

GUIDANCE FOR LIBRARIES

Overview

Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH) Order 25-2020 requires businesses and entities 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 any applicable Alberta Health guidance found at: alberta.ca/biz-connect.aspx.

Where any part of this guidance is inconsistent or in conflict with enhanced or stronger public health restrictions set out in another CMOH Order, the enhanced or stronger public health measures would prevail. Operators are also required to follow the [General Operational Guidance](#) and any other applicable CMOH orders.

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

In all settings, it is important that measures are implemented to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. This includes, but is not limited to ensuring: physical distancing, barrier use (where appropriate), proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette, enhanced cleaning and disinfecting, records management and building maintenance (e.g., ventilation).

COVID-19 Risk Mitigation

General	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Libraries are currently closed to in-person customer attendance.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Dropping-off and picking-up books and other materials from a counter in a “take-out” or curbside pick up fashion is permitted.• All attendees (including patrons picking up or dropping off library materials, staff and contractors) must stay 2 metres apart at all times unless they are part of the same household, and wear masks at all times in all indoor public areas and workspaces in the library.• Gift shops (retail) and cafes (food service and sales) in libraries may open to public access while the library remains closed, but must follow current restrictions, the General Operating Guidance, the Guidance for Retail Businesses and the Guidance for Food Service and Sales.• Operators must have plans for a rapid response if an employee becomes symptomatic while in the library. For more information on what this must include, see the General Operational Guidance.
Facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Operators should place hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol in convenient locations throughout the facility for staff use.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Place hand sanitizer in locations where the public may access “take-out” services (e.g., entranceways, counters).● Wherever possible, have entrances and exits separated to reduce congestion and support physical distancing.● Operators must enhance cleaning and disinfecting practices as described in the COVID-19 General Operational Guidance.● Operators can make water fountains available for attendees to use following the General Operational Guidance.● Operators must ensure that ventilation systems are operational and functioning optimally. Refer to the General Operational Guidance for more information on ventilation.
Check-out and Returns	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Store all returned materials that cannot be cleaned and disinfected in a dedicated space for 24 hours and do not handle these materials during that period.● Staff and volunteers should use hand hygiene before and after handling returned materials.● Library operators are encouraged to continue offering options for borrowing and returning materials such as:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Offering E-books and other virtual library borrowing services.○ Offering curbside drop-off and pick-up of books and resources.
Programs for the Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Adult, in-person, group recreational programming (e.g., book clubs and fundraisers) is not permitted in this Step.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Online or virtual activities may be hosted as alternatives.● Libraries can host, or be accessed by, youth group recreational programs for individuals 18 years or under, as described in the Guidance for Sport, Fitness and Recreation.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Participants must make an appointment or reservation in advance to attend youth group recreational programs.○ All participants must wear facemasks and be 3 metres’ physically distanced from each other.

This document and the guidance within it is subject to change and will be updated as needed.

Last Revised: April 2021