

Best Practices for Curbside Delivery of Library Materials

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PURPOSE

This document has been compiled by Peace Library System to provide information about safety measures your library may take when considering plans for reimplementing lending of materials to the public. Several sources were consulted, and much of the wording is drawn from documents created by our partners at Yellowhead Regional Library and Marigold Library System.

The information provided here is by no means exhaustive and may or may not apply to the unique circumstances of the library in your community. Ultimately, local library boards are responsible for making decisions about library service that comply with public health orders to ensure the safety and well-being of library users and staff.

BACKGROUND

- Public libraries were closed by provincial order in March. Public libraries are not considered essential services, and your facility is not yet allowed to open to the public. Any violation of this order may result in fines.
- As Alberta's relaunch strategy unfolds, with Stage One beginning tentatively on May 14th, many libraries have begun thinking about their transition back to public service when they are permitted to reopen during Stage Two (date TBD).
- One method for getting books in the hands of the community is curbside service, and a handful of our libraries have already begun implementing this service before formally reopening to the public. In light of this, we wanted to share some best practices to ensure that curbside service is performed responsibly and that risk is minimized for both staff and patrons.
- PLSB issued a statement regarding curbside delivery on April 14, 2020. You would have received this by email; if not, please contact PLS for a copy.
- Your Board needs to be involved in any decision regarding curbside service. Under normal circumstances, this would be an operational decision. These are not normal circumstances, and the Board as the legal body needs to be aware of the risks.
- You **must keep Peace Library System advised** as your library plans for resuming operations! PLS will need to know who is working at the library for what hours, and will coordinate with staff to ensure readiness in various areas, including working with IT to ensure Polaris functions are turned back on, coordinating deliveries, communication with TRAC, and much more.

The key considerations below have been gathered from guidelines for retail and food services as well as based on discussions and examples within the library community. As no set of standards has arisen, we have included suggestions for best practices from a PLS perspective for our members.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

RISK ANALYSIS

Health Canada has issued [risk informed decision making processes for businesses](#). The intent of this page is to provide a framework for decision making and mitigation strategies.

Before starting curbside delivery, think about the following questions and the steps you will take to mitigate the risk:

- Are your patrons part of a high-risk group?
- Are your patrons at greater risk of spreading the virus?
- Is your community experiencing an increased rate of infection? Stay up to date on transmission in your community by regularly checking [covid19stats.alberta.ca](https://www.covid19stats.alberta.ca).
- Will patrons and staff be participating in activities that could contribute to the spread of the virus? Transactional activities (retail, passing objects) may represent higher risk.
- Do you have a pandemic preparedness plan? A continuity plan? How will staff absenteeism impact your core activities?
- Do you have a communications plan to explain to patrons and key contacts what steps you are taking to ensure safety?
- Can your site implement public health, infection prevention and control measures?
 - Do you have a stable supply of disinfectant, soap, gloves, paper towels, masks, hand sanitizer, clean plastic bags, tissues?
 - Will you be compromising the supply of these materials to businesses and organizations deemed essential by the Province?
- How will staff/patrons demonstrating symptoms be handled?
- Do staff have access to mental health supports? Working in this type of ambiguity can increase stress.

COMMUNICATION

If you are implementing curbside pickup, the primary consideration you will have is the perception of safety – both for your patrons and for your staff.

There will need to be an increased focus and discipline around sanitation, and to communicate what steps you are taking.

You will also need to continuously monitor the recommendations from AHS and your local public health unit in order to make informed decisions regarding when to stop, or restart, curbside pickup.

BEST PRACTICE

- Update, and continuously update, messaging on your webpage along the lines of ‘what we are doing’ and list all the precautionary sanitation and safety steps you are taking.
- Include your expectations for patrons accessing your service.
- Be very, very clear and enforce the sanitation and safety steps you are taking.
- Consider printing copies of this messaging to include with checked-out materials.
- If you need help posting this information on your website, please contact Emma or Janet and they will be happy to assist you.
- Keep PLS updated as to what your current procedures are, and what your plans are for the future.

KEEPING STAFF SAFE

Recognize the staff who are doing this work.

Recognize, also, that staff have the right to refuse work that they deem unsafe. Staff may not agree to participate in curbside pickup activities. Refusal to work results in an inspection or investigation by the employer. If the employer and staff member disagree that the work is safe, OHS will investigate.

BEST PRACTICE

- Staff will need to spend extra time to focus on cleaning and sanitizing ALL shared services. This includes: doors, handles, tables, carts, staff workstations, materials, packing materials. Use damp cleaning methods such as damp clean cloths and/or a wet mop. Brushing, dusting, or sweeping can distribute virus droplets into the air. There is no evidence that a bed bug oven will kill the virus.
- Do not use reusable bags for curbside pickup.
- Workstations may need to be reconfigured or physical barriers (e.g. plexiglass) put in place to ensure staff are always working two or more meters apart. Workstations such as tables or keyboards should be dedicated to one staff member and should not be shared.
- Staff will need to increase the amount of time spent on hand-washing, and there needs to be continual reminders and access to information/posters on proper handwashing techniques.
- Staff will need continual and reliable sources of: soap, paper towels, disinfectant, hand sanitizer (minimum 60% alcohol), gloves, plastic lined bins for disposal of paper towels and gloves.
- Change gloves as you change tasks. Once you have processed items for a patron and moved it to the pick up zone – wash down everything and change your gloves. Once the patron has picked up items, wash down everything and change your gloves.
- Staff must not come to work if they are exhibiting any symptoms of cold, flu or allergies.

- If staff exhibit symptoms when at work, have a strategy for containment, sanitation of the area(s) and assume that anyone in contact with this staff person has been exposed. Use the [AHS symptom checker](#) and assume the staff member and anyone working with them will need to be in quarantine for 10+ days. Have a communication plan in place in the event that you need to inform the public.

KEEPING PATRONS SAFE

Access to physical items can support the mental health of patrons by providing a distraction, learning opportunities, skill development. However, providing this access to materials must be done safely and responsibly.

BEST PRACTICE:

Patrons should be encouraged to:

- **STAY HOME** if they are exhibiting signs of infection, cold, or allergies or if they are part of a high-risk group.
- Designate one person from a household to pick up library items if possible.
- Observe physical distancing as per public health orders.

MANAGING PATRON REQUESTS

Patrons will be largely limited to items checked in at their home library. Not all PLS libraries are currently providing curbside delivery and circulating materials, and while PLS is offering occasional delivery to libraries, items are not moving between systems.

BEST PRACTICE

- PLS can open up requests on Polaris for your library so your patrons can request materials via TRACpac. This is only done on request, so **please contact Janet** if you would like your holds filling function (“Request to Fill”) to be activated to fill local holds.
- To manage their requests, patrons can place holds in TRACpac. You may also allow patrons to call or email with their specific requests.
- Designated staff can review the requests, ensure that the items are both at that library and checked in, then pull the number of items that you are allowing patrons to check out at once. Do not pull items on the list that are for other libraries.
- After you use the RTF to pull your holds, use Polaris - Circulation – “Check Out”, enter the patron barcode and then the item barcode.
- Inform the patron via email or phone that their items are ready to be picked up and work out the time for them to do so. TRAC notices **will not go out**, so this will need to be done

- manually; Janet can turn notifications back on upon request, so please contact her if you'd like to set this up.
- We encourage you to have a readers' advisory conversation with your patrons to help them discover new or different authors or to figure out alternative titles in your collection that they might find interesting. You can also prepare kits of materials – i.e. mystery authors, Westerns, non fiction. Think 'blind date with a book'.

PICKUP OF MATERIALS

Each site will have a different process based on risk (i.e. if the library is co-located with other services), space and access.

BEST PRACTICE

- Designate specific parking spots for curbside pickup; ideally close to where staff can monitor arrivals/departures.
- If the pickup zone is in an airlock, leave the front door open to minimize how many times the door handles need to be touched.
- Staff should disinfect the table tops (or carts) with the material on it, before and after each pickup; same with any surfaces (doors, handles, automatic door opening buttons).
- Staff should leave the items for the patron in advance of the scheduled pickup time and leave the area.
- Indicate by marking on the ground where patrons should stand to maintain social distances.
- Patrons should not move to pick up items until staff are out of the area.
- Patrons should not touch items that are not for them if there are items out for other patrons.
- Include information and instructions for patrons that can be read before physically picking up. This may include a recommendation to store or quarantine books for a period before handling them, handwashing before and after handling library materials, and the best practices under #4 listed above.
- Make hand sanitizer, tissues, and a plastic-lined garbage can available for patron use.
- Reserve times for patrons to come and pick up material. This should be a phone call or email. If your patrons fall into a high-risk category, designate the first pickup times for them.
- Patrons may NOT enter the library for any reason. Doing so could result in fines levied against the library and the patron.
- The primary concern is to maintain the safety of staff and patrons.

ACCEPTING RETURNS

Do not open your drop box or otherwise accept returns until you have a plan for how to handle materials that may carry the virus.

BEST PRACTICE

- Ensure you have a well-ventilated area to quarantine the items away from staff.
- Items should be quarantined for a minimum of 72 hours or 3 days before they are checked in and returned to circulation. Make sure patrons understand the items will remain on their account for this length of time, but that fines are currently turned off in Polaris.
- Ensure you have the personal protective equipment to handle the materials.
- Ensure you have enough sanitation supplies to clean the items and the work surfaces.
- Remember: staff have the right to refuse work they perceive to be unsafe.