

These recommendations for a phased reopening of public libraries are tied to the stages of Alberta's Relaunch Strategy, which can be found at <https://www.alberta.ca/alberta-relaunch-strategy.aspx?>

Please note that these recommendations are not comprehensive, and nor are they mandatory. Public libraries in the Peace region are all unique in their size, staffing, and configuration of facility, and will have unique concerns and challenges. These recommendations are offered as considerations as library boards and staff plan their path forward.

No matter what stage is in place, libraries must ensure that both patrons and library staff are kept safe and healthy.

STAGE ONE

Planning for Reopening

Beginning May 14

Stage One allowed some businesses and facilities to resume full operations as of May 14 with enhanced infection prevention and controls in place. Mask use is strongly recommended in crowded public spaces, like mass transit, that do not allow for physical distancing of 2 metres apart. Remote working is advised where possible.

- Library facility must remain closed to the public, though limited curbside service may be introduced as appropriate and as staff are comfortable performing these tasks.
- If curbside service is implemented at your library, distribute existing holds, and enable holds for materials in your own collection.
- Quarantine items for three days (72 hours) before shelving
- Clean the main library spaces thoroughly.
- Purchase and distribute required/recommended sanitation supplies in staff and public areas (disinfectant, soap, gloves, paper towels, masks, hand sanitizer with minimum 60% alcohol, clean plastic bags, tissues).
- Stagger schedules to have minimal staff in the facility.
- Remove all communal items that cannot be easily cleaned, such as newspapers, magazines, stuffed toys, and games.
- Reconfigure work stations to be operable from 6 feet apart. Install plexiglass shields or other suitable barrier materials on service desks where needed/appropriate.
- Reconfigure computers or close alternating stations to allow for physical distancing.
- Remove soft seating from the public floor or mark it off-limits (for example, with caution tape). Space out remaining hard seating to allow for physical distancing.

- Consider how grocery-store model social-distancing provisions might be implemented at your facility, such as marked unidirectional aisles and 2 people per aisle limit. Create marking and signage to accommodate this.
- Put up signage reminding patrons about physical distancing and encouraging patrons to only touch items they intend to check out.
- Re-open book drops with a plan for 3-day quarantine on incoming materials. All floor space throughout facility will likely be needed to stage appropriate quarantine measures.
- Whether you are quarantining items or sanitizing items, designate areas for items so staff can clearly understand which items are deemed safe to handle and when.
- Disinfect hard surfaces with wipes or a disinfectant spray and disposable towels. If you cannot wipe surfaces fully and completely, quarantine is required. For soft porous surfaces such as print material, various sources indicate that the virus does not live as long on paper surfaces, including the interior of a book or paper-based products. Quarantining these items is strongly recommended.
- Give staff a couple of days or a week in the facility to reacclimatise before partial opening to public. Invite staff feedback, concerns, and ideas for how to keep the facility safe for staff and patrons.
- Review existing policies to ensure they reflect operations during the pandemic.

STAGE TWO

Gear Up Slowly and Cautiously

Possibly Beginning June 19

Stage Two will allow additional businesses and services [including libraries] to reopen and resume operations with 2 metre physical distancing requirements and other public health guidelines in place. Size of permitted gatherings will increase.

Libraries are permitted to open but are not required to open. Your library should not open until you have a plan. Please share your plan with Peace Library System so we can support you.

- Reopen the facility to the public with limited patron access, continuing to offer curbside service where appropriate, especially for high-risk individuals.
- Consider limiting access to all or part of your physical collection; for example, closing your stacks to patron browsing.
- Do not establish services that promote lingering or gathering. Ask customers not to linger.
- Limit the number of people in your physical facility to 1 person per 10 m², as recommended by the Public Library Services Branch.
- Put in place specific hours designated for elders and other vulnerable populations.
- Consider shortened hours of operations to decrease staff interaction with public and allow materials handling to occur primarily during closed hours.
- Do not offer in-person programming other than passive programs, make-and-take crafts, guessing games, etc. if you cannot accommodate physical distancing. Do not offer any

programming that enables spread of virus (for example, singing). Continue online offerings and virtual programming.

- Create a display or social media posts, noting what staff did during the closure, and put it up in a prominent place.
- Consider recommending masks for admission into the facility.
- Consider having staff wear masks and other PPE when in contact with the public.
- Place hand sanitizer and reminder signs by places where people will be sharing resources: copiers, computer terminals, self-checkout systems, etc.
- Clean any high touch areas and items hourly and especially between shift changes.
- Limit staff to one person working a service desk at a time.
- Consider waiving fines and fees to reduce money handling by staff.
- Keep a minimum of seating on the public floor, configured to allow for physical distancing.
- Do not accept reservations for study rooms or meeting rooms.
- Make limited computer access available by appointment with time to sanitize stations in between appointments.
- Restore reference, holds, and interlibrary loan.
- Continue to process returns and deliveries after a 3-day quarantine period.
- Communicate with patrons on what to expect along the way.

STAGE THREE

Keep Going with the “New Normal”

Timing TBD

Some restrictions and enhanced protection controls will remain in place. Physical distancing restrictions will be maintained. Size of permitted gatherings will increase.

- Resume regular hours of operation.
- Continue to offer curbside service where appropriate, especially for high-risk individuals.
- Keep seating configured to allow for physical distancing.
- Reintroduce some programming in small groups and/or outdoors, as appropriate. Supplement with online offerings and passive programs.
- Open up study rooms to one or two people.
- Make computers accessible at socially distant intervals.
- Limit staff to one person working service desks at a time.
- Ask customers not to linger.

STAGE FOUR

Finally! Back to “Normal”

Timing TBD (likely not until a vaccine is widely available and physical distancing restrictions are fully lifted)

- Resume regular operations with full complement of services and programming.

- Return toys and other high-touch items to the facility.
- Be prepared for increased demand and need from community experiencing a recession and collective trauma.
- Evaluate your library's COVID-19 response, and work with your board to develop policies for the future.

THROUGH THE FIRST THREE STAGES, THE FOLLOWING BEST PRACTICES ARE RECOMMENDED.

Hygiene Practices

- Clean your hands often. Wash your hands with soap and water, vigorously rubbing together front and back for 20 seconds. If soap and water are not immediately available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizers, rubbing hands until they are dry.
- Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough or sneeze into a tissue and then immediately throw it away; use your arm or sleeve to cover if you do not have a tissue.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Frequently clean and disinfect high-touch/shared surfaces such as:
 - Doorknobs, light switches, toilet handles, faucets and taps, elevator buttons, railings
 - Phones, computers, remote controls, keyboards, desktops, conference room equipment, cash registers, surface counters, customer service counters
 - Staff rooms, kitchens, washrooms
- Stay home when you are sick. When you are sick or have cold- or flu-like symptoms, including fever, sore throat, cough, runny nose, or difficulty breathing, stay home, get plenty of rest, and check with a health care provider as needed.
- All employers in Alberta are being asked to consider implementing active daily screening of workers, volunteers and patrons for symptoms of fever, sore throat, cough, runny nose, or difficulty breathing. An example of a screening questionnaire can be found [here](#).

Physical Distancing Practices

During the work day, staff members are requested to:

- Avoid meeting people face-to-face. Staff are encouraged to use the telephone, online conferencing, email, or instant messaging to conduct business as much as possible, even when participants are in the same building. Unavoidable in-person meetings should be short, in a large meeting room where people can sit at least six feet from each other; avoid shaking hands.
- Eliminate unnecessary travel and cancel or postpone nonessential meetings, gatherings, workshops, and training sessions.
- Do not congregate in work rooms, staff rooms, or other areas where people socialize. Keep six feet apart when possible. Remove shared items where cross-contamination is possible, such as shared coffee and water stations, buffet style utensils, and snack bins.
- Permit workers to take breaks and meals outside, in their office or personal workspace, or in such other areas where proper physical distancing is attainable.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON HOW TO SAFELY REOPEN YOUR FACILITY AND RETURN TO PUBLIC SERVICE, PLEASE READ:

Workplace Guidance for Business Owners (Government of Alberta)

<https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/covid-19-workplace-guidance-for-business-owners.pdf>

PLSB - Public Library Pandemic Response - Relaunch Strategy FAQ

<https://www.peacelibrarysystem.ab.ca/Media/HQ-Sites/Peace/Files/PLSB-Public-Library-Pandemic-Response-Relaunch-Strategy-FAQ>

PLSB - Checklist for Resuming Public Library Service

<https://www.peacelibrarysystem.ab.ca/Media/HQ-Sites/Peace/Files/PLSB-Checklist-for-Resuming-Public-Library-Service>