

Emergency Closures Policy

Updated 04/10/2024

The North Valley Public Library's priority is the health and safety of our employees and continuity of the services we provide to patrons. The Library is a public service entity; therefore, patrons expect the Library to be open even in severe weather or when building functions are impaired. Staff should attempt to provide temporary measures to keep the building open, such as use of space heaters or fans. The Emergency Manual should also be consulted for appropriate actions.

General Emergency Closures including weather and road conditions

There are times when the Library may need to open late, close early, or close all day due to an emergency such as weather, fire, loss of electricity, loss of heat, or noxious smells from construction. Local government, business, and school closures as well as staff and patron safety will be considered when making the decision to close.

In Montana, the public expects businesses, including the library, to be open in winter weather. Closing for a full day is rare; the weather report would have to indicate serious conditions, for example continual blizzard conditions, or Ravalli County Sheriff may issue an emergency-travel-only warning. A delayed opening is more acceptable to the public, with the understanding that once roads have been plowed and sanded, staff will drive slowly and carefully to work. Early closures happen when conditions deteriorate to the point of hazardous travel for staff.

Weather determinations are based on a variety of factors:

- Road conditions observed.
- Road conditions as reported on MDT 511 from Montana Department of Transportation and news sources.
- Weather reports and warnings in media, including dangerous cold to people and livestock.
- Ravalli County Sheriff's Office hazardous travel warnings advising people to avoid driving.
- School delays and closures on weekdays.
- If the temperature or windchill in Stevensville is -25F degrees below zero, or lower, the library will close until the temperature rises.

Procedures

The Director, or the employee in charge, in the absence of the director has the authority to close the library (delayed opening, early closure, all day) based on the factors above. Notifications outlined in the employees' Standard Operating Procedure need to be followed.

Compensation:

In the event of delayed opening and early closure, any hourly employee who reports to and leaves work at the designated time will be paid for all the hours they were scheduled to work that day. Any employee who reports to work later or who leaves earlier than the designated time will be paid for the actual hours worked. That employee will be required to use paid leave for the unworked hours. Any employee who does not report to work as scheduled must take paid leave. If the library is closed for the entire day, employees who are scheduled to work that day will be paid for the hours scheduled. Any



employee who has previously approved leave of any kind during any type of closure will be required to use that leave.

Contagious Disease Pandemic Procedures (Unusual)

These procedures are to reduce potential exposure to viruses and to protect the health and safety of employees and patrons while continuing services.

If the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announce a novel (new) pandemic that is highly contagious with community spread, and no treatment and no vaccines, the library will close to the public, initiate social distancing, disinfecting, and safety guidelines for staff. Library closures are not taken lightly. The decision to close will be based upon recommendations by sources such as CDC, the President of the United States, the Montana Governor, and Ravalli County. The Library Director will make a good faith effort to consult with the Chair of the Board (or other Trustee if necessary) before closing the library, and either the Chair, or the Director of the Library will inform the other board members of the decision by email.

Library employees who are healthy are expected to continue performing their job duties on site or remotely. When regular job duties cannot be completed, the Director may reassign employees to alternate duties and work functions. During pandemic emergencies, agency management shall allow reasonable flexible work schedules for employees. For example, an employee may need to work a split work shift or perform work outside of the normally scheduled work hours to meet personal and work demands.

All Closures

Every effort will be made to have public announcements of the closures on the Library's website, Facebook, door, note on the front door, and by any other sources that may be available to staff or the Library Director.