

# GUIDANCE FOR LIBRARIES

## Overview

Under current Chief Medical Officer of Health Orders, businesses and entities are required to:

- implement practices to minimize the risk of transmission of infection among attendees;
- provide procedures for rapid response if an attendee develops symptoms of illness;
- ensure that attendees maintain high levels of sanitation and personal hygiene;
- comply, to the extent possible, with the [Workplace Guidance for Business Owners](#), this guidance, and any other applicable Alberta Health guidance found at: <https://www.alberta.ca/biz-connect.aspx>.

This document has been developed to support libraries in reducing the risk of transmission of COVID-19 among attendees (including workers, visitors and the public). The guidance provided outlines public health and infection prevention and control measures, specific to libraries.

## COVID-19 Risk Mitigation

<b>Public Areas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure attendees are aware of practices in place by posting <a href="#">signage</a> in highly visible locations or displaying messages on digital screens that outline:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Physical distancing requirements (2 metres)</li><li>○ Prohibitions on attendance by attendees who are sick or isolating</li><li>○ Hand hygiene</li><li>○ coughing and sneezing etiquette</li><li>○ Cleaning and disinfection practices</li><li>○ Library specific rules, which may include:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Any changes to capacity and/or hours</li><li>▪ Any restrictions on person items (e.g., reusable bags)</li></ul></li></ul></li><li>• Hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol should be available at library entrances and exits and throughout the library.</li><li>• Consider keeping children’s play areas closed.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Communal toys should be removed.</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>Layout and Flow</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To help ensure that attendees are able to maintain physical distancing requirements, the following strategies should be considered:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Restricting and directing the flow of attendees into, throughout and leaving the library (e.g., designate doors for entry or exit to avoid two-way traffic, designate hallways for one-way flow of attendees with signs and floor decals).</li><li>○ Assigning staff to assist with distancing in high-traffic areas</li><li>○ Removing or spreading out seating</li></ul></li></ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Limiting the number of attendees allowed in the library at any given time.</li><li>○ Supporting vulnerable populations with dedicated hours.</li><li>● Post signage about any restrictions regarding elevator use to ensure distancing requirements can be met, as appropriate</li><li>● Increase the cleaning of all high touch surfaces and common spaces, in particular:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Washrooms</li><li>○ Water fountains. Consider encouraging attendees to bring their own water bottle or provide single use drinking vessels</li></ul></li><li>● Develop policies for staff <a href="#">masking</a>; consider masking policies for attendees.</li></ul>
<b>Check-out and Returns</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Consider installing acrylic shields (or equivalent) at desks, counters or points of contact between the public and library staff.</li><li>● Employ the use of self-serve checkout and return services as much as possible.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Place hand sanitizer stations and sanitizing wipes near each station.</li><li>○ Monitor use and frequently disinfect high touch surfaces.</li></ul></li><li>● If not already used, consider options for the public for borrowing materials, such as:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Accessing e-books and other virtual library borrowing services.</li><li>○ Browsing library catalogues online at home.</li><li>○ Encouraging the use of “holds” to reserve materials to reduce the amount of time people spend in the library.</li></ul></li><li>● Consider offering curbside pickup for on hold items, or if available, consider delivery or drop off services for items to residences.</li><li>● Libraries should store all returned materials in a dedicated space for 72 hours and prevent handling the materials during that period.</li><li>● Staff handling returned materials should always follow hand hygiene practices.</li></ul>
<b>Programming for the Public</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● One-on-one library services may continue with appropriate physical distancing and barriers.</li><li>● For adult in-person, group programming (e.g., book clubs, fundraisers, classes, workshops):<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Physical distancing (2 metres) must be applied for participants not from the same household</li><li>○ Consider limiting the number of participants</li><li>○ Consider hosting online or virtual activities.</li></ul></li><li>● Programming for children may operate in adherence with the <a href="#">Guidance for Day Camps</a>.</li></ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Computers used by the public should be cleaned and disinfected between each use.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Consider options to assign computer time to an individual, scheduling cleaning time between users.</li><li>○ Place hand sanitizer stations and sanitizing wipes at each computer.</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>Workplace</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop a rapid response plan in case an attendee falls ill with COVID-19 related symptoms.</li><li>• Ensure employees have access to hand sanitizer as required.</li><li>• Allow staff to wear masks if preferred.</li><li>• Stagger staff arrival and departure times, lunch times, breaks and meetings to reduce the number of individuals in one place at a given time.</li><li>• Designate lockers and storage spaces to individual workers.</li><li>• Provide staff with training on library practices, such as:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ New policies and procedures related to COVID-19, such as a response plan for if an attendee falls ill.</li><li>○ Physical distancing, updated check-out processes, and hygiene practices.</li><li>○ Updated programming policies.</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>Cleaning and Disinfecting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In addition to the cleaning and disinfection guidance found in the <a href="#">Workplace Guidance for Business Owners</a>, libraries should:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Clean high-traffic areas, checkouts (self-serve or staffed) and high-touch surfaces more frequently.</li><li>○ Keep washrooms (staff and public) clean and well-stocked with soap and paper towels.</li><li>○ Provide ample waste disposal options in both public and staff-only areas.</li><li>○ Line waste containers with plastic bags for safer garbage disposal.</li><li>○ Ensure library hours allow a deep clean of the entire library each day.</li><li>○ Make sure staff are properly trained on the safe use and disposal of masks, including how to put them on and take them off safely.</li></ul></li></ul>