



Hingham Public Library

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Reopening Plan for Hingham Public Library

Introduction

The Hingham Public Library has developed the following plan to resume in-person services for patrons and Town residents. This plan should be considered fluid as we follow recommendations from State and local government, the Hingham Executive Health Officer, and specialists in the library field. This plan is presented as an overview not as a procedure manual, and may be updated as recommendations change. Decisions will be made in coordination with Town officials and the Hingham Executive Health Officer.

We have determined four phases that will gradually increase service offerings based on social distancing guidelines. These phases allow us to increase services when appropriate and also to take a step back if necessary. Although we anticipate that Phase 1 will begin on June 1, 2021, there are no time frames or durations to this and subsequent phases on purpose because each phase will expand when it is safe to do so. The phases are as follows:

Reopening Phases for Hingham Public Library	Phase Overview
<p>Library Phase 1: <i>Initiate services that emphasize limited in-person contact and services</i></p>	<p>30-minute time limit</p> <p>50% building capacity limit</p> <p>Browsing, checkout, limited computer use only</p> <p>Seating unavailable</p> <p>Meeting rooms and study rooms unavailable</p> <p>Self-service holds pickup and checkout</p> <p>Contact tracing and masks required for entry</p> <p>Programs and technology services offered online only</p> <p>No in-person meetings or tutoring allowed</p> <p>Hours limited for cleaning and disinfecting</p>
<p>Library Phase 2: <i>Begin gradual increase in building capacity, time limits, and seating availability</i></p>	<p>60-minute time limit</p> <p>65% building capacity limit</p> <p>Browsing, checkout, limited computer use only</p> <p>Seating limited to encourage social distancing</p> <p>Meeting rooms and study rooms unavailable</p> <p>Self-service holds pickup and checkout</p>

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	<p>Contact tracing and masks required for entry</p> <p>Programs and technology services offered online only</p> <p>No in-person meetings or tutoring allowed</p> <p>Hours limited for cleaning and disinfecting</p>
<p>Library Phase 3: <i>Expanded service and adaptation to the current health climate with continued increase in capacity, time limits, and seating availability</i></p>	<p>2-hour time limit</p> <p>80% building capacity limit</p> <p>Browsing, checkout, limited computer use, quiet study only</p> <p>Increased seating available</p> <p>Meeting rooms and study rooms unavailable</p> <p>Self-service holds pickup and checkout</p> <p>Contact tracing and masks required for entry</p> <p>Programs and technology services offered online only</p> <p>No in-person meetings</p> <p>Tutoring allowed in open spaces not designated quiet areas</p> <p>Increased hours as needed for cleaning and disinfecting</p>
<p>Library Phase 4: <i>Near full resumption of services</i></p>	<p>No time limits</p> <p>No capacity limits</p> <p>No contact tracing required</p> <p>Masks may be required pending public health recommendations</p> <p>Normal library business and hours of operation resume</p> <p>Full seating available</p> <p>Meeting rooms for in-person gathering and study rooms available</p> <p>In-person library programs and technology services resume</p> <p>Bookstore will reopen for business</p>

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Mandatory Reopening Safety Standards

The Library will follow the sector-specific protocols and best practices as developed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts that outline mandatory reopening [Safety Standards and Checklist for Libraries](#), including [Workplace Safety Standards for Libraries](#), [Libraries Protocol Summary](#), and [Libraries Checklist](#). The Library has established the following plan in response to the ongoing public health crisis, with the goal of making the health and safety of our patrons and staff our top priority while still delivering a high level of service to the community.

A public health crisis is defined by a state of emergency at the Federal, State or local level. These protocols and best practices will remain in effect until the public health crisis ends, reliable treatment is found for the disease, and/or a vaccine is developed and widely distributed. The Library will resume services in a phased approach when it is deemed safe to do so, under the guidance of directives provided by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, and in consultation with the local Board of Health and Town officials.

In order for the Library to begin a gradual and phased reopening, we must ensure that the following mandatory safety standards for Phase 1 are consistently met. Safety standards and protocols for subsequent phases will be based upon the current State guidelines available at that time and will be communicated prior to advancing to the next phase.

The following protocols are based on State guidelines and will apply to all subsequent phases subject to revised guidance by State and Local authorities:

Library Phase 1: *Initiate services that emphasize limited in-person contact*

Social Distancing, Time and Capacity Limits

- Face coverings will be required at all times for all workers and patrons, except where unsafe due to medical condition or disability, and therefore no eating or drinking will be allowed within the library, with the exception of staff in designated areas
- Patron entries and exits will be monitored and limited to the main building entrance, and occupancy will be limited at all times to the following:
 - 50% of the building's maximum permitted occupancy as documented in its occupancy permit on record with the municipal building department or other municipal record holder
 - No enclosed space within the building shall exceed occupancy of 10 persons per 1,000 square feet
- All occupant counts and calculations shall include patrons but may exclude staff and other workers
- Patrons will have a maximum of 30 minutes in the building per day for browsing, checkout, and limited computer use only

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- Ensure separation of 6 feet or more between individuals where possible:
 - Common spaces and high-density areas may be reconfigured where workers and patrons are likely to congregate (e.g., lobbies and workstations for patrons) to allow social distancing.
 - Physical barriers for staff service points, checkout desks, and public computer stations will be installed to establish 6 feet of separation
 - Visual social distancing markers will be installed on flooring and by signage to encourage patrons to remain 6 feet apart (e.g., lines outside of the library if applicable, checkout lines, lines to use the restroom)
- Directional pathways will be established to manage visitor flow for foot traffic, to minimize contact (e.g., one-way entrance and exit to rooms, one-way pathways). Signage will be posted and clearly visible regarding these policies
- Public computers use will be limited so patrons using workstations are spaced out at least 6 feet apart
- No public meetings, tutoring, or in-person library programs will be permitted, and meeting and study rooms will be unavailable for public use
- Seating will be removed or designated not in use, with the exception of computer chairs.
- Self-service holds pickup and self-checkout will be available in the main lobby for those not wishing to remain in the building to minimize in-person contact

Hygiene Protocols

- Patrons and staff will have access to handwashing facilities on site, including soap and running water, to encourage frequent handwashing
- Alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol will be available at the main entrance and patrons will be asked to sanitize their hands upon entry
- Hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes will be available on all floors of the building for patrons and staff to use
- Signage will be visibly posted throughout the Library to remind patrons and staff of hygiene and safety protocols
- All public computers and other shared technology and equipment accessible to multiple users must be wiped down and disinfected between uses. Patrons using library equipment will be provided disinfectant wipes at each workstation and will be required to wipe down equipment after use
- Books and other materials being returned will be subject to a 24-hour quarantine before being checked in and returned to shelves by library workers

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Cleaning and Disinfecting

- Commonly touched surfaces in restrooms (e.g., toilet seats, doorknobs, stall handles, sinks, paper towel dispensers, soap dispensers) will be cleaned frequently and in accordance with CDC guidelines
- Thorough and frequent cleaning and disinfection of the Library will be conducted at least daily, and more frequently if feasible
- Frequent cleaning and disinfecting of heavy transit areas and high-touch surfaces (e.g., doorknobs, bathrooms, baskets, carts, worker break rooms) will be conducted
- Custodial staff will maintain cleaning logs that include the date, time, and scope of cleaning
- In event of a positive case, the Library will follow current CDC guidance on cleaning and disinfecting areas when someone has a COVID-19 diagnosis
- An additional HVAC filter change will be conducted, and doors and/or windows will be opened where possible to increase airflow
- Books returned by patrons will be quarantined and removed from service for 24 hours before they can be returned by workers and checked out by another patron

Staffing and Operations

- Staff will be provided training on up-to-date safety information and precautions including hygiene and other measures aimed at reducing disease transmission, including:
 - Social distancing, handwashing, proper use of face coverings
 - Self-screening at home, including temperature and symptom checks
 - Reinforce that staff shall not come to work if ill
 - When to seek medical attention if symptoms become severe
 - Which underlying health conditions may make individuals more susceptible to contracting and suffering from a severe case of the virus
- Staff will be asked to self-screen prior to beginning each shift by ensuring the following:
 - Worker is not experiencing any symptoms such as fever (100.0 and above) or chills, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, fatigue, headache, muscle/body aches, runny nose/congestion, new loss of taste or smell, or nausea, vomiting or diarrhea
 - Worker has not had “close contact” with an individual diagnosed with COVID-19. “Close contact” means living in the same household as a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, caring for a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, being within 6 feet of a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 for 15 minutes or more, or coming in direct contact with secretions (e.g., sharing utensils, being coughed on) from a person who has tested positive for COVID-19
 - Worker has not been asked to self-isolate or quarantine by their doctor or a local public health official

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- Workers who fail to meet the above criteria must be sent home
- Workplace hours and shifts may be adjusted (leverage working teams with different schedules or staggered arrival / departure) to minimize contact across workers and reduce congestion at entry points
- A log of workers and patrons will be maintained to support contact tracing (name, date, time, contact information)
- Staff will be strongly encouraged to self-identify and report symptoms or any close contact with a known or suspected COVID-19 case to the employer
- Staff shall not appear for work or complete a shift if feeling ill
- Any staff who test positive for COVID-19 will be encouraged to disclose to library managers for purposes of cleaning, disinfecting, and contact tracing. If library management is notified of any positive case at the workplace, management must immediately notify the local Board of Health (LBOH) in the city or town where the workplace is located. Library management must assist the LBOH with contact tracing efforts, including advising likely contacts to isolate and self-quarantine. Testing of other workers may be recommended consistent with guidance and / or at the request of the LBOH
- Notice will be posted to workers and patrons of important health information and relevant safety measures as outlined in the Commonwealth's [Mandatory Safety Standards for Workplace](#)
- The Library will maintain operating hours that allow for on-going off-hour sanitation and cleaning
- Visitors and service providers on site will be limited, and shipping and deliveries will be completed in designated areas
- Movement between workstations by staff will be limited whenever possible to help establish discrete work zones and to minimize overlap where possible
- Staff will be responsible for wiping down each shared workstation or equipment that they use with disinfectant wipes before and after use
- Lunch and break times will be staggered in order to reduce the number of people in one place and to ensure at least 6 feet of physical distancing at all times
- Overdue fines will be waived to discourage patrons from coming into the library in-person
- All water fountains will be designated as refill stations only, provided that social distancing can be maintained, and staff should bring their own water bottles

In addition, the following sections will apply to other library uses and policies that are impacted during this time:

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Patron Use Policy:

- Patrons who visit the library must follow COVID-19 Order. No 31 for wearing masks in public places inside and outside (excluding those in the exempt categories) and practice social distancing. Patrons who refuse to wear masks outside of an exempt group will be asked to leave or be denied entry into the library.
- Occupancy limits will be observed, and the number of patrons allowed into the library will be limited. To achieve this, seating may be removed or blocked off; limits on computer use may be in effect.
- To achieve social distancing in the library, there may be marks on the floor to maintain distance, acrylic barriers at service desks, and online/phone appointments for technology services.
- Patrons are expected to follow these safety guidelines to ensure the safety of staff and other patrons. If patrons are unable to follow these, the library will ask the patron to leave immediately. Repeated violations may result in a suspension of library privileges.

Criteria for Closing the Library:

In the event of decreased staffing levels, a local outbreak, a sick staff member or library patrons, or as otherwise directed by the local Board of Health, the Library may be forced to close for a period of time, reduce operating hours, and/or limit services. All closings will be communicated to the public as quickly as possible.

Programming Policy:

While the library is limiting in-person services, programming will continue in a virtual manner when possible.

Collections:

In order to ensure materials returned to the library are at the lowest risk possible for the transmission of COVID-19, the Library will quarantine items for at least 24 hours before checking them in and returning them to the collection. This includes books, magazines, DVDs, and CDs.

Because of their unique shapes and multiple parts, some items from the Library's Technology Collection may not be available for circulation. The Library will maintain access to the daily newspapers and regular magazine subscriptions. Current issues will circulate to allow for their quarantine following use.

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Circulation:

Upon accepting returns, all items will be checked in and all late charges will be waived during the period of limited services, to ensure patrons do not make unnecessary trips to the library and to eliminate cash transactions.

Meeting Room and Study Room Use:

The use of Meeting Rooms and Study Rooms by the public is suspended during Phases 1-3. Meeting Rooms may be utilized by staff only for quarantining library materials and staff workspaces to encourage social distancing.

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Approved by the Hingham Public Library Board of Trustees' Operations Committee April 16, 2021

This plan was developed using resources from "Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Massachusetts Libraries: Reopening Your Library" provided by the Massachusetts Library System under the guidance of the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners.



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