KDHE Guidance for Libraries

May 28, 2021

Centers for Disease Control (CDC) currently recommend preventative steps to reduce the risk of getting and spreading COVID-19. Specific guidance is available for administrators and leaders of community-based organizations.

⇒ Stay informed about the local COVID-19 situation. Get up-to-date information about local COVID-19 activity from public health officials.

⇒ Communicate with your local health department if you are concerned that guests who visit your facility might have COVID-19. Learn more about COVID-19 symptoms.

⇒ Download COVID-19 posters and CDC Fact Sheets and keep your guests informed about public health recommendations to prevent disease spread and about changes to services that might be related to the outbreak. Messaging may include:
- Posting signs at entrances and in strategic places providing instruction on hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, and cough etiquette.
- Providing educational materials about COVID-19 for non-English speakers, as needed. CDC provides resources in Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Korean, while KDHE has a library of resources in Spanish.

Staff Considerations
- Implement everyday preventive actions and provide instructions to library employees about actions to prevent disease spread. Meet with your staff to discuss plans to help guests implement personal preventive measures.
  - Encourage or require staff to wear face masks or cloth face coverings, depending on local policy. Face masks or cloth face coverings should be encouraged even if there is no local ordinance requiring them. KDHE recommends wearing a mask that fits snuggly around the nose, mouth, and chin and has multiple layers of fabric. Alternatively, a thinner disposable mask may be worn underneath a cloth face mask to improve the fit. For more information on the mask guidance visit: https://www.coronavirus.kdheks.gov/DocumentCenter/View/441/KDHE-Mask-Guidance-PDF---3-1-21.
  - Require staff and volunteers to wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
  - Consider distributing gloves for staff and volunteers to wear while handling library materials. Gloves should only be used in addition to proper handwashing practices.

- [Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze](#), then throw the tissue in the trash and wash your hands. Do not cough into your hands. If a tissue isn't available, cough into your elbow.
- Encourage ill staff and volunteers to stay home (or be sent home if they develop symptoms while at the facility), to prevent transmitting the infection to others.
- Prepare and plan for operations with a reduced workforce. Identify essential positions and people required to sustain necessary functions and operations.
- Minimize the number of staff members who have face-to-face interactions with guests. Use physical barriers to protect staff who will have interactions with guests, such as plastic or glass barriers at service desks.
- Ensure bathrooms are properly stocked with soap, paper towels, and no-touch trash cans. Offer hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are unavailable. When possible, place hand sanitizer in various locations throughout the library, encouraging guests to use frequently.
- Have HVAC systems inspected and maintained before and during reopening.

Cleaning and Disinfection Considerations
Common areas and high-touch hard surfaces
Ensure that all common areas within the facility follow good practices for environmental cleaning. This includes high-touch hard surfaces such as door handles, desks, door knobs, phones, computer keyboards, lights, point-of-sale keypads, self-checkout equipment, shelving, and bathrooms.

- While the risk of COVID-19 infection from touching surfaces is low, KDHE recommends regular handwashing or use of an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, and cleaning and disinfecting surfaces to reduce risk. To see the latest KDHE cleaning guidance, visit: https://www.coronavirus.kdheks.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1966/COVID-19-Cleaning-and-Disinfection-Guidance-Non-Healthcare-Settings-PDF---5-11-2021.
- Specific steps for cleaning library technology, including lab computers and white boards, can be found here.

Disinfecting books, collections, and cultural resources
Disinfecting books and collections
- Quarantining/isolating items is the preferred method for disinfecting library materials. Quarantine requires no special training to implement, is not expensive, and does not risk damaging collections.
  - REALM Project research on library-specific materials indicates that the SARS-CoV-2 virus is viable for varying amounts of time, depending on surface type and whether items are quarantined in a stacked or unstacked configuration. Therefore, quarantine periods of different lengths may be appropriate. Opting for a 7-day quarantine of most library materials may be the best single solution.
  - REALM Project research indicates that leather and synthetic leather covers should be quarantined in an unstacked configuration for a minimum of 8 days.
  - If items are quarantined in plastic bags, a 9-day isolation may be necessary.

- Do not attempt to disinfect archival materials, museum objects, or other valuable collections unless under the guidance of a conservator. Experts recommend quarantining collection items as the most effective way to disinfect them after handling by staff and guests. Historical materials may be irreversibly damaged by some cleaners.
- The following are not recommended for disinfecting library materials and collections:
  - Liquid disinfectants and powdered cleaners
  - Fogging
  - Ultraviolet (UV) radiation
  - Microwave radiation

Service Considerations
- Encourage or require all guests to wear face masks or cloth face coverings, depending on local policy. Face masks or cloth face coverings should be encouraged even if there is no local ordinance requiring them.
- Limit the number of guests in the library building and focus on maintaining appropriate social distancing measures (at least 6 feet of distance between individuals).
  - Reservation times may be an option for some libraries. Consider instituting an online reservation system to ensure appropriate capacity is maintained. As internet access is not always available to many library guests, consider allowing reservations by phone.
  - Considering offering special hours for seniors and high-risk populations, such as the first hour of business each day.
- Use signs or tape on the floor to maintain physical distancing while waiting for assistance at service desks, waiting for self-checkout stations, or outside the facility when timed access or curbside services cause lines to form.
- Consider offering alternative order ahead and pick-up options, such as curbside/contactless pickup.
- Encourage one-way flow of foot traffic with marked entrances and exits. Do not block fire exits. Use signs to direct one-way flow of traffic.
- Consider closing or rearranging areas of the library where guests gather and required physical distancing cannot be maintained such as:
  - Meeting rooms
  - Study rooms
  - Seating areas
  - Public computers
  - Children's play areas
- Use physical barriers, such as plastic or glass barriers, to allow guests to continue to use study areas, shared tables, and library technology such as computers.
- Keep guests informed of any changes to regular service operations. This might include sending out emails or posting notices in common areas.
- Consider instituting remote programming options such as online or radio.

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