

Inclement Weather, Health Emergencies and Other Emergencies Policy

Reviewed and/or Revised: 03/06/2017, 07/01/2019, 08/03/2020

Emergencies include but are not limited to: extreme weather, utility failure, demonstration, bomb or active shooter threat, fire, explosion, terrorism and health emergencies (pandemic or epidemic).

Inclement Weather:

At times when the weather becomes hazardous to the health and safety of the public and/or library staff, the library will take appropriate safety precautions. During periods of potentially bad weather conditions, the Library Director and staff will listen to the weather radio and/or follow online weather reports for possible storm watches and warnings.

If the library weather radio or storm sirens announce a notification of a **STORM WARNING**, the library staff will notify patrons of the impending weather. Announcements as follows:

“The National Weather Service has issued a Severe Thunderstorm Warning. Threatening weather conditions may develop. If a Tornado Warning is issued, library will require you to take cover or leave the library immediately.”

“The National Weather Service has issued a Tornado Warning. At this time the library requires you to take cover in the designated storm shelter areas or leave immediately.”

During a Tornado Warning, the Library Staff will strongly encourage the public to remain at the library and take cover in designated areas. Designated storm shelter areas: Men’s Bathroom, Youth Service’s Bathroom, Community Room storage closet or conference room with the table upended. Unaccompanied minors will be required to take cover in the designated areas. The front door will remain unlocked.

There are times prior to opening, especially in the winter, when the weather could threaten the safety of the public and library staff and would make reasonably safe travel to the library impossible. At such times, it may be necessary to not open the library or close the library early. The Library Director, or in his/her absence the President of the Board of Trustees, has the authority to close the library during periods of inclement weather or other emergencies, when keeping the library open may be dangerous and the safety of the library employees and patrons warrants such action. The Library Director or other staff member will notify the local radio station and publish on the library’s media sites.

Health Emergencies:

At the discretion of the Library Board of Trustees, or upon a mandate from local, county or state government or health officials, the Library may close, reduce its operating hours, and/or limit public services in the event of a pandemic or public health emergency and there is not sufficient staff to maintain appropriate staffing levels and/or staff is unable to maintain a clean and safe library environment.

If reduced staffing, hours or services are required, staff shall perform their responsibilities that most directly impact patrons prior to any other tasks, subject to the safety of patrons and staff.

The Library Director can update operating procedures as needed during a health emergency.

In the event of closure or reduction in operating hours, the Library Director will maintain communication with the staff, Library Board of Trustees, city officials and patrons.

Other Emergencies:

If a dangerous situation arises in the library, 911 will be called immediately. The 911 panic button on the phone system should be utilized as needed. Law Enforcement and Emergency Personnel will be notified of the situation if allowable. Patrons in the library will also be notified if allowable. Staff and patrons are to get to a safe place or out of the building as soon as possible. Staff and patrons should report to the Iowa Falls Police Department.

If the library building is damaged, incapacitated or uninhabitable due to an above listed emergency, the Library Director, or in his/her absence the President of the Board of Trustees, will close the library as necessary.

Staff:

The Library Director will determine if employees are required to make up time lost as a result of a closing or emergency. Part time employees will not be paid for the hours the library is closed and are not guaranteed those hours back. Full time, salaried employees will not have the time deducted for any closing. The Library Director determines if lost hours will need to be made up by full time employees (as Comp Time) and in what length of time those hours need to be worked.