

Syracuse Public Library Emergency and Safety Policy

The Syracuse Public Library attempts to provide a safe environment for all who use our facility as well as safe repository for library material of all types. Despite our best efforts, situations may arise of an emergency nature. These guidelines for foreseeable but unplanned emergencies which may occur in the library are designed to reduce risk to life and materials. In the event of a major disaster involving a wider section of our community, the library will adhere to the City of Syracuse's Standard Operating Procedure for Disaster Response.

1. Weather Emergencies

A. Tornado or Violent Storm

1. When warranted, staff will monitor weather conditions using television, radio, and or the Internet. When Otoe County is in a watch or a warning, staff will follow the appropriate library procedures established for the situation. These procedures are reviewed by staff yearly and updated as needed.
2. If time allows, patrons must either leave the building or take shelter in the library. If a tornado strikes with little or no warning and there is not time to evacuate patrons and staff should take shelter away from the windows and exterior walls, hiding under furniture if they cannot get to an interior room. Everyone should protect their heads as much as possible. The open stacks area should be avoided.

B. Snow Storms

1. The library may open late or close early when winter weather conditions present a danger to staff and patrons. The library will follow the actions of the City of Syracuse during normal business hours and the Library Director shall be authorized to close the library during those times.
2. Maximum effort will be made to maintain regular library operating hours. However if the library is closed due to bad weather, staff will post notices on all entrances.
3. Programs for all ages will be canceled whenever the Syracuse School District calls off school because of inclement weather, wheather or not the library closes.

2. Facility Emergencies

A. Fire

1. At the first indication of smoke or flame or if the fire alarm is pulled by a patron staff should investigate the situation to determine location and extent. If the problem can be easily contained staff should proceed to do so. If there is any doubt about controlling the fire, staff should immediately call 911 and then evacuate the building, pulling the closest alarm to notify all patrons.

2. Staff should familiarize themselves with alarm locations and with the location and operation of fire extinguishers in the building. Annual review of the process of turning off the fire alarms in case of mistaken warnings will be scheduled.

B. Loss of utilities

1. If electrical power is lost for at least two hours or if the loss makes the temperature or the lighting in the library difficult for working, the library may close until the problem is resolved. Annual checks of emergency lighting should be done by the City's Electrical Department.

2. If water is shut off to the library all restrooms should be closed immediately. Staff may be able use facilities at City Hall or neighboring businesses.

3. Personal Safety

A. Health Emergencies or Accidents

1. Staff should exercise caution when assisting anyone with a health complaint. Make the affected person comfortable and call for emergency personnel immediately in the event of a serious problem. Staff should not attempt to provide first aid unless certified.

2. At no time should staff ever dispense medication, including aspirin, to the public.

3. Following the incident, staff should complete the City's Accident Report form and submit it to the City Administrator.

4. Patron Unruliness or Violence

1. Library patrons are expected to conduct themselves in a manner which shows respect to other patrons and to staff. Disruptive behavior which disturbs others or destroys property will not be tolerated.

2. Patrons/Guardians are responsible for the behavior of their children while in the library. Children who are being disruptive and do not respond to a staff request to stop will be asked to leave the building and if necessary the parent will be called to pick the child up from the library. If a parent is unavailable after one hour the Syracuse Police Department will be contacted.

3. Staff members may handle patron situation directly if they feel comfortable doing so. If the situation escalates or if the patron refuses to listen to staff, the police shall be called immediately.

4. Staff member may dismiss the offender for the rest of the day or for up to two weeks depending on the severity of the offense. Repeat offenders or those who commit an extremely serious offense may be permanently barred from the library facility by the Library Director. Appeals of the dismissal must be submitted in writing one week, prior to regular Library Board meeting and will be reviewed by the Library Director and Library Board at the regular meeting following receipt of the appeal.

5. Paton's who remain on library premises after being asked to leave, or patrons who enter the library during the time period in which they have been banned from the library will be subject to arrest and prosecution for trespassing.

5. Reporting Emergencies

A. All emergency situation should be reported tot he Library Director as soon as possible. The Library Director will contact the President of the Library Board and the City Administrator as appropriate. The full Library Board will be informed of the emergency at the next regular board meeting.

B. Because timely and accurate reporting of emergencies is crucial, library staff should refer to the Syracuse City wide Crisis Communication Plan of the City of Syracuse, Nebraska before information regarding emergencies is made public. Information about non-emergency situation that may affect the public should be approved by the Library Director before being released.

C. Hazardous Materials

1. If carbon monoxide detectors warn of danger or if other chemical fumes are noticeable, staff should immediately evacuate the building and call 911 for assistance.

2. If a traffic accident in the vicinity of the library involves hazardous waste materials of any type, library staff should follow the directives of City Hall, and Syracuse Police Department.

D. Plumbing problems or water leaks

1. If a plumbing problem is limited to a single area, staff will close off the affected facility and call for professional assistance if they are unable to resolve the problem.
2. If a plumbing problem or water leak affects major parts of the library, the Library Director may close the library if deemed necessary.

E. Bomb Threats

1. Staff receiving a bomb threat call will try to keep the caller on the line as long as possible, noting every detail about the caller's voice background noises, and so forth. If the caller doesn't mention location and detonation time of the bomb this information should be requested.
2. If a bomb threat has been received at a nearby facility, evacuation of the library will be based on the judgment of emergency personnel.

Adopted September 1st, 2014