



BACKGROUND

- Public libraries were closed by provincial order in March. Public libraries are not considered essential services.
 - Any violation of this order may result in fines.
- PLSB issued a statement regarding curbside delivery on April 14, 2020.
- Your Board needs to be involved in this decision. Under normal circumstances, this would be an operational decision. These are not normal circumstances and the Board, as the legal body, needs to be aware of the risks.

The key considerations below have been gathered from guidelines for retail and food services as well as based on discussions and examples within the library community. As no set of standards have arisen, we have included suggestions for best practices from a YRL perspective for our members.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

1. Risk Analysis

Health Canada has issued [risk-informed decision-making guidelines for workplaces/businesses](#). The intent of this page is to provide a framework for decision making and mitigation strategies.

Before starting curbside delivery, think about the following questions and the steps you will take to mitigate the risk:

- Are your patrons part of a high-risk group?
- Are your patrons at greater risk of spreading the virus?
- Is your community experiencing an increased rate of infection?
- Will patrons and staff be participating in activities that could contribute to the spread of the virus? Transactional activities (retail, passing objects) may represent higher risk.
- Do you have a pandemic preparedness plan? A continuity plan? How will staff absenteeism impact your core business activities?
- Do you have a communications plan to explain to patrons and key contacts what steps you are taking to ensure safety?
- Can your site implement public health, infection prevention and control measures?
 - Do you have a stable supply of disinfectant, soap, gloves, paper towels, masks, hand sanitizer, clean plastic bags, tissues?
 - Will you be compromising the supply of these materials to businesses and organizations deemed essential by the province?
- How will staff/patrons demonstrating symptoms be handled?
- Do staff have access to mental health supports? Working in this type of ambiguity can increase stress.

2. Perception is Reality

If you are implementing curbside pickup, the primary consideration you will have is the perception of safety – both for your patrons and for your staff. There will need to be an increased focus and discipline around sanitation. You will also need to continuously monitor the recommendations from Alberta Health Services (AHS) and your local public health unit in order to make informed decisions regarding when to stop, or restart, curbside pickup.

BEST PRACTICE

- Update, and continuously update, messaging on your website along the lines of ‘what we are doing’ and list all the sanitation steps you are taking.
- Include your expectations for patrons accessing your service.
- Be very, very clear and enforce the sanitation and safety steps you are taking.

3. Staff

Recognize the staff who are doing this work. Recognize, also, that staff have the right to refuse work that they deem unsafe. Staff may not agree to participate in curbside pickup activities.

BEST PRACTICE

- Staff will need to spend extra time to focus on cleaning and sanitizing ALL shared services. This includes: doors, handles, tables, carts, staff workstations, materials, packing materials. Do not use reusable bags for curbside pickup.
- Staff will need to increase the amount of time spent on hand-washing, and there needs to be continual reminders on proper handwashing techniques.
- Staff will need continual and reliable sources of: soap, paper towels, disinfectant, hand sanitizer (minimum 60% alcohol), gloves, plastic lined bins for disposal of paper towels and gloves.
- Change gloves as you change tasks. Once you have processed items for a patron and moved it to the pick up zone – wash down everything and change your gloves. Once the patron has picked up items, wash down everything and change your gloves.
- Staff do not come to work if they are exhibiting any symptoms of cold, flu or allergies.
- If staff exhibit symptoms when at work, have a strategy for containment, sanitation of the area(s) and assume that anyone in contact with this staff person has been exposed. Use the [AHS self assessment](#) and assume the staff member and anyone working with them will need to be in quarantine for 10+ days. Have a communication plan in place in the event that you need to inform the public.

4. Patrons

Access to physical items can support the mental health of patrons by providing a distraction, learning opportunities, skill development.

BEST PRACTICE

Patrons should be encouraged to:

- STAY HOME if they are exhibiting signs of infection, cold or allergies.
- Designate one person to pick up library items.
- Observe physical distancing.

5. The Process

Each site will have a different process based on risk (i.e. library is co-located with other services), space and access.

BEST PRACTICE

- Designate specific parking spots for curbside pickup; ideally close to where staff can monitor arrivals/departures.
- If the pickup zone is in an airlock, leave the front door open to minimize how many times the door handles need to be touched.
- Staff should disinfect the table tops (or carts) with the material on it, before and after each pickup; same with any surfaces (doors, handles, automatic door opening buttons).
- Staff should leave the items for the patron in advance of the scheduled pickup time and leave the area.
- Indicate on the ground where patrons should stand to maintain social distances.
- Patrons should not move to pick up items until staff are out of the area.
- Patrons should not touch items that are not for them if there are items out for other patrons.
- Make hand sanitizer, tissues and a plastic-lined garbage cans available for patron use.
- Reserve times for patrons to come and pick up material. This should be a phone call or email. If your patrons fall into a high-risk category, designate the first pickup times for them.
- Patrons may NOT enter the library for any reason. Doing so could result in fines levied against the library and the patron.
- The primary concern is to maintain the safety of staff and patrons.
 - For that reason, do NOT accept returns unless and until you are able to:
 - Ensure you have the space to quarantine the items away from staff.
 - Ensure you have the personal protective equipment to handle the materials.
 - Ensure you have enough sanitation supplies to clean the items and the work surfaces.
 - Remember: staff have the right to refuse work they perceive to be unsafe.

6. TRACpac

Patrons will be limited to items checked in at their home library. There is no movement of materials between libraries, and this service will not be reinstated until the province provides guidelines.

BEST PRACTICE

YRL will not be opening up libraries in Polaris to permit holds.

- This is not as easy a process as just permitting holds to happen; there are other consequences to this that can, and will, impact library operations.
- We need a consistent response across the region. Not all libraries are willing to open to curbside delivery (yet).
- Patrons are not following instructions to limit their hold requests to their home library collections – this is starting to impact holds list, and staff time to manage it.
- Edmonton Public Library has closed to holds. YRL libraries are within an easy reach of Edmonton patrons who could put holds on material using the ME Library feature and show up at your library expecting service.

Managing requests:

- If patrons have specific title or author requests:
 - Create a new list.
 - Search for and add the titles they want to that list.
 - Use advanced search to limit the search to their home library.
 - Email the list to the library.
- Designated staff can review the list, ensure that the items are both at that library and checked in.
- Pull the number of items that you are allowing patrons to check out at once.
- Inform the patron via email or phone that their items are ready to be picked up and work out the time for them to do so. TRAC notices will not go out, so this will need to be done manually.

You can reserve the right to limit the number of items checked out.

You can reserve the right to substitute items based on your collection.

You can have a readers' advisory conversation with your patrons to help them discover new and/or different authors.

You can also prepare kits of materials (i.e. mystery, westerns, non-fiction; hink 'blind date with a book').