

# Reopening Protocol for In-Person Services in Libraries

Effective Date: 12:01am on **Thursday, April 15, 2021**

**Recent Updates:** (Changes highlighted in yellow)

**4/14/21:** Libraries do not have to isolate returned library materials prior to re-shelving. Employees who are engage in re-shelving should wash their hands thoroughly after handling returned materials. At their discretion, libraries may resume rental of meeting rooms or other spaces for private events.

**4/2/21:** At the discretion of the operator and their local government authority, libraries may be open at 75% of maximum indoor capacity.

COVID-19 case rates, hospitalizations, and deaths continue to fall, but community spread still remains moderate. COVID-19 continues to pose a high risk to communities and requires all people and businesses to take precautions and modify operations and activities to reduce the risk of spread.

Due to Los Angeles County entering the “Orange Tier” of the State’s Blueprint for a Safer Economy framework, this protocol has been updated to lift some local activity-specific restrictions. Libraries should proceed with caution and adhere to the requirements in this protocol to reduce the potential spread of COVID-19 within their business operations.

This protocol outlines public health modifications to assist operators of libraries to remain in compliance with the County of Los Angeles Health Officer Order and Appendix B for Retail operations, thereby lowering the risk of exposure to both library patrons and employees. Library operators should also take the following actions prior to reopening for in-person services:

- Review and Complete the Protocols Checklist for Retail Establishments Opening for In-person Shopping: [Appendix B](#).
- Review [State Library guidance](#) for restoring in-person services in California’s libraries.
- At their discretion, Libraries may resume rental of library spaces for meetings, conferences and events, in compliance with the Public Health Protocol for Private Events (Meetings, Receptions, and Conferences).

Please note: Libraries may open with limited patron occupancy, offer sidewalk service only, or close at the discretion of the operator and their local government authority. Patrons are encouraged to check with their library to determine their open/closed status and current services offered prior to visiting. In compliance with the Safer at Work and in the Community Health Officer Order, libraries must limit maximum indoor occupancy/capacity to 75%.

This document may be updated as additional information and resources become available so be sure to check the LA County website <http://www.ph.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/> regularly for any updates to this document.

This checklist covers:

- (1) Workplace policies and practices to protect employee health
- (2) Measures to ensure physical distancing
- (3) Measures to ensure infection control
- (4) Communication with employees and the public

(5) Measures to ensure equitable access to critical services.

These five key areas must be addressed as your facility develops any reopening protocols.

**All libraries covered by this protocol must implement all applicable measures listed below and be prepared to explain why any measure that is not implemented is not applicable to the library.**

**Library Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Library Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date Posted:** \_\_\_\_\_

## A. REQUIRED RESTRICTIONS

- The number of people in the library should be low enough to ensure physical distancing but in no case more than 75% of the library's maximum indoor capacity.

Maximum number of people in the facility limited to: \_\_\_\_\_

- Library staff must strictly and continuously meter entry and exit of patrons at all entrances to the library in order to track occupancy and ensure compliance with capacity limits. Libraries may choose to limit the number of entrances that are open to the public during normal business hours to facilitate easier tracking. Libraries may also consider adopting an appointment system to limit the number of people in the building at a given time. Patrons arriving at the library are required to wear a face mask at all times while in the library or on the grounds of the library. This applies to all adults and to children 2 years of age and older. Patrons that have been instructed by their medical provider that they should not wear a face mask must wear a face shield with a drape on the bottom edge, to be in compliance with State directives, as long as their condition permits it. A drape that is form fitting under the chin is preferred. Masks with one-way valves must not be used. To support the safety of employees and other visitors, libraries should consider offering a face mask to visitors who arrive without them.
- [Entry Screening](#) must be conducted before patrons may enter the library. Screening must include a check-in concerning cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, fever or chills and whether the individual is currently under isolation or quarantine orders. These checks can be done in person or through alternative methods such as on-line check in systems or through [signage](#) posted at the entrance to the facility stating that visitors with these symptoms must not enter the premises.
  - o Negative Screen (Cleared). If the person has no symptom(s) and no contact with a known COVID-19 case in the last 10 days, they can be cleared to enter the library that day.
  - o Positive Screen (Not Cleared):
    - If the person has had contact with a known COVID-19 case in the last 10 days or is currently under quarantine orders, they may not enter and must be sent home immediately to quarantine at home. Provide them with the quarantine instructions found at [ph.lacounty.gov/covidquarantine](http://ph.lacounty.gov/covidquarantine).
    - If the person is showing any of the symptoms noted above or is currently under isolation orders, they may not enter and must be sent home immediately to isolate at home. Provide them with the isolation instructions found at [ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation](http://ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation).

- Patrons arriving at the library with children must ensure that their children stay next to a parent, avoid touching any other person or any item that does not belong to them, and should wear a face mask they are two years of age or older.
- Physical distancing of six (6) feet between patrons and employees should be maintained at all times. Areas used by the public (for example, building lobbies, study carrels, computer workstations) should be reconfigured to enable physical distancing of at least six feet. If necessary, consider closing every other computer workstation or study carrel if they cannot be moved.
- If feasible, libraries should implement a contactless return system (e.g., patrons drop them into library drop boxes or during regular hours in bins outside the library). Library employees who handle returned items should clean their hands thoroughly after handling returned items.
- Children's play areas are closed for use. Toys should be removed from the children's area or be covered or cordoned off if they cannot be removed.
- Libraries should consider using physical partitions or visual cues (e.g., floor markings, colored tape, or signs) to indicate where workers and/or employees should stand in order to maintain physical distancing. In areas where employees may interact with patrons at a distance of fewer than 6 feet, such as the circulation desk or the information desk, plexiglass barriers should be installed to minimize exposure.
- If applicable, elevator capacity should be limited to the number of people that can be accommodated while maintaining a 6-foot physical distance between riders. Consider elevator sizes, number of building floors, and daily number of employees and visitors to establish physical distancing guidelines appropriate for elevator riders.
- Public restrooms should be well-stocked at all times with hand soap, paper towels, tissues, and hand sanitizer. Employee restrooms are not available for patrons' use. Water fountains remain closed for public use.
- Hand sanitizer effective against COVID-19, tissues, and if feasible, contactless trash cans, should be made available to patrons throughout the library but especially in high-traffic areas, such as copiers, printer stations, circulation desks, computer terminals, self-check-out areas, and reception.

## B. EMPLOYEE PROTECTIONS

- All employees have been told not to come to work if sick. Employees understand to follow DPH guidance for self-isolation and quarantine, if applicable. Workplace leave policies have been reviewed and modified to ensure that employees are not penalized when they stay home due to illness.
- Upon being informed that one or more employees test positive for, or has symptoms consistent with COVID-19 (case), the employer has a plan or protocol in place to have the case(s) [isolate themselves at home](#) and require the immediate [self-quarantine](#) of all employees that had a workplace exposure to the case(s). The employer's plan should consider a protocol for all for all quarantined employees to have access to or be tested for COVID-19 in order to determine whether there have been additional workplace exposures, which may require additional COVID-19 control measures. See the public health guidance on [responding to COVID-19 in the workplace](#).
- Employees who have contact with the public or other employees during their shift (s) are offered, at no cost, an appropriate face mask that covers the nose and mouth. For more information, see LAC DPH COVID-19 Mask webpage at <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/ncorona2019/masks>. The mask must be worn by the employee at all times during the workday when in contact or likely to come into contact with others. Employees who have been instructed by their medical provider that they should not wear a face mask must wear a face shield with a drape on the bottom edge, to be in compliance with State directives, as long as their condition permits it. A drape that is form fitting under the chin is preferred. Masks with one-way valves must not be used.

- Entry screenings** must be conducted before employees, volunteers, delivery personnel, and contractors may enter the workspace, in accordance with the LACDPH [Entry Screening guidance](#). These checks can be done remotely or in person upon the employees' arrival. A temperature check should also be done at the worksite if feasible.
  - Negative Screen (Cleared). If the person has no symptom(s) and no contact with a known COVID-19 case in the last 10 days, they can be cleared to enter for work that day.
  - Positive Screen (Not Cleared):
    - If the person was not fully vaccinated<sup>1</sup> against COVID-19 and had contact with a known COVID-19 case in the last 10 days or is currently under quarantine orders, they may not enter and must be sent home immediately to quarantine at home. Provide them with the quarantine instructions found at [ph.lacounty.gov/covidquarantine](http://ph.lacounty.gov/covidquarantine).
    - If the person is showing any of the symptoms noted above or is currently under isolation orders, they may not enter and must be sent home immediately to isolate at home. Provide them with the isolation instructions found at [ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation](http://ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation).
- In the event that 3 or more cases are identified within the workplace within a span of 14 days the employer should report this cluster to the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health at (888) 397-3993 or (213) 240-7821 or online at [www.redcap.link/covidreport](http://www.redcap.link/covidreport). If a cluster is identified at a worksite, the Department of Public Health will initiate a cluster response which includes providing infection control guidance and recommendations, technical support and site-specific control measures. A public health case manager will be assigned to the cluster investigation to help guide the facility response.
- All employees must wear a face mask at all times except when working alone in private offices with closed doors or when eating or drinking. The exception made previously for employees working in cubicles with solid partitions exceeding the height of the employee while standing is overridden.
- To ensure that masks are worn consistently and correctly, employees are prohibited from eating or drinking except during their breaks when they are able to safely remove their masks and physically distance from others. At all times when eating or drinking, employees must maintain at least a six-foot distance from others. When eating or drinking, it is preferred to do so outdoors and away from others, if possible. Eating or drinking at a cubicle or workstation is preferred to eating in a breakroom if eating in a cubicle or workstation provides greater distance from and barriers between workers.
- Occupancy is reduced and space between employees is maximized in any room or area used employees for meals and/or breaks. This has been achieved by:
  - Posting a maximum occupancy that is consistent with enabling a distance of at least six feet between individuals in rooms or areas used for breaks; and
  - Staggering break or mealtimes to reduce occupancy in rooms or areas used for meals and breaks; and
  - Placing tables at least eight feet apart and assuring six feet between seats, removing or taping seats to reduce occupancy, placing markings on floors to assure distancing, and arranging seating in a way that minimizes face-to-face contact. Use of partitions is encouraged to further prevent spread but should not be considered a substitute for reducing occupancy and maintaining physical distancing.
  - Where possible, libraries should provide outdoor break space with shade covers and seating that ensures physical distancing.
- Employees are instructed to wear their face masks properly and to properly wash, replace, or sanitize their face mask frequently.

<sup>1</sup> People are considered fully vaccinated against COVID-19 two (2) weeks or more after they have received the second dose in a 2-dose series (e.g., Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna), or two (2) weeks or more after they have received a single-dose vaccine (e.g., Johnson and Johnson [J&J]/Janssen).

- Employers should consider where disposable glove use may be helpful to supplement frequent handwashing or use of hand sanitizer; examples are for employees who are screening others for symptoms or handling commonly touched items.
- Copies of this guidance have been distributed to all employees.

### C. MAINTENANCE PROTOCOLS

- The HVAC system is in good, working order; to the maximum extent possible, ventilation has been increased. Effective ventilation is one of the most important ways to control small aerosol transmission. Consider installing portable high-efficiency air cleaners, upgrading the building's air filters to the highest efficiency possible and making other modifications to increase the quantity of outside air and ventilation in offices and other spaces. See California Department of Public Health [Interim Guidance for Ventilation, Filtration and Air Quality in Indoor Environments](#) for detailed information. Please Note: Ventilation and other indoor air quality improvements are an addition to, and not a replacement for, mandatory protections including wearing face masks (except in certain high-risk environments that require using proper respiratory protection), maintaining at least six feet of distance between people, washing hands frequently, and limiting activities that bring together people from different households.
- Commonly used items should be sanitized regularly.
- Commonly used equipment should be sanitized before and after each use.
- High traffic areas such as distribution areas, circulation or help desks, break rooms, restrooms and other common areas are disinfected hourly, on the following schedule:
  - Distribution area \_\_\_\_\_
  - Circulation Desk \_\_\_\_\_
  - Help Desk \_\_\_\_\_
  - Break rooms \_\_\_\_\_
  - Restrooms \_\_\_\_\_
- Public restrooms are sanitized regularly using EPA approved disinfectants and following the manufacturer's instructions for use, on the following schedule:  
\_\_\_\_\_

### D. MONITORING PROTOCOLS

- A copy of this protocol, or if applicable, the facility's printed Los Angeles County COVID-19 Safety Compliance Certificate is posted at all public entrances to the facility. For more information or to complete the COVID-19 safety compliance self-certification program, visit <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/covid19cert.htm>. Facilities must keep a copy of the Protocols onsite at the facility for review, upon request.
- Instructional and informational signage is posted throughout the library regarding infection control, occupancy limits, physical distancing and the use of face masks. See the [County DPH COVID-19 Guidance webpage](#) for additional resources and examples of signage that can be used by businesses.
- Signage at the entry and/or where patrons line up should notifies patrons of options for and advantages of preordering (if available).
- Online outlets of the library (website, social media, etc.) should provide clear information about library hours, required use of face masks, policies in regard to preordering, pickup and return of library materials, and other relevant issues.

**E. MEASURES THAT ENSURE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO CRITICAL SERVICES**

- Libraries should consider implementing dedicated library hours for vulnerable populations, including seniors and those medically vulnerable have been instituted, if feasible, preferably at a time following a complete cleaning.
- Services that are critical to library patrons have been prioritized. Where feasible, continue to offer curbside pick-up of library items to all patrons.
- Libraries should make efforts to assure access to library materials for patrons who may have limited ability to use an online reservation system.
- Transactions or services that can be offered remotely have been moved on-line.
- Measures are instituted to assure access to goods and services for patrons who have mobility limitations and/or are at high risk in public spaces.

**Any additional measures not included above should be listed on separate pages, which the library should attach to this document.**

**You may contact the following person with any questions or comments about this protocol:**

**Library Contact Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date Last Revised:** \_\_\_\_\_