Guidance for Libraries

The following is intended as a plain language summary of rules during the COVID-19 emergency and does not replace the need to follow all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

- **Masks**
  - Provide cloth masks for employees; however, employees are welcome to use their own cloth masks as well.
  - Require employees and visitors over age 2 to mask while on site except only:
    - As necessary for the employee to eat or drink during break times. The employee should be seated at least 6 feet from others when taking off mask.
    - When seated alone in a private office or in a cubicle whose sides extend above the head of the employee.

- **Barriers**
  - Install plastic or plexiglass barriers at information and check-out desks to physically separate staff and visitors.

- **Isolate**
  - The Free Library: Follow the COVID Screening Policy for City Employees (policy version 1 issued June 5, 2020) which should be administered prior to the start of each onsite shift or workday. This document is included with this guidance and the self-administered assessment tool is available at phila.gov/employee-screener.
  - It is not necessary to conduct onsite temperature measurement for staff or visitors. If you measure temperatures, use a no-touch thermometer, and do not allow anyone with a temperature of 100.4 or higher to remain onsite.
  - Have sick leave policies in place so that employees excluded from the workplace do not lose earnings.
  - If an employee develops COVID-19 infection or has a positive test, businesses and other organizations must take additional precautions to stop the virus from spreading further, as described in Guidance for Essential Businesses and Organizations During COVID-19. Required precautions include calling PDPH at 215 685-5488 to report positive cases.

- **Distance**
  - Adjust work assignments to ensure employees can stay at least 6 feet from each other and from visitors throughout their shifts and use barriers as above where this is not possible.
  - Use floor decals or other visual cues to encourage spacing by visitors.

- **Reduce crowds**
  - Visitors will not be allowed inside the library.
  - Some access centers are located in libraries. They will continue to function according to the Access Center guidelines.
  - Encourage curbside pickup. Both the library staff and the guest should be masked during any interaction.
  - Encourage use of e-books and online resources.

- **Handwashing**
  - Place handwashing stations or hand sanitizer at entry, break rooms, and outside communal bathrooms for all staff and visitors with prominent signage promoting use.
  - Give staff hourly handwashing breaks.

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Call (800) 722-7112 to speak to a health care professional on the Greater Philadelphia Coronavirus Helpline
• **Clean**
  - Wipe down high-touch surfaces with disinfectant at least every 4 hours. See [CDC guidance](https://www.cdc.gov) for details.
  - Keep books and other materials that cannot be safely cleaned out of circulation for at least 3 days.
  - For electronics, such as tablets, touch screens, and keyboards:
    - Put wipeable covers on electronics and clean between each user.
    - Follow manufacturer’s instruction for cleaning and disinfecting.
    - If no guidance, use alcohol-based wipes or sprays containing at least 70% alcohol. Dry surface thoroughly.

• **Ventilation**
  - If possible, increase ventilation in the building by either:
    - Opening windows and/or doors on opposite sides of the building and using fans to blow outside air through the building OR
    - Optimizing ventilation provided by the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system by:
      - Having the HVAC system checked to assure that it is working properly. If it can be adjusted, the system should be set to provide at least 6 air exchanges per hour
      - Maximizing the amount of outside air circulated by the system
      - Installing filters with minimum efficiency reporting values (MERV) of 13, or the highest compatible with the filter rack. It is not necessary to use high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters or ultraviolet light irradiation systems.
      - Checking that the external air inlet duct is not blocked and that it is at least 15 feet from people.

• **Communicate**
  - Educate staff about strategies to prevent spread of COVID-19.
  - Post prominent signs at entrances:
    - Asking people who are sick or who have had contact with someone with COVID-19 within the past 14 days not to enter.
    - Encouraging people to cover coughs or sneezes.
    - Mandating physical distancing of at least 6 feet.
    - Mandating that all staff and visitors wear masks with reminders about how to do so appropriately (staff should be encouraged to enforce this practice for visitors).

See:
[Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools, and Homes](https://www.deptofphl.com)
[PA Guidance for Businesses Permitted to Operate during the COVID-19 Emergency](https://www.deptofphl.com)

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