



**CHENEY
LIBRARY**

Pandemic Operations Plan

Approved by Board of Trustees March 23, 2021

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	1
Introduction	2
Record of Changes	3
Background	4
Purpose	4
History	4
Essential Positions	5
Remote Work	5
Personal Protective Equipment	6
Staff Exposures	6
Protocols	6
Disinfecting	7
State of Emergency Policy	8
Phased Reopening Plan	8
Housing for Essential Employees	11
Administration Succession	12

Introduction

This plan has been developed in accordance with New York State Labor Law section 27-c, as well as in accordance with requirements applicable to Cheney Library. The plan includes the identification of essential positions, protocol for remote work for non-essential employees, procedure for maintaining an adequate supply of personal protective equipment, and contact tracing practices.

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As the Director of Cheney Library, I confirm that this plan has been developed, approved, and placed in full effect in accordance with New York State Labor Law section 27-c, to address public health emergency planning requirements.

By: Sara Yetto

Signature: _____

Title: Library Director

Date: _____

Record of Changes

Date of Change	Description of Change	Implemented by

Background

Purpose

This plan has been developed in accordance with the amended New York State Labor Law section 27-c, which requires public employers to adopt a plan for operations in the event of a declared public health emergency involving a communicable disease. This plan was developed for Cheney Library only. This plan is pertinent to a declared public health emergency in the State of New York which may impact our operations.

History

On March 11, 2020 the World Health Organization declared a pandemic for the novel coronavirus which causes the COVID-19 Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome. The health and wellbeing of our patrons, staff, and community are paramount. We encourage all employees and contractors to use [CDC Guidance for Keeping Workplaces, Schools, Homes, and Commercial Establishments Safe](#).

The fundamentals of reducing the spread of infection include:

- Using hand sanitizer and washing hands with soap and water frequently, including:
 - After using the restroom
 - After returning from a public outing
 - After touching/disposing of garbage
 - After using public computers, touching public tables, and countertops, etc.
- Practice social distancing of 6 feet when possible.
- If you are feeling ill or have a fever, notify your supervisor immediately and go home.
- If you start to experience coughing or sneezing, step away from people and food, cough or sneeze into the crook of your arm or a tissue, the latter of which should be disposed of immediately.
- Clean and disinfect workstations at the beginning, middle, and end of each shift.
- Other guidance which may be published by the CDC, the State Department of Health, or County health officials.

Due to the outbreak of COVID-19, library operations were reduced significantly. This included closing down physical operations and offering only virtual services. The initial closure of the library occurred on March 16. The Cheney Library Reopening Plan was approved by the Cheney Library Board of Trustees on June 2, 2020. The library

continues to move through the levels described in the Cheney Library Reopening Plan based on positive test rates in Rensselaer County, government guidelines, and information from the library system level.

Essential Positions

Listed below are essential positions which must be staffed on-site for the continued operation of the Library. While some work may be essential, some tasks can be accomplished remotely, and therefore do not need to be identified in this section. Non-essential employees and contractors able to perform their work tasks remotely will be permitted to do so. Essential staff will complete a COVID-19 self-screening sheet before the start of each on-site shift.

Custodial Workers

- Perform daily maintenance
- Clean and disinfect facilities

Library Associates

- Empty book drops.
- Maintain the collection
- Distribute resources and equipment

Library Director

- Process and pay bills
- Access physical files
- Sign checks
- Retrieve and reply to mail
- Empty book drops
- Maintain the collection

Property Maintenance Workers

- Plow parking area
- Clear walkways

Remote Work

If possible, opportunities will be presented for staff to work remotely and/or outside of regular operating hours as a method of limiting exposure. All staff are expected to follow the schedule assigned to them, and to track their hours. Hours worked in addition to those scheduled require approval in advance from the Library Director.

Employees working remotely will be expected to protect library and patron information accessible from their home office. The Library may provide the employee with supplies or equipment necessary to perform work duties from home; these decisions will be made by the Library Director on a case-by-case basis.

Personal Protective Equipment

Personal protective equipment (PPE) plays a vital role in reducing the spread of infectious disease, as well as maintaining the health and safety of our employees and contractors. PPE includes:

- Masks
- Face shields
- Gloves
- Disposable gowns and aprons
- Cleaning supplies*

* Cleaning supplies are not PPE; however, cleaning supplies are necessary for disinfecting surfaces. Such supplies include hand soap and hand sanitizer. These supplies have been listed as PPE, as they are vital to protecting employees' and contractors' health.

Protocol for providing PPE is as follows:

1. Identify a need for PPE: This is based upon employee duties and location of work
2. Obtain PPE: The amended law requires public employers to provide at least two pieces of each required type of PPE to each essential employee and contractor during any given work shift for at least six months. Supplies will be purchased in bulk.
3. Store PPE: PPE will be kept on location in an area which allows safe long-term storage. Employees and contractors will always have immediate access to PPE. Usage of PPE will be monitored by the Library Director to ensure a two-month supply is always available.

Staff Exposures

Protocols

All protocols related to staff exposures were established using CDC guidelines.

- A. **If employees or contractors are exposed to a known case of communicable disease that is the subject of the public health emergency:**
- a. Potentially exposed employees or contractors who do not have symptoms should remain at home or in a comparable setting and practice social distancing for 10 days if they have received a negative test result and 14 days if they have not received a negative result.
 - b. The Library will follow current CDC and public health guidance for the communicable disease in question. As possible, employees will be permitted to work remotely during this period of time if they are not ill.
- B. **If an employee or contractor exhibits symptoms of the communicable disease that is the subject of the public health emergency:**
- a. Employees and contractors who exhibit symptoms in the workplace should be immediately separated from others and sent home with a recommendation to contact their physician.
 - b. Employees and contractors who exhibit symptoms outside of work should notify the Library Director and stay home, with a recommendation to contact their physician.
 - c. Employees and contractors will not return to work until they have met the criteria to discontinue home isolation per CDC/public health guidance and have consulted with a healthcare provider.

If the disease in question is other than Contagian, CDC and other public guidance shall be referenced.

Disinfecting

If an employee or contractor has tested positive for the communicable disease that is the subject of the public health emergency:

1. Apply the steps identified in Item B, above, as applicable.
2. Close off areas occupied for prolonged periods of time by the subject employee or contractor.
 - a. CDC indicates that a period of 24 hours is ideally given before cleaning. If this time period is not possible, a period of as long as possible will be given. CDC/public health guidance for the disease in question will be followed.
 - b. Any common areas entered, surfaces touched, or equipment used will be cleaned and disinfected immediately.

3. Identification of potential employee and contractor exposures will be conducted.
 - a. If an employee or contractor receives a positive test result, all contacts will be informed of possible exposure. Confidentiality will be maintained in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
 - b. Apply the steps identified in item A, above, as applicable, for all potentially exposed employees or contractors.

The Library will follow CDC/public health recommendations and requirements and maintain contact with our local public health office for guidance and support, as necessary.

State of Emergency Policy

In a state of emergency, this policy will take precedence and override conflicting policies in order to preserve and ensure the safety of the library's staff and patrons:

Restriction of library services and operations will be determined in accordance with any applicable executive orders from the state and local government and executed by the Library Director in coordination with the Library Board of Trustees.

During a state of emergency, the administration is to create a continuation of services plan that outlines these restrictions and describes a plan for possible alternate service delivery methods.

Administration will communicate necessary operational changes to the staff, patrons, and the public as quickly as possible and as safety allows.

Phased Reopening Plan

New York State is requiring that every entity create a Safety Plan describing how it will work to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Cheney Library's safety plan, titled Cheney Library Reopening Plan, is presented below.

Level 1: Community Communication and Initial Staff Training

- Communicate actively with library patrons, staff, community partners, and volunteers about reopening plans
- Develop State of Emergency Procedures Authorization Policy

- Conduct regular virtual board and committee meetings
- Secure staff protective gear and cleaning supplies
- Maintain regular contact with the library system
- Share recent laws affecting public libraries (executive orders, Matilda's Law, Family First Act, CARES Act, etc.)
- Remote staff training and projects
- Protocols established for staffing, cleaning, interaction with the public
- Make sure all staff know what to do if they or someone in their household gets sick
- Review staff sick leave/call in policies and procedures with all staff
- Encourage digital documents whenever possible to minimize handling of the public's physical material
- Develop a social media presence

Level 2: Building Cleaning and Reorganizing

- Cleaning crew come in prior to staff returning to deep clean the library
- Cleaning checklist for regular cleaning throughout the day
- Remove all high touch, non-transactional materials, including toys and games
- Reorganize all public and staff furniture and collections for transactional service and physical distancing recommendations
- Extend due dates to minimize necessary library transactions
- Establish a quarantine protocol for all returned materials
- Establish a quarantine/cleaning protocol for incoming materials from vendors, USPS, and other delivery services
- Create signage for all new procedures, collections, and changes to building
- Reduce clutter on service desks (clipboard, paper, pens, etc.)
- Install brightly-colored tape on floor to remind people of physical distancing
- Install plexiglass "sneeze guard" at service desk
- Book drop return only
- Quarantine all books for at least 96 hours after being returned
- Secure extra delivery bins from the system
- Coordinate with contractors to begin construction projects
- Contractors sign in with a librarian upon entering the library to assist in contact tracing

Level 3: Staff Return to Library for In-Person Training

- Train/reinforce procedures regularly
- Non-medical masks required
- Gloves available for those who wish to use them

- Conduct constant staff training on the proper use and disposal of masks and gloves
- Regularly train and reinforce hand washing and all other hygiene protocols
- Only allow staff in the building who are supposed to be in the building according to their schedule to assist in contact tracing
- Retain all staff work schedules (digital or in paper) to assist in contact tracing
- Continue to encourage staff working from home wherever appropriate to reduce the number of staff in the library building as necessary
- Develop “What happens if…” guidelines and talking points for some possible scenarios involving patron behavior, ignoring rules, arguing about new policies, etc.
- Develop protocols and procedures to manage delivery material at your library.
- Library staff receive and process delivery materials, familiarize themselves with new protocols and procedures.
- Resolve the current hold shelf, including possible outreach to current hold patrons to determine if material is still wanted and to inform patrons of the library’s current plans for checking out physical material.

Level 4: Reintroducing Library Circulation Services - No Patrons in the Building

- Open book drop to begin accepting returned material
- UHLS delivery service starts up again for all libraries with adjustments to schedules and procedures to maximize “contactless” delivery and to conform to shortened hours schedules.
- UHLS will quarantine all interlibrary delivery materials for a minimum of 96 hours at the system office to ensure all deliveries coming from other libraries through delivery are clean and ready to process immediately when they arrive at the library.
- Override/waive any financial transactions until later levels of service
- Implement new limited hours
- Curbside service and homebound services
- Start running pull list for locally owned items/local patrons first

Level 5: Limited Opening of Library to the Public

- Library open at 50% capacity
- Patrons allowed 20 minutes in the library for transaction only
- Continue with virtual programming
- No public meetings or in-person programming
- Staff-facilitated copy/scan/fax services with cleaning protocol between each use
- 2 public computers only with cleaning protocol between each use

- First hour of each day is reserved for curbside only
- Last hour of each day is reserved for cleaning
- No play spaces open
- Bathroom closed to the public until further notice
- No volunteers until regular library hours resume
- Newspapers returned to the front desk after in-house use

Level 6: Open to the Public for Limited Seating and Extended Library Use

- No group seating available (special seating considered for some gatherings - ie. families and group home visits)
- Extended, but still time limited stay in the library
- 20-minute public computer restrictions continue
- No play spaces or toys available
- As government restrictions allow, gradually phase back in regular library use
- Gradual return to normal hours of operation
- Preset bag book sales
- Follow official government restrictions and guidelines for how many can gather

Level 7: Service Expands in Response to Changing Physical Distancing Guidelines

- Limited in-person programming reintroduced at some libraries
- Plan programming in shorter intervals (ie. monthly not weekly)
- Limited pre-registration for all programming
- Cleaning protocols in between all programs
- No drop-in programs
- Where physical distancing is challenging, do not offer program
- Allow community group meeting room use with an MOU/Agreement that groups will follow official guidelines, participant restrictions, social distancing requirements, etc.
- In-person library board meetings resume (provided that the board can gather in compliance with official guidelines)
- Gradual relaxation/modification of staff protocols
- Masks no longer required for staff/patrons as dictated by official directives
- Workspaces, public computing areas, and other public spaces may be gradually returned to traditional configurations in response to the relaxation of physical distancing guidelines
- Public restrooms made available

Housing for Essential Employees

There are circumstances within a public health emergency when it may be prudent to have essential employees lodged in such a manner which will help prevent the spread of the subject communicable disease to protect these employees from potential exposures, thus helping to ensure their health and safety and the continuity of Cheney Library's essential operations. Cheney Library will coordinate with Rensselaer County to help identify and arrange for these housing needs. The Library Director is responsible for coordinating this.

Administration Succession

There may be cases in which the Library Director is not able to carry out their duties in relation to their position. If the Director is unable to fulfill the duties of their office, the longest tenured members of the Cheney Library Board of Trustees will fulfill these duties until the Director returns from their leave of absence, or until the Board of Trustees appoints an interim Director, or a new Director.