

Jasper County Public Library

COVID-19 Mitigation Plan

The health and safety of Jasper County Public Library (JCPL) employees is a top priority. Since the onset of the COVID – 19 pandemic JCPL has monitored and adjusted library operations and services based on and consistent with federal, state, and local health recommendations. The following mitigation plan has been developed and updated periodically to protect the health of both individual employees and the public. Further updates will be shared as their implementation date draws nearer and as details solidify. Generally speaking, we expect many of the restrictions on operations and conduct to lessen over time, though certain practices – particularly those related to handwashing and other personal and environmental hygiene – likely will become long-term or permanent aspects of our operations.

JCPL expects all employees to adhere to the safety measures set forth in this plan (and others that may be announced from time to time). Failure to support the health and safety goals listed below may lead to disciplinary action. This plan does not alter the at-will nature of JCPL employment. Given the nature and purpose of the library's efforts, this document may be updated and modified as new situations arise or new information becomes available. Employees will be notified of modifications to the extent and as soon as feasible.

The Management Team will monitor and implement this plan. Questions or suggestions are welcome and should be directed to the Business Office or the Director (preferably via phone or email, and – if in person – while maintaining social distance). JCPL may not always have an answer (immediately or at all), but will always do its very best to provide one.

I. Maintaining Social Distancing Recommendations

- A. JCPL requires social distancing of at least six feet between employees whenever feasible (e.g., excluding situations such as passing co-workers in a hallway or traveling past a co-worker's work space).
- B. JCPL may make changes in services, library hours, and schedules to maximize employees' ability to adhere to social distancing recommendations. Additionally, Plexiglas sneeze guards will be installed in staff and public areas to aid in mitigation.
- C. Employee schedules may be staggered to minimize the number of employees in a building with at least a 15 minute interval between team changes to avoid or minimize team interaction.
- D. All departments with fixed workstations will adjust work areas to adhere to at least a six foot distance.
- E. Employees will have a set schedule and anyone unable to work any portion of their schedule should speak with their supervisor in regard to the reasons why and to discuss the options available to them.

- F. Employees will not be in the building when their team is not scheduled except with prior approval of the Director. Social distancing must be maintained.
- G. Senior staff who are not scheduled at their building for their weekly hours will be responsible for completing their weekly hours using telecommuting as per Director parameters.
- H. Clerks and Pages will be scheduled as close to their normal hours as is possible.
- I. Janitors will be scheduled their full hours since they are unable to telework. However, like all employees, janitors are expected to maintain social distancing and utilize appropriate PPE and hygiene protocols.
- J. Employees should rely upon phone calls, texts, emails, and virtual meetings to communicate and work together to reduce face-to-face contact.
- K. Employees should work six feet away from their co-workers. If the nature of an assignment renders six-foot distancing impossible, notify and discuss with the manager on duty.
- L. Employees in small shared offices or close work stations will be moved to an alternate place in the building to work.
- M. Employees should enter and exit the library buildings moments or minutes apart as needed to maintain physical distancing. Do not congregate in physical proximity in connection with shifts starting or ending (or any other time).
- N. Strive to follow the CDC's recommendation to decrease social contacts in the workplace, such as in-person meetings and group lunches.
- O. One employee at a time may be in the staff lounge, and only to use the refrigerator and microwave. Wash hands immediately before and after handling shared appliances. Employees will bring their own dishes and utensils and will take them home at the end of each shift to be cleaned. Carry-in events and shared coffee pots are discontinued at this time.
- P. Any employee using the staff lounge must continue to keep the six foot physical distance requirement.
- Q. IT or Maintenance may be required to enter your building for repairs. Please be considerate and remain physically distant. IT and maintenance staff will wash their hands prior to and after repairs.
- R. Current library services will be limited or modified to ensure that proper social distancing between employees and patrons can be maintained.

- S. Patrons will be required to stay in their car during curbside service.
- T. Any patron services added will have minimal staff-patron interactions and will require physical distancing ability.
- U. Employees should complete incident reports regarding any patrons who repeatedly – and despite polite but clear verbal redirection – violate the social distancing requirements, face covering requirements or do not stay on the patron side of the Plexiglas sneeze guards.

II. Implementing Basic Infection Prevention Measures

- A. Employees will disinfect their work areas and high-touch surfaces at the beginning and end of each shift using paper towels and JCPL-provided disinfecting solution. High touch surfaces include such things as door handles and locks, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, sinks, shared kitchen surfaces, microwave handles.
- B. Employees will frequently and thoroughly wash and sanitize hands using CDC guidelines.
- C. Handwashing is always important but particularly important when changing between work activities, moving materials between co-workers and patrons, or processing the book drop. This is not an exhaustive list. Employees will wash hands before and after such activities to prevent cross contamination.
- D. Employees will actively refrain from touching their face – mouth, nose, and eyes – while at work.
- E. Employees will practice respiratory etiquette (e.g., sneeze or cough into the shoulder or inside elbow whenever possible, facial tissue if not possible, and into hands as a last resort, always followed by prompt hand-washing and any other appropriate clean-up).
- F. Employees will respect personal working spaces and not use co-worker's desk, phone, or workspace.
- G. Shared workspaces should be sanitized thoroughly between users and at the change of each shift using JCPL-provided solution.
- H. Employees should carry their own writing utensils.
- I. Employees will contribute to basic housekeeping practices including routine cleaning and disinfecting of shared surfaces, equipment, and other elements of the workspace.
- J. Non-essential doors are to remain open to avoid touching. Front and back doors should remain closed.

- K. Handwashing signs will be posted in all public and staff restrooms that reflect proper handwashing procedures.
- L. Soap and paper towel will be available at all sinks, including public restrooms, for handwashing.
- M. Hand sanitizer will be made available for staff and patrons as supplies allow.

III. Utilizing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- A. The library will follow local health department guidance and/or the Indiana Governor's Executive Orders in regard to face coverings. Face coverings are recommended for employees and patrons unless otherwise required by local and/or state officials.
- B. Employees are responsible for using face coverings properly and for keeping them clean in consideration of CDC guidelines.
- C. Face coverings should not hinder job performance.
- D. Signs will be placed at library entrances to alert patrons that face coverings are recommended or required in consideration of item A in this section.
- E. Social distancing should still be followed even while wearing face coverings or other PPE.
- F. Janitorial staff will receive priority access to gloves if supplies run short, especially when cleaning with harsh chemicals.
- G. Upon removal of any PPE, employees must wash hands thoroughly before touching anything else.
- H. Employees are encouraged to rely on frequent and thorough handwashing.
- I. Gloves must always be available in spill kits to aid in the clean-up, transportation, and disposal of potentially infectious blood or body fluid spills.
- J. Employees may wish to bring their own gloves, but improperly utilized gloves can be a greater source of contamination than bare hands. Employees wearing gloves can become complacent about following proper hand hygiene guidelines. Any employee that wishes to use their gloves at work must ensure frequent glove changes and handwashing before changing work activities.
- K. Used PPE of any type must be disposed of in lined trash receptacles (or tied/sealed plastic bags pending placement in receptacles). Employees who leave or discard of PPE improperly – including without limitation by leaving used PPE on the ground in the parking lot – will be disciplined.

IV. Responsibilities for Monitoring Individual Health, Wellness, and Contacts With Others (At and Outside Work)

- A. The library will post notices regarding the symptoms of COVID-19 in public and staff areas.
- B. All employees are responsible for monitoring how they feel and remaining alert to potential symptoms of COVID-19, which include cough, shortness of breath, and fever (among other possible symptoms). This is an ongoing obligation and specifically includes a conscious assessment immediately prior to each time an employee reports to work at a JCPL facility. By commencing work at any JCPL site, you are representing that you have self-assessed and are not currently experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.
- C. Employees are welcome (but by no means required or expected) to consider utilizing the free COVID-19 self-assessment available at:
<https://landing.google.com/screener/covid19>.
- D. If an employee does not feel well, exhibits any COVID-19 symptoms, or has a temperature above 100.4 (or feels feverish), the employee must stay or return home and notify their supervisor immediately. In such situations, employees need only inform their supervisor that they are experiencing symptoms associated with COVID-19 and the basic identification of each symptom (e.g., “shortness of breath” or “fever.”). Employees need not share further details when reporting to supervisors and supervisors should not solicit further details. The Business Office may seek limited follow-up information in appropriate cases.
- E. Employees who have had “close contact” (as defined by the CDC) with confirmed or probable COVID – 19 cases must stay or return home and notify their supervisor immediately. In such cases, employees will be required to quarantine and/or requested to test for COVID – 19 in accordance the most current CDC, state, or local health authority guidance. CDC’s definition of close contact is based on physical proximity and duration and can be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/contact-tracing/contact-tracing-plan/appendix.html#contact>.
- F. Employees are encouraged to follow the CDC’s recommendations on what to do if exhibiting symptoms (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/sick-with-2019-ncov-fact-sheet.pdf>) and how/when to quarantine following close contact with someone who has COVID – 19 (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html>).

V. Handling Library Materials

Handling materials is one of the most complex areas of operations during a pandemic due to the potential of virus transmission on shared objects such as books and DVDs. We will use data provided by the REALM study to guide our decision making.

Materials Entering JCPL Facilities from non-JCPL Facilities

- A. Employees handling materials as they enter a JCPL facility will wear gloves as supplies allow.
- B. Employees will remove items from book drops and leave in current status.
- C. Designated carts will be used for emptying book drops and will not be used for other activities.
- D. Items emptied from the book drop will be quarantined for 120 hours.
- E. Each library will designate a quarantine area for book drop materials that is away from staff work or travel patterns.
- F. Items will be placed on tables or on the floor in the designated quarantine space.
- G. For management of the quarantine, a slip will be taped to the table with the date items were placed in quarantine and date/time (120 hours from arrival) that materials will be available to be checked in.
- H. After 120 hours a designated cart (clean cart) will be used to transfer library materials to an area for check in.
- I. Once checked in, items are available for shelving or holds.

Couriered Materials

- A. Items that are transferred via the courier do not need to be quarantined as the item is either coming off the shelf of a sending library or has already been through quarantine at the sending library.
- B. Each library will designate a dispatch area for the use of the courier.
- C. The transport area must be away from staff work areas to minimize possible contact courier would have with co-workers.
- D. Each library location will establish a receiving area for courier deliveries to limit contact between delivery personnel and library staff.

VI. Cleaning and Disinfecting

- A. Cleaning removes germs, dirt, and impurities from surfaces or objects. Cleaning works by using soap (or detergent) and water to physically remove germs from surfaces.
- B. Disinfecting works by using chemicals or ultraviolet lights to kill germs/viruses on surfaces or objects.

- C. A combination of cleaning and disinfecting will be most effective in mitigating the COVID-19 virus.
- D. The library will follow CDC guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting facilities.
- E. The janitors are responsible for the daily cleaning and disinfecting of the library.
- F. The other employees are responsible for cleaning and disinfecting their work areas and /or shared work areas, supplies, and equipment as previously explained.
- G. Cleaning and disinfecting will take place at the end of each shift before a team leaves the building.

VII. Symptoms in the Workplace

- A. Employees who report or demonstrate symptoms upon arrival at work or who become sick during the day should immediately be separated from other employees and sent home. The current team supervisor will notify the Business Office immediately. The Director and/or Business Office will determine the length of time an employee will need to remain isolated and/or off work based on the facts and circumstances of each situation and according to the most current public health authority guidelines, including without limitation CDC Public Health Recommendations for Community-Related Exposure.
- B. People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. A list of symptoms is available on the CDC website. Certain symptoms that are common to other conditions may not require extended isolation and/or absence. However, any/all symptoms must be reported and will result in initial isolation as set forth in the preceding Paragraph A, with management determining the length of further isolation on a case-by-case basis.
- C. If a sick employee is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19, JCPL will follow CDC cleaning and disinfection recommendations.

COVID – 19 Vaccinations

- A. JCPL’s position regarding vaccinations is based on our overall commitment to health and safety and the information currently available during the uncertain and ever-changing landscape of the pandemic. More specifically, the Library has carefully considered: the role that vaccinations are expected to play in combatting the pandemic; the information currently available about COVID – 19 vaccinations’ effectiveness and potential effects in different groups and individuals; and the proximity in which we must necessarily come to others in the course of performing our jobs.
- B. We are **not** “mandating” or requiring employees to receive the COVID – 19 vaccination at this time. **However**, JCPL strongly encourages all who can safely get

the vaccine to do so, and we urge each individual employee to make their own informed decision, in consultation with their chosen health care provider(s).

- C. The effectiveness of the COVID – 19 vaccine is not guaranteed to be complete or immediate. Accordingly, because this plan is aimed at protecting the Library community as a whole, and again based on currently available information, an employee’s individual decision to receive (or not receive) a COVID – 19 vaccine will have no impact on any other provisions of this plan. As non-exhaustive examples, employees remain responsible for monitoring and reporting their symptoms at all times (see Section IV and VII above), maintaining appropriate distance from others (see Section I), and engaging in good personal hygiene and cleaning practices as to their persons and their surroundings (see Sections II-III, V-VI). Those experiencing symptoms consistent with COVID – 19 will continue to be isolated from the workplace as circumstances warrant based on recommendations by the CDC and/or state or local health authorities (see also Section VII(b) above).

Adopted May 11, 2020; revised June 8, 2020; revised September 14, 2020;
revised November 9, 2020; revised December 14, 2020; revised February 8, 2021