**Frequently Asked Questions**

**Facility and Services Reopening**

**Q: How often do bathrooms need to be cleaned?**

**A:** [Interim Guidance from the New York State Department of Health](https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/RetailMasterGuidance.pdf) indicates that all restroom surfaces (i.e. fixtures, door knobs, push plates, and switches) should be cleaned and disinfected at least once daily. However, the guidance notes that restrooms should be cleaned more often depending on frequency of use.

**Q: Do we have to keep restrooms open to the public by law?**

**A:** Yes, laws regarding public restrooms are set at the [state level](https://up.codes/viewer/new_york/ipc-2015/chapter/4/fixtures-faucets-and-fixture-fittings#403) and at this time no executive order has suspended this.

**Q: Should we close the shared staff kitchen?**

**A:** [Interim Guidance from the New York State Department of Health](https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/RetailMasterGuidance.pdf) indicates that you should prohibit shared food and beverages, encourage that staff bring their lunch from  home, and reserve adequate space for employees to observe social distancing while eating means. If your staff kitchen cannot accommodate social distancing then the

**Q: Are the NIEHS trainings recommended for staff? If we find outdated information can/should we edit them?**

**A:** This training is recommended for staff on the topics of COVID-19 and workplace safety, however, it should be coupled with training specific to your library on the PPE your library will offer as well as procedures for library services. The [Interim Guidance from the New York State Department of Health](https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/RetailMasterGuidance.pdf) indicates you should develop a communications plan for not only staff, but also visitors, and patrons that includes applicable instructions, training, signage, and a consistent means to provide employees with information. You may consider developing webpages, text and email groups, and utilize social media to achieve this.

**Q: Who should be included in the log of people who enter the library facility?**

**A:** The [New York State Department of Health’s NY Forward Safety Plan Template](https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/NYS_BusinessReopeningSafetyPlanTemplate.pdf) clarifies that the log should include library “workers and visitors, who may have close contact with other individuals at the work site or area; excluding deliveries that are performed with appropriate PPE or through contactless means; excluding customers, who may be encouraged to provide contact information to be logged but are not mandated to do so.”

**Q: Is there a log template our facility can use?**

**A:** There is currently no template. [Interim Guidance from the New York State Department of Health](https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/RetailMasterGuidance.pdf) specifies the log “should contain contact information, such that all contacts may be identified, traced and notified in the event an employee is diagnosed with COVID-19.”

**Q: What is the definition of close contact? If we wear masks, we don't have to worry about any tracing, correct?**

**A:** In [**Frequently Asked Questions**](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html) , the CDC defines close contact as “being within approximately 6 feet of a COVID-19 case for a prolonged period of time or having direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (e.g., being coughed on) without PPE.”

**Q: Are there samples of policies my library can use?**

**A:** MHLS is gathering policies at [www.midhudson.org/covid19](http://www.midhudson.org/covid19) as they become available.

**Q: Is it mandatory that we use disinfectants from List N? Due to difficulties obtaining many of these, can we use other products that claim similar disinfectant properties?**

**A:** In the [FAQ Regarding Disinfectants and Caronavirus](https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus/frequent-questions-about-disinfectants-and-coronavirus-covid-19), the CDC recommends “if you would like to use a product that is not on our list (List N), look for an EPA-registered product with ‘human coronavirus’ listed as a target pathogen on the product label, then look for the EPA registration number on the label to confirm the product is EPA registered and follow the label directions when using it. If a product doesn’t have an EPA registration number, then EPA has not reviewed any data on whether the product will kill public health pathogens such as viruses.”

**Q: Is there any guidance on handling cash transactions?**

**A:** [Interim Guidance from the New York State Department of Health](https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/RetailMasterGuidance.pdf) recommends “use of touchless payment options or pay ahead, when available. Minimize handling cash, credit cards, reward cards, and mobile devices, where possible.”

**Q: Is there any guidance on the public using copy machines?**

**A:** [Interim Guidance from the New York State Department of Health](https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/RetailMasterGuidance.pdf) suggests limiting objects shared by staff and customers, cleaning shared objects frequently, and providing hand sanitizer for people using sharing objects.

**Q: How long should materials be quarantined for?**

**A:** The [WHO Q&A on coronaviruses](https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/question-and-answers-hub/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses) found that the coronavirus can live on cardboard surfaces for 24 hours and plastic surfaces for 72 hours. The [Northeast Document Conservation Center](https://www.nedcc.org/free-resources/preservation-leaflets/3.-emergency-management/3.5-disinfecting-books) recommends quarantining library material for 72 hours.

**Q: Should our reopening plan be approved by our board and insurance company?**

**A:** As per the [Handbook for Library Trustees of New York State](http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/trustees/handbook/chapter07.htm), “…it is the board’s responsibility to reduce risk to a manageable level so that the service program or even the survival of the library is not threatened. A poorly managed incident, a lawsuit or a judgment against the library can have consequences for beyond the immediate impact of the event.” Board input on reopening plans, up to and including a formal resolution to accept the plans, is advised. If your insurance company is willing, their review of your plan would be a welcomed addition to your risk management efforts.

**Q: What steps can the library take to ensure water supply systems are safe?**

**A:** Libraries can follow the CDC’s guide [*8 steps to minimize Legionella risk before your business or building reopens*](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/building-water-system.html) to safely manage water systems.

1. Develop a comprehensive water management program (WMP)
2. Ensure water heater is maintained
3. Flush water system
4. Clean decorative water features
5. Ensure hot tubs / spas are safe for use
6. Ensure cooling towers are clean and maintained
7. Ensure safety equipment including fire sprinkler systems, eye wash stations, and safety showers are clean and well-maintained
8. Maintain water system

**Q: Are there guidelines for HVAC settings?**

**A:** The CDC’s[**Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers Responding to Coronavirus**](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html) recommends the following:

Consider improving the engineering controls using the building ventilation system. This may include some or all of the following activities:

* + Increase ventilation rates.
  + Ensure ventilation systems operate properly and provide acceptable indoor air quality for the current occupancy level for each space.
  + Increase outdoor air ventilation, using caution in highly polluted areas. With a lower occupancy level in the building, this increases the effective dilution ventilation per person.
  + Disable demand-controlled ventilation (DCV).
  + Further open minimum outdoor air dampers (as high as 100%) to reduce or eliminate recirculation. In mild weather, this will not affect thermal comfort or humidity. However, this may be difficult to do in cold or hot weather.
  + Improve central air filtration to the MERV-13 or the highest compatible with the filter rack, and seal edges of the filter to limit bypass.
  + Check filters to ensure they are within service life and appropriately installed.
  + Keep systems running longer hours, 24/7 if possible, to enhance air exchanges in the building space.

**Q: In the case of an employee testing positive for COVID-19, how will you trace close contacts in the workplace? How will you inform close contacts that they may have been exposed to COVID-19? How would we advise the public of any staff illness?**

**A:** [Interim Guidance from the New York State Department of Health](https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/RetailMasterGuidance.pdf) recommends building a proactive infection plan like the one in the MHLS Reopening Planning Template for when someone reports testing positive for or developing symptoms of COVID-19. Staff and visitors should be traced and contacted in cooperation with the local health authority, including using the contact log.

**Q: What tool(s) can our library use that enable staff to self-report their health status and management to verify that they have reviewed the report?**

**A:** Screening can be done using a survey form such as one developed through Google Forms, phone call, or text message. [Interim Guidance from the New York State Department of Health](https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/RetailMasterGuidance.pdf) requires daily screening of employees.

**Q: What do you do if you've been working with someone who becomes ill or living with someone who becomes ill?**

**A:** According to[Interim Guidance from the New York State Department of Health](https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/RetailMasterGuidance.pdf), if an employee has had close contact with a person with COVID-19 for a prolonged period of time AND is symptomatic, the employee should notify their employer and self-quarantine for 14 days if they test positive or do not get tested.

If an employee has had close contact with a person with COVID-19 for a prolonged period of time AND is NOT symptomatic, the employee should notify their employer and adhere to the following practices prior to and during their work shift, which should be documented:

1. Regular monitoring: As long as the employee does not have a temperature or symptoms, they should self-monitor under the supervision of their employer’s occupational health program.

2. Wear a mask: The employee should wear a face mask at all times while in the workplace for 14 days after last exposure.

3. Social distance: Employee should continue social distancing practices, including maintaining, at least, six feet distance from others.

4. Disinfect and clean work spaces: Continue to clean and disinfect all areas such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, and shared electronic equipment routinely.

**Q: How often must the library screen employees?**

**A:** [Interim Guidance from the New York State Department of Health](https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/RetailMasterGuidance.pdf) states “mandatory daily health screening practices must be implemented.”

**Can a library report that info to contact tracers?**

**A:** [Interim Guidance from the New York State Department of Health](https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/RetailMasterGuidance.pdf) requires libraries to “notify the local health department and DOH immediately upon being informed of any positive COVID-19 test result by an employee at their workplace.”

**Q: Should the library check the temperature of all employees before they enter the library?**

**A:** [Interim Guidance from the New York State Department of Health](https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/RetailMasterGuidance.pdf) allows the library as employer to check temperatures as part of screening, but it is not required.

**Q: Can the library require that a staff member be tested for COVID-19?**

**A:** [EEOC Guidance](https://www.eeoc.gov/wysk/what-you-should-know-about-covid-19-and-ada-rehabilitation-act-and-other-eeo-laws) allows employers to require staff to be tested for COVID-19

**Q: What is the procedure if a staff member answers "yes" on the daily screening, are they allowed in the library?**

**A:** [Interim Guidance from the New York State Department of Health](https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/RetailMasterGuidance.pdf) says “an employee who screens positive for COVID-19 symptoms should not be allowed to enter the worksite and should be sent home with instructions to contact their healthcare provider for assessment and testing. “