarantine. In general, staff should be especially lenient to everyone regarding fines until further notice.

Programming

At this time, we are conducting risk assessments on all library programs. Library programs will continue to be offered as long as the restrictions and suggestions listed above are followed.

Exceptions include:

1. All Outreach programs are cancelled until further notice. This includes visits to senior's facilities, daycares, schools, and community events.
2. All group tours and pre-arranged group visits (eg. daycares) to the library are suspended until further notice. Please cancel any visits that are already booked.

Be aware that visitors from other areas of the province or country may visit your library during March Break or school closures and may participate in programmes in your Branch. Please follow recommended guidelines for handwashing, cleaning, and social distancing in order to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

Please be aware that this protocol may change at any time as risk assessments change or instructions from the Cariboo Regional District or health authorities are updated.

March 15, 2020

Wanda Davis, Manager of Library Services

Appendix B:

Protocol for handling library materials returned to library branches in the Cariboo Regional District

March 20, 2020

The purpose of this protocol is to protect staff from the being exposed to the COVID-19 virus that may have been transferred to library materials by members of the public. Library customers have been encouraged to keep library materials at their homes and not to return them to library branches. However, in order to prevent books, etc. from being left lying on the sidewalk beside closed book drops (as has happened in the past), book drops have not been locked. Staff will deal with returned items in the following manner:

1. When preparing to remove items from the book drop, place an open box beside the book drop.
2. Wash your hands. Put on a pair of disposable gloves if you have them available.
3. Empty the book drop by transferring all items to the box. Use several boxes if necessary.
4. When the box is full, remove gloves if you are wearing them and dispose of them in the garbage. Wash your hands following the guidelines for hand washing by the Public Health Authority of Canada. **Do not contaminate the outside of the box or the flaps by touching it with the same gloves that touched the items or before washing your hands. Avoid touching your face before washing your hands thoroughly.**
5. After washing your hands, close the box and write today's date on the box.
6. Out of an abundance of safety, wash your hands again.
7. Set the box aside for at least 7 days (7-day quarantine) before opening it, checking in the items, and returning them to the shelves.

Note: If you wish, and if you have adequate supplies, you may wipe the mylar covers of hardcover books, and plastic covers of DVDs and CDs before placing them in the box. However, because the items will be quarantine for 7 days this is not strictly necessary. Current science states that the virus cannot live for that length of time on surfaces.

Note: If you have room in your branch and have book trucks available, you may quarantine books for 7 days on a book truck if the truck can be placed in an area where other staff will not be tempted to touch it or the books on it.

Note: Although some testing has been done on the length of time the virus remains active on various surfaces, there is still no conclusive scientific evidence on the shortest length of time library books should be quarantined. Although most institutions now accept that 72 hours is a safe quarantine time, we will be using a 7-day quarantine out of an abundance of caution to protect staff and to avoid being the center of a community outbreak

Please be aware that this protocol may change at any time as risk assessments change or better scientific evidence becomes available.

March 20, 2020

Wanda Davis, Manager of Library Services

Appendix C:

Protocol for curbside pickup of checked out library materials

May 21, 2020

This service is meant to provide public access to the Library's physical collections until the tools necessary for safe public access to library buildings are readily available in sufficient quantities for staff and customer safety.

This service is meant to be contactless and low risk to both library staff and customers. Hand washing with soap and water will be used by staff, and the use of disinfectant wipes or spray will be used to ensure cleanliness for commonly touched surfaces. Quarantine time for library materials will be used to ensure coronavirus is not transmitted to customers via library material. As no contact with customers will take place, handwashing facilities are readily available for staff, and physical distancing will be strictly enforced, personal protective equipment is not required.

1. Customers will search for library materials (books, DVDs, CDs, etc.) using the Library's online catalogue and place holds on material they wish to borrow. Alternatively, customers can phone the library and request that staff place holds for them. If customers do not have a valid library card, staff will register them using the new virtual library card registration procedure.
 - a. If customers phone the library to request that staff place holds on their behalf, staff must confirm the customer's identity by asking the customer for information that is in the patron record.
 - b. Staff will inform the customer of the procedure for pickup of materials when they become available.
 - c. Customers may designate a person to pick up their holds for them but must inform staff in advance who that person will be. Staff will add that information to the patron record.
2. Each morning, staff will print the 'pick list' from Sitka and, after washing their hands, will pull books, etc. from the shelves.
3. Staff will check out the items to the patron's account and print the checkout receipt. At that time, staff should note the name of the person (if any) who is permitted to pick up items on the customer's behalf.
4. Staff will place the checked-out items in a bag, attach a label to the bag with the patron's first name, the date of checkout and the due date in large, easy to read print.
5. Staff will place the bag in an area of the library designated for quarantined items. The bag of items will remain in quarantine for at least 72 hours to ensure that the items are free from viruses.
6. After quarantine is over, staff will (after washing their hands) remove the bag of items from quarantine and call the customer to arrange a time for pickup. All rules for the pickup exchange will be discussed with the customer.

Pickup exchange protocol:

1. Pickup appointments will be in 15-minute intervals to ensure that customers do not congregate in the pickup area.

2. Each day a table will be placed outside the library in an area that can be observed by staff from inside the library.
3. At each appointed pickup time, library staff (after washing their hands) will place the designated bag of books on the table. Customers will not be permitted to approach the table while staff are at the table. Decals or chalk drawings will be placed at least 6 feet away from the outside edge of the table and again at another 6 foot interval in case multiple people show up at the same time. Customers must remain standing at the designated spot until library staff have left the table and returned to the library.
4. Staff will ask the customer for their first name to verify that the name on the bag matches the person who is picking it up.
5. Staff will leave the bag on the table and return to the library.
6. The customer can then approach the table to pick up their bag of items.
7. After the customer has left, staff will clean the table to get ready for the next pickup appointment.

Signs will be available to let customers know that if they wish to return library material during their pickup appointment they should put them in the book return and not leave items on the table. If a customer places any items on the table that should have gone to the book return, staff will wear disposable gloves to move the items to the book return. Items will not enter the library except through the book drop. After placing items in the book drop staff will remove and dispose of the gloves before touching any surfaces.

Books returned through library book drops will be dealt with using protocol already established for this purpose.

Signs will also be available to remind customers that staff will be happy to answer any questions they might have by telephone, but will not be able to have face-to-face discussions at this time.

As personal protective equipment will not be used for this service, staff are not to approach customer vehicles or customers.

Please be aware that this protocol may change at any time as risk assessments change or instructions from the Cariboo Regional District or health authorities are updated.

Wanda Davis, Manager of Library Services