

Muskoka Lakes Township Public Library
LIBRARY BOARD POLICY

Policy Type: Operational	Policy Number: OP-15
Policy Title: Public Health Emergency	Policy Approval Date: 04/14/26
Chairperson: V. Duke	Policy Review Date: 04/30

Intent:

To establish a policy to guide the Muskoka Lakes Public Library (herein after referred to as the Library) in the event of a public health emergency. Every effort will be made to ensure that the core business activities of the Library can be maintained with limited staff and reduced hours as determined by the Muskoka Lakes Public Library Board (herein after referred to as the Board) and the Library's Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

Regulations:

During a public health emergency, the Library may be required to take measures to help slow the spread of illness such as closing by order of township, district, local, provincial or federal health or government officials.

In accordance with the *Public Libraries Act* and the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, the Board is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for staff, volunteers and members of the public who use the Library. The Board also acts to protect and secure Library property.

Public health emergencies, including epidemics and pandemics, are addressed in this policy and complement the Library's Safety, Security and Emergencies Policy (OP-17).

Guiding Principles:

Library Closure

The Library may temporarily close or limit services because of a public health emergency if any of the following occur:

1. A mandate, order, or recommendation for closure is issued by the township, district, local, provincial or federal health or other government officials.
2. A Library employee has been diagnosed with a communicable illness and public health guidance indicates that operational changes are required.
3. The decision of the Board
4. The discretion of the CEO or designate
5. There is insufficient staff to maintain basic service levels or to reduce the possible spread of illness.

Authority and Responsibility

The CEO or designate is responsible for determining and implementing operational responses to a public health emergency, including closure, reopening, and service modifications.

The CEO or designate will determine:

- a) if the circumstances require the closure of the Library
- b) when to reopen the Library
- c) procedures for closure, reopening, and service delivery, including continuity of operations, communication, human resources, health and safety, and service access
- d) staff training requirements for safely providing service

If the CEO (or designate) is unable or unavailable to perform the requirements outlined in this policy, administrative authority for this policy and all Library operations shall be provided by the Board Chair (or designate).

Compliance with Public Health Directives

The Library will follow directives, orders, and recommendations issued by municipal, local, provincial, or federal public health authorities and government officials during a public health emergency.

Temporary Changes to Library Services

Temporary changes to Library services, access to facilities, programs, and operations may occur without prior amendment to this policy in order to respond to evolving public health conditions.

Related Documents

MLPL OP-01 User Code of Conduct
MLPL OP-05 Membership
MLPL OP-09 Emergency Closures/Inclement Weather
MLPL OP-13 Fee Schedule
MLPL OP-17 Safety, Security and Emergencies in the Library
MLPL OP-28 Internet Services and Technology
MLPL OPHR-02 Human Resource Management
Occupational Health and Safety Act
Public Libraries Act



Appendix A

Public Health Emergency Considerations

The following considerations are intended to guide the development of procedures by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or designate during a public health emergency. These may be adapted as required based on the nature of the emergency and direction from public health authorities.

1. Service Levels and Closure Options

The Library may implement varying levels of service depending on the circumstances, including:

- **Complete Closure** – no staff access to Library facilities
 - **Closure with Essential Services Only** – limited staff access for critical operations
 - **Partial Closure with Modified Services** – reduced or alternative service delivery models
- Alternative service delivery methods may be considered where appropriate.

2. Continuity of Operations

During an extended public health emergency, operational priorities may include:

- maintaining essential building functions (e.g. HVAC, plumbing, routine checks)
- ensuring continuity of payroll, financial processes, and administrative functions
- adjusting hours of operation and staffing levels as required

3. Communication

Communication with staff, users, and the public may include:

- updates via the Library website, social media, and email
- notification of program changes, cancellations, or service disruptions
- coordination with local media or community partners, where appropriate
- signage at Library locations outlining access, hours, and safety requirements

4. Human Resources

The Library's Human Resource policies will continue to apply.

Considerations may include:

- maintaining approved leave where possible
- supporting staff with caregiving or other responsibilities
- adjusting staffing levels or work arrangements
- Staffing and compensation considerations will be managed in accordance with the Library's Human Resource policies.

5. Health and Safety

In accordance with applicable legislation:

- appropriate health and safety measures may be implemented
- staff may be provided with necessary equipment and training
- procedures may be developed to support safe service delivery

6. Access and Capacity

Access to Library spaces and services may be adjusted as required.

Considerations may include:

- capacity limits within Library spaces
- procedures for entering and using the Library
- availability of services such as meeting room use

7. Technology and Internet Access

Access to technology services may be modified as needed.

Considerations may include:

- availability of public computers
- access to Wi-Fi within or outside Library facilities
- methods for providing technology assistance

8. Membership Services

Membership services will continue in accordance with Library policy, with procedures adapted as needed for registration and renewals.