

## **Emergency, Urgent, and Difficult Situations, and Evacuation Procedures Policy**

All staff and board members should possess and carry with them at all times the Pocket Response Plan containing essential contact information and procedures  
All staff should know the locations of all exits, fire alarm pulls, and fire extinguishers and be familiar with the evacuation routes for the building.

### **EMERGENCY SITUATIONS REQUIRING EVACUATION**

Emergency situations are instances in which life or property is in immediate danger and help is required from an emergency agency, such as police, fire, or ambulance.

Fires or the presence of bombs or other bio-hazardous/harmful materials—as well as threats regarding any of these dangers—require immediate evacuation.

### **Evacuation Procedures**

The primary objective of the staff must be to clear the building as quickly as possible in a safe and orderly manner.

1. **Call 911 and/or pull fire alarm**—If you observe a fire or other building emergency.
2. **Inform and evacuate patrons**—Whenever a fire alarm sounds, staff persons at each service desk should search the area, telling all patrons to evacuate the building by the nearest exit in a calm and orderly fashion.
3. **Non-cooperative patrons**—If a patron refuses to leave the building, notify rescue personnel of their location once you have safely exited the building.  
If you are in danger, you are to exit immediately; no employee is expected to risk his/her own life and health to facilitate an evacuation.

#### **4. Disabled visitors**—If you need to assist someone with a disability:

- Take the person to the nearest Emergency Exit stairwell (see Exit Routes below).
- Inform the person with the disability that he/she is now in an engineered fire safe stairwell, and that you are going to get assistance.
- Proceed down the fire stairwell and inform fire or police officials that there is a disabled person in the stairwell.

#### **5. Elevator Procedure**

If the fire alarm is sounding, the elevator will stop wherever it happens to be. It must be recalled to the main floor (by the front door) by using the emergency elevator key. Emergency keys for the elevator are located in the key box in the staff processing office, at the Children's Desk, at the Information Desk, and in the Director's Office.

The elevator will not operate in case of a power outage. If a patron becomes stuck in the elevator, call the fire department immediately to safely release them. Do not attempt to free anyone from the elevator yourself.

If the alarm button in the elevator is pushed it will call Safeco Alarms 338-4440. The alarm company will ask the person in the elevator the nature of the emergency. If it is pressed accidentally, stay in the elevator to talk to the security company to let them know it is a false alarm. If the security company asks for password, it is “carnegie”

**Exit Routes**—If safe:

- Circulation Area: Through Emergency Exit located next to History Room, proceed down the fire safe stairwell and exit the building. Alternate Route—
  - Down the stairs to the main exit. Circulation desk clerk is responsible for this room including upstairs bathroom and atrium.
- Information Room: Rear Emergency Exit; proceed down the fire safe stairwell in the back of the building and exit the building. Alternate Route— Down the stairs to the main exit. Info desk clerk evacuates all patrons in that room and the small study room.
- Children’s Area: Rear Children’s Room Emergency Exit; proceed through the fire safe stairwell and exit the building. Alternate Route— Upstairs to the main exit. Children’s desk clerk evacuates children’s and teen rooms.
- Community Room, Lower Gallery, Downstairs Restrooms and Staff Room: Proceed through Community Room Emergency Exit through the fire safe stairwell and exit the building. Alternate Route—Up stairs to the main exit. Fourth staff person recalls elevator to the main floor and evacuates these areas.

**6. Close Doors**—The last staff member to exit from an area should make sure all doors are securely closed. Staff should monitor the front door to insure that no patron re-enters the building until responders give the “all clear.

**7. Direct evacuees to safe area outside**—As visitors and staff exit the building direct them to the benches in the back of the library. The benches are a safe distance from the building and away from the fire, smoke, or danger zone.

**8. Take attendance**—Once employees are assembled outside, the Library Director, Assistant Director, or senior staff member should take a roll call and determine if all employees are accounted for and then report any missing employees to emergency responders.

**9. Follow directions of emergency responders**—Do not re-enter the building until the onsite fire or police department provides the “all clear.” Once library staff has returned to their stations, patrons can be allowed back into the building.

**10. False Alarms**—

- If the fire alarm is pulled for any reason, the fire department will respond. **Staff must proceed to evacuate the building whether they believe it to be a false alarm or not.**

## **THREATS OF VIOLENCE**

Violent situations are instances when aggressive behavior is directed toward staff, other people or property. In any situation involving violent behavior, the safety of people is of primary importance and protection of property of secondary importance.

If there is a threat of violence, staff members should immediately pull one of the panic buttons to summon the Saugerties Police Department. (This is a silent alarm). Panic buttons are located under the Circulation Desk, Information Desk, Children's Circulation Desk, and the Children's Office. If away from the panic buttons, staff members should call 911.

### **When to call 911**

1. If there is an emergency or you think there might be an emergency developing.
2. If you or others are threatened.
3. If library property is threatened.
4. If there is immediate danger of violence.
5. If you observe criminal behavior, or if a patron reports criminal behavior to you.
6. If a supervisor or person in charge is not available and a problem is serious.
7. If every reasonable effort to obtain a person's compliance with the rules has failed and the person has refused to leave the library or has become confrontational.

### **When to pull a panic button**

The panic buttons should only be used when there is an immediate threat of violence or harm and there is no opportunity for staff to call 911. (The police are better equipped to help in an emergency if the 911 dispatcher can assess the situation.)

Procedures:

1. Do not attempt to confront or overpower the person or persons. Try to get staff and other people out of the way and to safety immediately. Pay particular attention to the safety of children and disabled persons.
2. Notify the person in charge as soon as possible if she or he is not in the immediate vicinity.
3. Do not attempt to stop the person(s) from leaving the building.
4. If safety allows, make sure that staff and any other witnesses remain in the building until the police arrive.
5. If the person(s) has/have left the library when the police arrive, provide as much information as possible including a full description.
6. File an incident report.

When calling 911:

7. State your name and say that you are calling from the Saugerties Public Library, 91 Washington Avenue..
8. Briefly, but clearly, explain the problem.

## **SHELTER-IN-PLACE/LOCKDOWN PROCEDURES**

The atmospheric release of bio-hazardous or other harmful materials, external violent situations, and other outdoor threats including tornados may require immediate Shelter-In-Place. This is a precaution aimed to keep staff and patrons safe while remaining indoors. Generally, Shelter-In-Place and Lockdown notifications come from local authorities.

1. Ask patrons to stay in the building and NOT leave for their safety.

2. Bring all staff members and patrons to the downstairs Gallery (near the restrooms).
3. Lock all exterior doors.
4. In Lockdown do not allow anyone to enter the building.
5. Monitor the radio, TV, and Internet for the official all-clear announcement.
6. All staff members and patrons are to remain in the Shelter-In-Place area until the all-clear announcement.

### **MEDICAL EMERGENCIES**

In the event of an injury or other medical emergency, Staff members should immediately call 911.

#### **In case a person loses consciousness:**

#### **Immediately call 911!**

The library is equipped with an AED machine located in the hallway just outside the Information Room door.

1. Tap the person on the shoulders and ask if they are okay and determine if they are breathing. If breathing is not normal, or you cannot see it, roll the person onto their back and begin chest compressions. Tell someone else to get the AED machine. Once you begin CPR do not stop, so work in a team and switch before you are exhausted. Perform 100 compressions per minute, 2” deep.
2. Get someone to help by cutting away the person’s shirt.
3. When the AED machine is turned on it will give instructions for attaching pads to the chest and continuing CPR.

### **URGENT SITUATIONS**

Urgent situations, for purposes of this document, are instances that require immediate attention of a person in charge or a library board trustee. Urgent situations include, but are not limited to, plumbing problems, power outages, emergency closings, and building or grounds problems that need immediate attention. Urgent situations also include health or safety issues that are not emergencies as defined above.

#### **Procedures**

In an urgent situation, call, in this order:

- Director
- Assistant Director
- Librarian 1
- Children’s Specialist
- Board President
- Any other Library Board trustee not already listed above

#### **Power Outages:**

The elevator will halt operations during a power outage. In case of a power outage, staff should immediately check to see if anyone is trapped inside the elevator. If so, immediately call 911 and ask for the fire department to come and release them.

In case of a power outage lasting more than 15 minutes, staff should close the library.

### **Suspicious items**

A suspicious item, for purposes of this document, may be a package, container, bag or other item delivered to, left in, or found in or near the library. It may be of unknown or suspicious origin or may contain suspicious or unrecognizable substances.

If you feel suspicious, uncomfortable or threatened by an item found in or near the library, treat it as a suspicious item and follow the procedures below.

1. Do not open the package or explore its contents.
2. If any individuals touched the package, contents or substances in the package, instruct them to wash their hands immediately.
3. Step away from the item, clear employees and patrons from the immediate area, and notify the police and postal inspector or delivery agency (if package was delivered).
4. File an incident report.

### **BODILY FLUID SPILLS**

Incidents resulting in spillage of body fluids including blood should be reported to the person in charge as defined above. The custodian, John Drews, (Phone number 845-750-2026) is designated to clean up bodily fluid spills.. If the spill occurs in a restroom, immediately place an “out of order” sign on the door and notify the custodian.

If staff is cleaning bodily fluids they should use one of the Universal Precaution Kits that are located in the processing office.

In case of questions, call the Ulster County Department of Health, at (845) 340-3150.

### **DIFFICULT SITUATIONS**

Difficult situations are instances that are challenging or uncomfortable, may involve confrontation, and may escalate into an emergency situation. Difficult situations include, but are not limited to, instances involving confrontational, disruptive or suspicious individuals, unattended children, and people who challenge or violate the Patron Code of Behavior Policy or any other library policies. In general, unless this manual states otherwise, employees should refer the issue to the person in charge of the library.

#### **Procedures**

1. In a difficult situation, contact the person in charge of the library as defined above.
2. Be familiar with the rules and with the actions open to you as an employee.
3. If you are unsure about a situation or are uncomfortable approaching a patron about a behavior problem, report the situation to your supervisor or the person in charge of the library and let him/her take responsibility for the situation.
4. If a supervisor or the person in charge is not available, consult a fellow employee. Ask him/her for support.
5. Be polite but firm. Do not make serious accusations without proof.
6. If a patron fails to respond to a warning, tell that person what the consequences will be and follow through.
7. Inform the Director, Assistant Director or the person in charge about serious problems that arise. Routinely file an incident report when it is necessary to speak to patrons about problem behavior.

8. When a difficult situation becomes an emergency, immediately pull one of the panic buttons to summon the Saugerties Police Department.

### **Suspicious Behavior**

Suspicious behavior includes any behavior that seems odd or out of the ordinary, behavior that may be illegal or dangerous, behavior that may escalate into violence, or behavior that includes viewing or leaving suspicious or possibly illegal material on public computer screen.

### **Procedures**

1. Determine exactly what the behavior is. Notify the person in charge and describe the behavior.
2. Do not attempt to stop the person from leaving the building.
3. If the behavior involves suspicious or illegal material accessed via a computer, do not let any other patron use the computer until contacting the police.
4. If the person has left the library by the time the police arrive, provide as much information as possible including a full description.
5. File an incident report.

### **STAFF TRAINING**

All staff members will receive yearly training in the following areas:

- Implementing the Emergency, Urgent, and Difficult Situations, and Evacuation Procedures policy.
- Evacuation Procedures and Assignments.
- Location of universal precaution kit.

In addition to yearly staff training, periodic, unannounced, emergency and fire drills will be conducted at least four times per year.

Test panic buttons once per month

Test fire alarms once every six months

### **See Related Policies**

- Incident Report Form
- Inclement Weather Emergency Closing Policy
- Patron Code of Conduct
- Safe Child Policy

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