

Emergency Closings

In considering closing the Library during emergency situations (weather related, local emergency, civil unrest, power failure, etc.) the following issues should be taken into consideration:

1. The Library as an essential service.

Does the Library perform any services that support life, safety and security to the public during an emergency situation? Closing decisions should not depend on other governmental agencies that may or may not be considered an “essential service”.

 - Definition of *essential* – adjective - absolutely necessary; indispensable - pertaining to or constituting the essence of a thing.
 - Definition of *service* – noun - a basic, indispensable, or necessary element. (Definitions supplied by Dictionary.com)
2. Accommodations to be made to alleviate inconvenience.
 - a) Charge no fines for days closed.
 - b) Offer free 1 hour computer time for interrupted computer use during the 2 days following closure. These computer users must still comply with the “first come first served policy”.
 - c) Accept return of AV items in the book drop during closure without penalty fee.
 - d) Allow 2-day grace period for customers who were unable to get to the Library during emergency situations beginning with the date of closure.
 - e) During catastrophic situations, provide services as necessary through use of external sources such as mobile units, cooperation of other libraries and government agencies.
3. Criteria, decision-making and notification.

The final decision to close the Library or take other appropriate actions in response to emergency situations should rest with the Administrator (or a designated representative) and the Library Board President (or another Board member in the absence of the President). In the event that communications are disrupted, Library Administration would make a decision to close.

In order to make an informed decision:

 - a) Contact city, county and or state agencies for input concerning the situation.
 - b) Review traffic flow within the immediate area and outlying roads.
 - c) Review safety and security of the public, building, parking lot and staff.
 - d) Decide if the possibility of wind/water damage or bodily harm is immediate.
 - e) Monitor and review travel/weather advisories issued.
 - A **travel advisory** is a [public](#) notice issued by a [government agency](#) to provide information about the relative safety of

traveling to or visiting one or more specific [destinations](#). The purpose is to allow travelers to make an informed decision about a particular travel destination, and to help them prepare adequately for what may be encountered on their trip. Travel issues may include: inclement [weather](#), [civil unrest](#) or [disease](#). (as defined by Wikipeida)

- f) Ask for input from the staff
4. Actions to be taken once the decision to close the building has been reached:
- a) Notify staff and trustees via the established telephone tree.
 - b) Notify the Emergency Closing Center.
 - c) Email/phone notification to neighboring libraries and MLS.
 - d) Specify a closing time. The front doors should be locked at that time and no one admitted. Fifteen (15) minutes before the announced closing time, the police should be notified to assume custody of minor children left in the building. In the event the police are unable to pick up minor children, 2 staff members should take the child to the nearest, accessible police or evacuation center.
 - e) Post sign on the front doors of the building, if possible. Sign should indicate reason for closing and where to locate minor children.
 - f) Change message on answering machine to reflect the situation.
 - g) Allow accommodations such as the use of the Library phones to help customers arrange transportation.
 - h) Post to E-Newsletter.
 - i) Note: if communications are disrupted, notifications may not be possible.
5. Employees who wish to leave when the decision to remain open has been made:
- a) Accommodate all requests to leave with the understanding that there is no pay for lost time unless the hours are rescheduled or vacation/compensatory time is used. Adjustments will be made on employee time sheets.
 - b) Eliminate services that cannot be staffed with remaining employees.
 - c) Close the Library if at least 2 employees are not available as a security/safety issue.
6. Employees who are unable to safely leave at the time of closing may remain in the building with the authorization of the Administrator or Board President.
7. Whether a library closing occurs before or after the start of the business day, employees will be paid as specified in Section 5_35 of the Personnel Manual.

Adopted 3-12-07

Personnel Policy
Public Policies/Building
Emergency/Disaster Manual