



LIBRARY OF MICHIGAN RESOURCES TO SUPPORT LIBRARIES WITH COVID-19 PATRON POLICIES

This information sheet is intended as a tool to assist in clarification and decision making for Public Library Directors and Boards. It is not intended as legal advice. Library Boards and Directors should consult with their library attorneys when determining a plan or policy for their libraries. The sample policies provided here are samples only. As with any library policy, the language in the samples provided may or may not be appropriate for the individual circumstances of your library. Consult with an attorney to determine appropriateness of any policy for your library.

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Sample Patron PPE Policy

LIBRARY NAME Patron Personal Protective Equipment Access Policy

Due to the Public Health emergency caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, recommendations by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) and requirements put in place by Executive Order and the **COUNTY** County Health Department,

Patrons aged 2 and up wishing to enter the **LIBRARY NAME** are required to wear a mask or face covering, and practice appropriate social distancing.

“Face covering” can include any material worn on or over the face that provides a barrier from the top of the bridge of the nose to the chin. Masks, face shields, and cloth covering the nose and mouth (such as that worn for religious reasons) are all acceptable. Coverings available, but not worn (masks around the neck, or partially covering nose/mouth) are not compliant with his policy.

If a patron is unable to comply with the policy, they are asked to speak to staff at **LOCATION**, who will provide necessary accommodations.

This policy, as with other patron behavior policies, will be enforced in the manner described in the library’s Patron Behavior Policies, available **LOCATION**.

Patrons refusing to comply with this policy may be asked to exit the library.

There are a variety of graphical signage resources provided by the State of Michigan. You can find graphics to use in your library here:

Wear a mask, It’s the law – customer poster --

https://www.michigan.gov/documents/leo/Workplace_Guidelines-Face_Coverings_V4_692430_7.pdf

No Mask, No entry – customer poster --

[https://www.michigan.gov/documents/leo/Customer_Guidelines-Wear a Mask - FINAL 692152 7.pdf](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/leo/Customer_Guidelines-Wear_a_Mask_-_FINAL_692152_7.pdf)

Sample Signage Language:

To protect Patrons and Staff, and in compliance with State Executive Order and Health Department recommendations, the **LIBRARY NAME** REQUIRES that anyone entering the building wear a face covering/mask.

If you cannot comply, please see staff at **LOCATION**.

Sample Language for Door/Entrance Sign:

STOP

To protect Patrons and Staff, if you have the following symptoms:

Cough
Fever
Shortness of Breath
Flu-Like Symptoms

Please do not enter the library. Please call us at **NUMBER** and we will be glad to bring items to your car or assist you over the phone or digital device.

THANK YOU FOR PROTECTING YOUR COMMUNITY!

Sample Patron Social Distancing Policy:

(These are examples of requirements you could use in a policy. Your library's circumstances, facility, staff, etc. may require or not similar policy text. Use from the items below as appropriate for your organization.)

In accordance with current Executive Order and (County Health Department requirements), as well as recommendations from the CDC and MiOSHA, the **LIBRARY NAME** has implemented the following social distancing requirements that patrons must follow while in the library building:

- Patrons and family groups (including children) must remain 6 feet (or approximately 2 meters) away from staff and other patrons and family groups (including children) using the library. The library has marked the floor in frequently used areas to assist in gaging appropriate distance. Please use these markings.
- Please comply with posted signage and visible markers while moving through the library. Some changes have been made to alter traffic flow to reduce possible contact with other patrons and staff.
- Masks or facial coverings must be worn at all times by patrons, if medically able, while in the building (including children aged 2 and up). *[Remember that staff may not ask the nature of a medical issue-*

only if there is a reason why the patron is not wearing a mask. Patrons should be clearly notified that they should approach library staff if they are unable to wear a mask.]

- Chairs at tables and other seating areas have been modified to reduce close contact. Please refrain from moving chairs or tables, or disturbing covers or barriers.
- Respect the staff and keep 6' of distance between you and them
- Plexiglas barriers are there to protect patrons as well as staff, please do not walk around, or lean over them.
- There are Hand Sanitizer Bottles/Stations located throughout the library. Please utilize them as often as you wish.
- *If using library equipment (Computers, copiers, fax machines, online catalog stations, self-checkout machines, etc.) Patrons are required to wipe down all touched surfaces (keyboards, monitors, control panels, etc.) with the sanitizing wipes provided near the equipment. Please discard the wipes immediately after use in the waste receptacles provided. Staff is available to assist.
- **If utilizing touchable, climbable, or rideable items in the children's area, patrons are required to wipe down these items after use with the sanitizing wipes provided near the equipment. Please discard the wipes immediately after use in the waste receptacles provided. Please do not permit children to handle wipes. Staff is available to assist.
- Public bathrooms are open. Please adhere to hygiene requirements and appropriately wash hands after entering the bathroom. Please leave the stalls as you find them. Capacity of bathrooms may be limited. If there are any problems or concerns with the bathrooms, please notify available staff.
- Anyone requiring assistance or accommodations with regards to these policies, are requested to contact library staff.
- Patrons with questions regarding these policies are asked to contact library staff.

NOTE:

*Libraries may assign staff to clean surfaces between uses if necessary, or in accordance with Library's Covid-19 plan. (Staff would require training in appropriate cleaning/disinfecting and in appropriate handling of chemicals.)

**This may not apply to libraries that can remove such items from Children's area.

Sample Patron Covid-19 policy enforcement procedures

*Utilize existing enforcement procedures:

Example:

Notify patron of policy
 Inform patron of ramifications of continued violation of policy
 Enforce (Including asking patron(s) to leave)

However, if patron ultimately refuses, or becomes contentious or intimidating, then the staff person should respond as they would in any situation where patron behavior becomes unacceptable. Here is an example:

- Step back and slightly to the side physically from the patron.

- Quietly listen to their argument/objection
- Smile with your eyes* (maintain a friendly face under your own mask – smile if you must under your mask)
- Talk in a low, calm voice.
- Use “I” language (I see you are frustrated; I see you are upset, etc.)
- Try to find a mutually satisfying solution (You can make – or buy- a mask, let me give you a mask, How about I pull the materials you need and bring them to you?)

Staff should be trained in De-escalation techniques and some available courses are available here:

Library of Michigan Staff Skills Niche Academy virtual course on de-escalation (2 parts). Available https://www.michigan.gov/libraryofmichigan/0,9327,7-381-88855_89737_99269---,00.html (Click upper right for list of topics, choose “Customer Service.”)

Kentucky Verbal De-escalation Techniques (From Ky State Personnel Dept).
<https://personnel.ky.gov/KEAP/Verbal%20De-Escalation%20Skills%20Presentation.pdf>

If they continue or escalate the situation:

Calmly ask them to leave “I am sorry, but I don’t think there is anything I can do to help you. Here is contact information so you can call or e-mail us with a request for materials and we would be happy to bring them to you or your car outside.”

If they refuse have another staff person call the police. Other staff persons present should be trained to be attentive to such confrontations and be prepared to call police.

Alternatively:

If the staff member feels threatened or the patron is threatening:

Tell the patron that if they do not comply with library policy, they will be unable to utilize library services. Remind them of any accommodations (masks to make or buy, or services available via phone or e-mail), and notify them that library policy is to contact law enforcement if patrons refuse to leave when asked by staff, and then walk away.

If the patron does not leave:

Call law enforcement – If your law enforcement will not enforce a mask policy, remember that the problem here is no longer the enforcement of policy, it is the patron’s unacceptable intimidating behavior. Ask law enforcement to assist in handling an intimidating and unruly patron. The problem is not the lack of compliance – it is the behavior in response to the enforcement that is the problem.

A NOTE about enforcement policies:

- **Every policy a library creates should be reviewed by the library's attorney.**
- **Every policy a library creates should be approved by the board. (Unless the board has expressly given the library director authority to approve in their stead).**
- A well-created policy must be enforceable. A policy created with no intent or desire to enforce it is a request, not a policy.
- Libraries may already have an enforcement policy in place for handling uncooperative patrons. This existing policy can be used with Covid-19 policies too.
- When enforced, policies must be NEUTRALLY ENFORCED. This means that EVERY patron in violation of the policy must be treated the same way. Libraries can't ask one patron to leave because they won't comply, and then ignore another patron violating the same policy. If a library asks a homeless person to leave because they will not wear a mask, they also have to ask a board member violating the rule to leave.
- Staff enforcing the policy must be trained in the policy – and in any exceptions. For example, Masks are NOT currently required by Executive Order or Health Department decree for people who can't wear them because they can't medically tolerate them. However, staff may not ask the nature of a medical issue- only if there is a reason why the patron is not wearing a mask. Patrons should be clearly notified that they should approach library staff if they are unable to wear a mask.

Alternatives to enforcement (or alternatives to asking patron to leave):

Due to well-publicized incidents of intimidation and threats as well as the reluctance of certain local law enforcement agencies to enforce mask requirements, a library may find it preferable to offer patrons who are violating mask requirements with an opportunity to make (for free) or purchase an inexpensive mask rather than ask them to leave the library.

This option also provides a way that libraries can assist patrons that have had no access to, or who cannot afford a mask (such as homeless and or economically challenged patrons), but who could be disproportionately and negatively affected by a mask requirement.

Provide components to make simple mask from coffee filters or other basic materials, permit patron to make mask at very little to no cost.

If possible, obtain inexpensive masks to sell to patrons with no mask.

The research and resources above are for informational purposes only and not for the purpose of providing legal advice. You should contact your attorney to obtain advice with respect to any particular issue or problem.

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