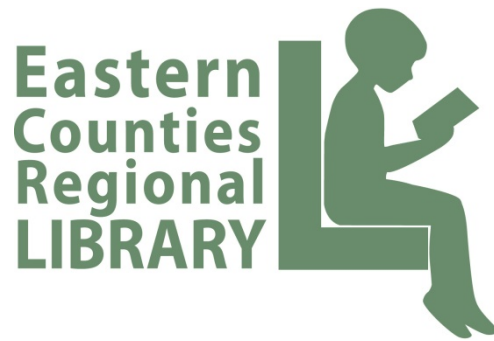


## Eastern Counties Regional Library

# Pandemic Response Plan



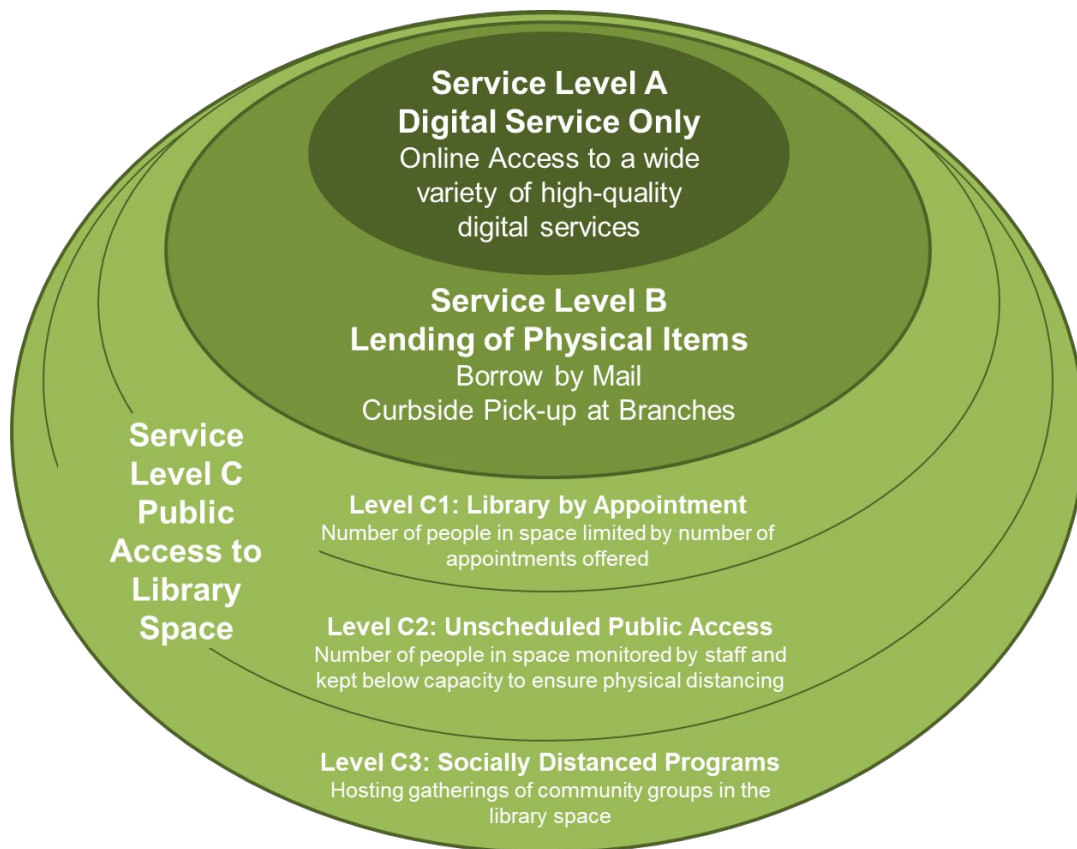
### Schedule of Revisions

Date	Version
2020-06-11	Pandemic Response Plan, including Appendices A-D, approved by ECRL Board
2020-08-05	Addition of Appendix E: Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to reflect current public health requirements about non-medical masks
2020-11-09	Service Level C broken down into sub-levels C1-C3. Procedures updated to reflect current best practices

## Introduction

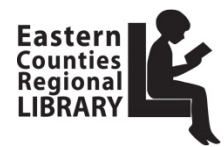
Eastern Counties Regional Library's (ECRL) Pandemic Response Plan has been developed to ensure library operations safeguard the health of our staff and the public during the unprecedented challenges presented by COVID-19. This plan is based on the concept that our services will expand and contract in response to environmental conditions. For example, if future waves of COVID-19 infections arrive in Nova Scotia, ECRL operations can use this response plan as a guide to quickly retract to a safe level of service for the specific conditions. We believe this model will allow ECRL to effectively navigate the complexity of changes brought to society by the pandemic and it will inherently incorporate the evolving nature of the information about how to control the spread of COVID-19. This plan should also be viewed as the outline for a pandemic-proof service structure suited to our specific organization and geographic context.

Figure 1 provides a visual representation of this pandemic-proof service structure, with different levels of service that expand and contract and are suited to different environmental conditions. Service Level C encompasses the offerings of Service Level B, which in turn includes Service Level A offerings. Table 1 describes the environmental conditions that shape the appropriate corresponding service levels. A more detailed table, including operational considerations of each service level can be found in Appendix A.



**Figure 1.** ECRL Service Response to Pandemic Conditions

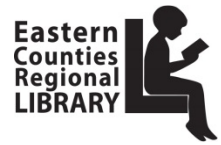
# ECRL Pandemic Response Plan



**Table 1.** ECRL Service Levels and Staffing, Dependent on State of the Environment

State of the Environment	Corresponding Service Level	Staffing Arrangement
<p><b>State A:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State of emergency</li> <li>High or unknown virus activity</li> <li>Essential workers and activities only</li> <li>Gatherings limited to 5 or less</li> <li>Physical distancing required</li> </ul>	<p><b>Service Level A: Digital Services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Online Access to a wide variety of high-quality digital services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 manager on site at HQ to monitor the building and network.</li> <li>1 HQ staff person visiting each site on a weekly basis to satisfy insurance requirements.</li> <li>All other staff working remotely</li> <li>All library locations closed to the public</li> </ul>
<p><b>State B:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State of emergency</li> <li>Low or known virus activity</li> <li>Non-essential workers allowed if workplaces meet safety requirements</li> <li>Some non-essential activities permitted</li> <li><b>Non-essential gatherings permitted, but still limited to 5 or less.</b></li> <li><b>Physical distancing and other public health guidelines are required.</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Service Level B: Lending of Physical Items</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level A Service, plus:</li> <li>Borrow by Mail (from HQ)</li> <li>Curbside Pick-up at Branches</li> </ul>	<p><b>Some staff returning to workplace:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff return to HQ to begin purchasing new materials and filling Borrow by Mail requests.</li> <li>HQ Staff whose job duties can be done remotely, continue to work from home.</li> <li>No more than 5 staff working at HQ at any one time.</li> <li>Library branch staff return to work to offer Curbside Pick-up at all possible locations.</li> <li>No public access to libraries.</li> </ul>
<p><b>State C:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Non-essential businesses and restaurants are open and permitting the public to enter their premises for shopping or dining.</li> <li>Physical distancing and other public health guidelines are still practiced.</li> <li>Cleaning per shift provided by Municipal and community partners at library sites.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Service Level C: Public Access to Library Space</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level B Service, plus:</li> </ul>	<p><b>Most staff returning to workplace:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staffing level at HQ ensures physical distancing. Those whose job duties can be done remotely, continue to work from home.</li> <li>All branch staff return to workplace. Only one staff person working per shift.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Service Level C1: Library by Appointment,</b> for Members only. New members must sign up for their library card online or by phone before booking an appointment.</p>	
	<p><b>Service Level C2: Unscheduled Public Access:</b> Library staff monitor number of people in the space, keeping it below the capacity required to maintain physical distancing.</p>	
	<p><b>Service Level C3: Socially Distanced Programs:</b> Hosting gatherings of community groups in the library space</p>	
<p><b>State D:</b> Physical distancing is no longer required.</p>	<p>At this state, there will be a re-evaluation of the service model as a whole.</p>	

# ECRL Pandemic Response Plan



The service response to pandemic conditions by Eastern Counties Regional Library (ECRL) will evolve as environmental conditions permit. The timeline for starting subsequent activities will depend upon relevant public health directives, Municipal and partner support, and organizational capacity to complete the necessary work and staff training.

ECRL's initial pandemic response involved several changes to our historical service structure. In line with Libraries across the Nova Scotia and Canada, ECRL significantly expanded and enhanced our digital library services. These digital library services are accessible 24/7 to all residents of the Counties of Guysborough, Inverness and Richmond with internet service. Digital library services can be maintained during a severe lockdown. More recently our Borrow by Mail service has been expanded to include all ECRL members. This region-wide service is accessible by both phone and internet and enables the safe circulation of physical library collections. As long as non-essential workplaces are permitted to be open with safety procedures in place, this service can be offered and can reach more vulnerable people who are offline. The addition of Borrow by Mail to digital services provides a comprehensive basic level of service for everyone. The implementation of contactless Curbside Pickup of library materials at library locations brought local library staff back to work to assist their community members over the phone or by email, and allows users to schedule a time to pick up their borrowed library materials without having to enter the library space. This option will continue to be provided to those who wish to use it, even as we continue to expand library service and allow public access to library spaces.

The introduction of public access allows library members to use public access computers or WiFi, browse the collection in-person, and interact with library staff while maintaining physical distance. Public access to library spaces began with a Library by Appointment service model, where users could visit a library during a designated time slot that was booked ahead of time. In this way, the number of users in the library at any one time was controlled by the number of appointments offered. This was an important consideration because many of our libraries are relatively small spaces, and the need to maintain physical distance remains a core public health measure to prevent the spread of COVID-19. In between library appointments, library staff had designated time to clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces. The next stage of public access will allow unscheduled library visits, with library staff responsible for monitoring the capacity of each location and controlling access to maintain physical distancing for everyone in the library, and performing regular cleaning and disinfection of high-touch surfaces. A future service for ECRL will be to resume hosting gatherings of community groups in those of our library spaces that can accommodate groups while continuing to maintain physical distancing between program attendees. Any service that allows public access to library spaces will only be possible at locations which have Municipal or community partner support for library cleaning after each shift that includes public open hours.

## COVID-19 Protocols

All phases of ECRL's Pandemic Response require the following protocols to be observed:

- All staff must **self-monitor for any signs of illness** and not report to work if they are feeling unwell. They should follow public health advice, and report their illness and absence from work to their supervisor by telephone.
- If a staff member has a positive test for COVID-19, the CEO must be informed by telephone as soon as practical. ECRL Special Sick Leave for COVID-19, approved by the Board on March 19, 2020 would apply in such circumstances.
- If a staff member does fall ill, their work location will be shut down until a deep clean of the building can be accomplished, or sufficient time has passed that no live virus would be still present on surface. Other staff members at that location will be asked to work from home and monitor their health for a period of 14 days.
- Staff members **must observe physical distancing**, staying 2 metres (6 feet apart) from each other and from members of the public.
- ECRL direction about the use of personal protective equipment (PPE), such as non-medical masks, gloves, face shields, and plexiglass barriers, will be in alignment with the latest public health information, and is therefore subject to change. It should be noted that neither plexiglass barriers nor the wearing of non-medical masks are a substitute for physical distancing. ECRL will focus on modifying activities to ensure they can be accomplished at a distance, with PPE acting as the last line of defence, rather than the primary method of protection.
- Staff members must recognize that proper **hygiene** is an important way to protect themselves from infection and to reduce the risk of spreading infection to others. This includes frequent and thorough hand washing with soap and water (or using hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available), practicing proper cough and sneeze etiquette, and avoiding touching your face.
- ECRL will provide hand washing stations (including a water jug with spigot, hand soap, bucket, and paper towel for drying hands) at strategic locations in workplaces to accommodate the frequent handwashing that will be required in order to follow safe work procedures.
- Wearing gloves is not a substitute for hand washing. Gloves may be appropriate for a specific tasks (e.g. emptying a bookdrop when it is unknown how recently materials have been deposited), but they must be removed as soon as the task is complete, disposed of properly, and hands washed immediately after removing the gloves.
- **Cleaning:** ECRL work locations accessed by more than one person will be cleaned regularly by janitorial staff. Janitorial staff will clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces after every work shift. ECRL staff will clean and disinfect their own work areas periodically throughout their work day, strategically preventing potential cross-contamination from packages or library materials. For locations with public access, cleaning protocols will be appropriate for public spaces.
- Staff members must **only eat food during designated breaks**. Eating during worktime while handling library materials will not be permitted. Drinking from closed beverage containers is allowed. Work shifts at some library branches have been adjusted to ensure adequate and properly timed meal breaks.

## Principles and Assumptions

- ECRL serves vulnerable (e.g. seniors) populations. We therefore have a strong commitment to adjusting our operations in a way that will minimize the risk of infection for our members, while still providing services that are often needed most by those same vulnerable populations.
- Service Level expansion will be executed first at library locations with few obstacles to success. Challenges presented at specific library locations (e.g. facility problems, lack of supplies, human resource issues) will be addressed once the appropriate service level is in place elsewhere. This will ensure efficient use of our limited organizational capacity, to activate services for more people before the progress is slowed by site-specific challenges.
- ECRL will not open library locations to the public without providing access to a public washroom. Library staff will perform light cleaning of public washrooms during their shift. Washrooms can only be open to the public they have been thoroughly cleaned by janitorial staff after every day of public access. Therefore, the ability of ECRL to offer public access to the library space depends on support from our municipal and community partners who are responsible for cleaning our locations.
- ECRL can only host gatherings or programs at locations that have sufficient space to accommodate physical distancing of program attendees. Program or facility use requests will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, considering the library location, the nature of the program, number of attendees, safety measures in place, etc.

## Assumptions Specific to Safe Handling of Physical Library Materials

- Library items that have been in quarantine for 72 hrs are considered to not be infectious. Library items include: hard cover books covered with plastic book jacket covers, soft cover books, DVDs and other media in plastic cases. This assumption is based on this letter published on the New England Journal of Medicine website on March 17, 2020:  
<https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMc2004973>
- Library items will not be placed back on the shelf at library branches until they have undergone at least 72-hour quarantine period after being returned by borrowers. Library staff will wash their hands before shelving previously quarantined library items. Therefore, items on library branch shelves are considered to be not infectious.
- At ECRL Headquarters (HQ), shelves designated for quarantine will be clearly labelled and completely separate from general collection shelving. Returned items will not be placed on general collection shelving until they have undergone at least a 72-hour quarantine period. Library staff will wash their hands before shelving previously quarantined library items. Therefore, items on collection shelves (EMU, EPR, EHQ, EHQL) are considered to not be infectious.
- ECRL Employees will not report to work if they feel unwell or have any symptoms of COVID-19. Employees will thoroughly wash their hands before handling library materials to be shelved or sent to library users. In the unlikely event that an employee accidentally coughs or sneezes on a library item, that item will be wiped with disinfecting wipes, if possible (e.g. plastic DVD cases)

and placed in quarantine for at least 72 hours. Therefore, the risk of spreading novel coronavirus to the public from ECRL staff is considered to be low.

## Service Level Overviews

### Service Level A: Digital Services Only

- Closure of all library branches to public and staff, only essential staff working at HQ, all other staff working from home
- Staff who are unable to complete their regular job duties at home completing online training courses during regular work hours
- Suspension of all circulation of physical library materials, including Borrow by Mail
- Focus on providing high-quality digital services to everyone with internet access
- HQ Staff member visiting all library sites on a weekly basis for insurance requirements.

### Service Level B: Lending of Physical Items

- Returns will be accepted at bookdrops and by mail – addition of temporary bookdrops required at some branches
- 72-hr quarantine period will be implemented on all returned materials
- Borrow by Mail available to all users, processed and sent by staff at HQ.
- Curbside Pickup of items at library branch location, one staff person working at each branch.
- Frequent handwashing by staff, wearing gloves when emptying bookdrops, cleaning and disinfecting surfaces, curbside pickup items will be wrapped in brown kraft paper.
- Patrons will be instructed to wash their hands after handling mail bags or unwrapping curbside pickup packages. Library items inside can be handled safely.
- Detailed procedures for Borrow by Mail can be found in Appendix B. Detailed procedures for Curbside Pickup can be found in Appendix C.

### Service Level C: Public Access to Library Space

#### **Service Level C1: Library by Appointment**

- Library by Appointment – limiting access to a certain number of users for pre-scheduled discrete periods of time (e.g. one person per 10m<sup>2</sup> of floor area, each person can remain in the library for up to 60 minutes).
- Library staff and users will be required to wear non-medical masks during library visits. Non-medical masks are not a replacement for physical distancing, so physical distance of 2 metres must be maintained between individuals not in the same household. Library users will be required to use hand sanitizer when they enter the library.
- Computer and WiFi access will be available during Library by Appointment slots. The number of public computers in each branch has been decreased to ensure physical distancing while using

computers. Library users will be asked to use hand sanitizer before using a public computer. All public and staff computers will be equipped with a waterproof keyboard and mouse, allowing for disinfection between users, and at the end of each day.

- Between appointment slots, there will be a 10-15 minute window when library staff will wipe high touch surfaces, keyboards and mice, and bathrooms, ensuring a safe environment for the next users.
- Browsing will be permitted. Library users will be asked to use hand sanitizer before browsing physical collections. Items touched by users while browsing can be returned to the shelf, and will not be subject to the same 72-hours quarantine period as returned items. In the unlikely event that a library user coughs or sneezes on a library item as they are browsing, that item should be placed in 72-hour quarantine.
- Contactless checkout of physical library materials. Wireless barcode scanners will allow members to scan their own library card, and scan the barcodes on their items while maintaining 2 metres of physical distance from staff. Staff will not be required to touch the items. Wireless receipt printer will print a record of loans and due dates for users.
- Payment for printing, photocopying, bill payment, etc will be cashless. A secure credit/debit card payment option is available, with a minimum payment of \$1.00. Payment by cheque will also be accepted.
- Thorough cleaning and disinfecting of high-touch surfaces and bathrooms by janitorial staff required at the end of each day.
- Borrow by Mail and Curbside Pickup of library items will continue to be available to those who prefer to receive library service this way
- Detailed procedures for Library by Appointment procedures can be found in Appendix D.

## Service Level C2: Unscheduled Public Access

- Allowing unscheduled (i.e. drop-in) public access at locations where library appointment numbers have trended consistently lower than facility capacity.
- Library staff and users will be required to wear non-medical masks during library visits. Non-medical masks are not a replacement for physical distancing, so physical distance of 2 metres must be maintained between individuals not in the same household. Library users will be required to use hand sanitizer when they enter the library.
- Should facility capacity be reached, the library door will be locked and/or a sign posted to instruct users to wait for staff to let them in. Users will be asked to be mindful of their time in the library to allow another user to enter.
- Computer access can be booked for 55-minute time slots, leaving 5 minutes for staff to clean/disinfect before the next user. Users will be instructed to use hand sanitizer before and after computer use. The user can extend their booking beyond 55 minutes if no one else has booked or is waiting to use the computer after them. Users who have not booked a computer-use timeslot in advance will be asked to wait until the current user's 55 minutes is up. All public



and staff computers are equipped with a waterproof keyboard and mouse, allowing for disinfection between users and at the end of each day.

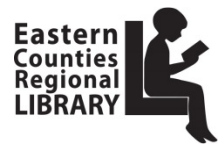
- Library staff will wipe high touch surfaces: door handles, checkout stations, and bathrooms, regularly throughout their shift. As much as it is feasible, they will strive to disinfect high touch surfaces after each user. If that is not possible, surfaces should be disinfected at least every 2 hours, ensuring a safe environment for the next users. Computer desks, keyboards, mice will be disinfected after each user.
- Browsing will be permitted. Library users will be asked to use hand sanitizer before browsing physical collections. Materials touched by users while browsing can be returned to the shelf, and will not be subject to the same 72-hour quarantine period required for returned items. In the unlikely event that a library user coughs or sneezes on a library item as they are browsing, that item should be placed in 72-hour quarantine
- Contactless checkout of physical library materials. Wireless barcode scanners will allow members to scan their own library card, and scan the barcodes on their items while maintaining physical distance from staff. Staff will not be required to touch the items. Wireless receipt printer will print a record of loans and due dates for users.
- Payment for printing, photocopying, bill payment, etc will be cashless. A secure credit/debit card payment option is available, with a minimum payment of \$1.00. Payment by cheque will also be accepted.
- Thorough cleaning and disinfecting of high-touch surfaces and bathrooms by janitorial staff required at the end of each day open to the public.
- Borrow by Mail and Curbside Pickup of library items will continue to be available to those who prefer to receive library service this way.
- Detailed procedures for Unscheduled Public Access can be found in Appendix F.

## Operations at ECRL Headquarters

- Employees whose work tasks can be done remotely will continue to work from home in general, for as long as physical distancing is required. This will minimize the number of people gathering at HQ, decreasing the chance of spreading infection.
- Addition of hand washing stations near each person's work station, to facilitate frequent hand washing at specific points during safe work procedures.
- Addition of hand washing station in ECRL van, to facilitate frequent hand washing while traveling. Vehicles are cleaned with disinfecting wipes after every use. Only one staff member travels in a vehicle at any one time.
- Maintaining physical distance of 2m between staff members at all times. No congregating in the kitchen during breaks.
- Limiting the number of employees using the same washroom facilities.
- Increased cleaning and disinfection of high-touch surfaces by janitorial staff, at the end of each workday.
- Increased wiping of common surfaces by staff, periodically throughout the workday.

# ECRL Pandemic Response Plan

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- 72-hour quarantine period observed for all returned library materials.
- Addition of office partitions (i.e. “cubicles”), to prevent the spread of respiratory droplets and throughout the open concept workspace.

## Appendix A: ECRL Service Response to Pandemic Conditions

State of the Environment	Municipal and Partner Support	Corresponding Service Level	Staffing Arrangement	Library Card Registration	Browsing and Check-out	Handling Returns	Public Computers	Printing and Copying	Programs and Events	Supplies Required	Budgetary Impact
<p><b>State A:</b> Everyone except essential workers directed to stay home and only go out for essentials like groceries and prescriptions, employees work from home where possible. Gatherings limited to 5 or less, only if essential, only if physical distancing is observed.</p>	No requirements	<p><b>Service Level A: Digital Service Only</b> Online Access to a wide variety of high-quality digital services</p>	<p><b>All staff working from home:</b> Except: 1 manager on site at HQ to monitor the building and network. Except: 1 HQ Staff person visiting each branch on a weekly basis to satisfy insurance requirements. HQ Staff whose job duties can be done remotely, continue as usual Branch Staff and HQ staff whose tasks cannot be done remotely, training online</p>	Online and by Phone. Card number and PIN will be provided, card mailed out at a later date.	Digital only	Returns not accepted; bookdrops closed	Not available	Not available	None	N/A	Yearly subscription costs; No further impact on 2020-2021 budget.
<p><b>State B:</b> Still in a state of emergency, but it is acceptable to bring people out of their homes for things other than shopping for essentials. Non-essential gatherings permitted, but still limited to 5 or less, and physical distancing is still required.</p>	Cooperation to control access to facilities, regular cleaning	<p><b>Service Level B: Lending of Physical Items</b> Digital Service Borrow by Mail (from HQ) Curbside Pick-up at Branches, where possible</p>	<p><b>Some staff returning to workplace:</b> All HQ staff whose job tasks require handling physical collection return to workplace. HQ Staff whose job duties can be done remotely, continue to work from home. No more than 5 staff working at HQ at any one time. One staff person returns to work at each branch to offer Curbside Pick-up</p>	Online and by Phone. Cards and PINs mailed out.	Digital browsing only; Staff check out physical items in advance, patrons not present	Quarantine mail bags with items still inside for 72 hours after pick-up from post office	Not available	Not available	None	Wheeler bags, brown paper, gloves, hand washing stations, disinfecting wipes and sprays	Supplies listed; Postage for BBM; Addition of temporary dropboxes; HR legal fees
<p><b>State C:</b> Non-essential businesses and restaurants are open and permitting the public to enter their premises for shopping or dining. Non-essential gatherings or more than 5 people are permitted, physical distancing is still required outside of household "bubbles".</p>	Commitment that janitorial staff will clean and disinfect all high-touch surfaces, including bathrooms, after each day with library access appointments.	<p><b>Service Level C: Public Access to Library Space</b> Digital Service Borrow by Mail (from HQ) Curbside Pick-up at Branches; Plus:</p>	<p><b>All staff return to workplace, except those whose job duties can be done remotely:</b> HQ staff whose job duties can be done remotely will continue to generally work from home, to minimize the number of people in the facility. All branch staff return to workplace. Only one staff person working in each location per shift.</p>	Online and by Phone (membership is required prior to booking an appointment)	Browsing allowed Contactless checkout: Patrons will scan their own card and items with a wireless barcode scanner and receipt printer set up more than 2m away from staff workstation	Staff wear gloves to empty bookdrops, place materials in quarantine for 72-hours before handling, discharging, processing	Number of computers in each branch will be reduced, to allow social distancing, sessions will be limited if others are waiting or have made an appointment.	Printing and copying available. Payment by credit and/or debit card, or cheque. Cash not accepted.	None in-person	Gloves, face shields, masks, hand washing stations, hand sanitizer for public use, washable keyboards and mice for public and staff computers, wireless barcode scanners, wireless receipt printers, cleaning and disinfecting supplies, social distancing signage and markings	Supplies listed; Cashless payment solution; Branch Manager to provide necessary oversight to branch staff without on-site management
		<p><b>Service Level C1: Library by Appointment</b> for Members only. New members must sign up for their library online or by phone before booking an appointment.</p>		In-person							
		<p><b>Service Level C2: Unscheduled Public Access:</b> Library staff monitor number of people in the space, keeping it below the capacity required to maintain physical distancing.</p>		In-person							
		<p><b>Service Level C3:</b> Socially Distanced Programs: Hosting gatherings of community groups in the library space.</p>							Only at locations large enough for physical distancing of attendees		

In this document, where “wash hands” is noted, it is understood to mean wash hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds, and dry with paper towel.

### Handling Borrow by Mail Returns

Borrow by Mail items will be sent out to and returned from library users in black smooth-surface mail bags, with a plastic window to display the mailing label, as displayed here:

The procedure for handling Borrow by Mail returns from library users will be as follows:



1. Bins filled with black mail bags will be retrieved from the post office. The employee visiting the post office may choose to wear a non-medical face mask, but physical distancing of 2m from post office workers should be observed.
2. Bins from the post office will be brought back to ECRL HQ, placed in the designated mail sorting area, and marked with the date they were collected at the post office. Employee will wash their hands after handling mail bins.
3. After a quarantine period of at least 72 hrs, staff members can begin opening bags and checking in items, following this process:
  - Bring a book cart from their workstation to the mail sorting area. Each staff member doing this task will have a designated book cart, and will not have to touch a book cart touched by another staff member.
  - Wash hands, at hand washing station set up next to mail sorting area.
  - Open each mail bag, remove contents and place on the book cart, remove the postage label from the bag and place in recycling bin, place empty bags in a designated bin for future use.
  - Wash hands again, before leaving the mail sorting area.
  - Bring book cart back to individual workstation.
  - Discharge (i.e. check in) each item by scanning item barcode or using RFID pad, if applicable. Open DVD cases to ensure all pieces are present before discharging.
  - Sort discharged items at workstation/on book cart according to destination:
    - Branch or HQ basement for shelving
    - Hold for another user
  - Wash hands, at hand washing station at or near workstation.

- Place material on the appropriate shelf for distribution to various shelving locations (as normal)
- Place material destined for a patron on designated Holds Sorting shelf.
- Return to work station and use a disinfecting wipe on all hard surfaces, ensuring adequate contact time for disinfection (see product label).
- Wash hands again before proceeding to another task.

### Handling Returns from Library Drop Boxes

All branches are visited by ECRL HQ staff once a week during closure periods for insurance purposes. For branches with outside drop boxes, we will communicate to library users that they are welcome to begin returning their books in those drop-boxes. The procedure for handling these returns will be as follows:

1. Staff member will wear gloves for this task, because items in the drop-box may have been dropped off very recently. Alternately, they may have been in the drop-box for a long time and may be wet or soiled. Staff member will wash hands before putting on gloves.
2. Wearing gloves, staff member will unlock the drop-box, retrieve items and place them in a bin.
3. Staff member will remove gloves, dispose of them in a garbage bag, and wash hands immediately.
4. With clean hands, staff member will close the lid of the bin, and attach a label to the bin, indicating the branch where they were retrieved and the date and time.
5. Staff member will transport the bin back to ECRL HQ, where it will be placed in a designated quarantine area for at least 72 hrs.

### Procedure for Filling Borrow by Mail Holds

1. Patron places a hold using our online catalogue or telephone service.
2. If the desired item is on the shelf at one of our library branch locations, it will be pulled from the shelf the next time a staff member visits that branch, using the following procedure:
  - Staff member will wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds.
  - Staff member will refer to “Holds Pickup List” and pull each item off the shelf and place in a bin.
  - Staff member will transport bin from branch to ECRL Headquarters.
  - These bins do not need to be quarantined, since the items were taken from the shelf, and only touched by a staff member with cleaned hands.
  - When the bins arrive at HQ, they will be opened and all items scanned by staff with clean hands. Items will be placed on the Holds Sorting shelf.
3. Items pulled off the shelf at HQ to fulfill user holds are not considered to be infectious and likewise do not require a quarantine period before they can be sent out to users. These items will be scanned and placed on the Holds sorting shelf.

4. Once a given user's requested items are made available on a Holds Sorting shelf, one staff member will prepare them for mailing using the following procedure:
  - Staff member will wipe their workstation and book cart with disinfecting wipes, allowing the required contact time for disinfection.
  - Staff member will wash their hands
  - Staff member will bring user's holds to their workstation on book cart
  - With clean hands, staff member will check out each item to the appropriate user, by scanning barcode or using RFID pad. Staff member will weigh the items and place them in a black mail bag.
  - Staff member will use their computer to create and print shipping and return label, complete with weight of package and the user's mailing address.
    - All users will have previously been contacted by phone or email, to ensure that they still wish to receive library items that may have been placed on hold prior to COVID-19 conditions, and to confirm we have their correct mailing address on file.
  - Staff member will retrieve shipping label from printer, insert it into the slot in the mail bag, and place the mail bag in a bin to bring to the post office.
  - Staff member will wash their hands before beginning this process again for the next user.
  - Staff members will use disinfecting wipes to wipe their keyboard mouse, desk surfaces, and printer at intervals throughout the day: 10:30am; before taking a lunch break; at 2:30pm; and at the end of the day.
5. We will communicate with library users and recommend that they wash hands with soap and water after handling mail bags. Library items inside are safe to handle.

In this document, where “wash hands” is noted, it is understood to mean wash hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds, and dry with paper towel.

### Procedure

In order to facilitate curbside pickup, one staff person at each library branch location will be brought back to work.

1. Patron places a hold using our online catalogue or telephone service.
2. Each library location will use the automatically generated “Holds Pickup List” to pull items off the shelf to fulfill user requests, following this procedure
  - Staff member will print the Holds Pickup List, if necessary.
  - Wash hands.
  - Pull all items required items from shelf, and place at workstation.
  - Scan item barcodes and place items in transit, as normal.
  - As noted in the assumptions on page 1, library items on library branch shelves are considered to not be infectious and do not require a quarantine period.
3. Once per week, each library location will receive a delivery of bins of library items from HQ and other branches. All items in these bins have come from the shelf at other locations, or have previously been quarantined for at least 72 hours (if they were returned by library users). They can be processed by the branch staff member without any additional quarantine period, following this procedure:
  - Branch staff member will open one bin, then wash their hands.
  - Branch staff member will retrieve all items from inside the bin, scanning item barcodes and sorting according to whether they require shelving, or are for a user’s hold.
  - Branch staff member will wash their hands every time they open a new bin.
  - Once all items have been received and sorted, items for user holds can be processed.
  - Staff member will wash their hands before processing each individual user’s holds for pick-up.
  - With clean hands, staff member will check out each item and stamp with due date stamp.
  - Once all items have been checked out, library staff will wrap items together using brown paper, and secure with tape.
  - Library user’s name will be written on the package
  - Branch staff member will communicate with library user and arrange a time for pick-up of these items. Each user will get a half-hour pick-up window, and their items will be left outside the branch (on or in a box or bin, depending on the branch and weather conditions), so the user can have completely contact-less pick-up of their items.
  - We will communicate with library users and recommend that they wash hands with soap and water after handling the brown paper packages. In addition to the user’s name, written on each package will be the date when the package was wrapped.

## **Non-medical Masks**

When worn properly, non-medical masks can reduce the risk of transmitting the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19. As of July 31, 2020, it is mandatory to wear a non-medical mask in most indoor public places in Nova Scotia. Therefore, wearing a non-medical mask will be mandatory in libraries during public access times.

Using a mask alone isn't enough to prevent the spread of COVID-19. ECRL staff and members should also make sure to keep their hands clean, follow cough and sneeze etiquette and physical distancing guidelines and stay home if they are feeling sick. The use of non-medical masks in ECRL spaces does not replace the need to maintain physical distancing of 2 meters between staff and library members, and between library members not part of the same close social group.

### **Non-medical masks for ECRL Members**

ECRL members accessing public library spaces must wear a non-medical mask for the duration of their visit. This mask must fully cover both their nose and mouth for the duration of their stay in the library.

### **Non-medical Masks for ECRL Staff**

ECRL Staff will be required to wear a non-medical mask during times when library members have access to the library. If there are certain hours during a shift when the employee is working, preparing items for curbside pick-up or other tasks, but the library is closed, the employee is not required to wear a non-medical mask during those hours. Staff must put on a non-medical mask at the beginning of the public access portion of their shift, and continue wearing a mask for the duration. They should change their mask during their shift, if it becomes damp or dirty.

Disposable non-medical masks will be provided for employee use. These masks should be discarded when they become wet or soiled. Staff members are permitted to wear re-usable masks, if that is their preference. Re-usable masks must be laundered regularly, most importantly after they become damp or dirty. If an employee chooses to wear a re-usable mask, it is their responsibility to ensure that mask is clean. ECRL will reimburse employees for the purchase of re-usable non-medical masks of their choosing, up to a maximum of \$40. Receipts of purchase must be provided.

Public service staff will be provided with a "smile mask", which makes the wearer's mouth visible to others, while still covering the nose and mouth. This mask can be used by staff at the request of a library member, who may need to see the staff member's mouth for a variety of reasons.

Staff must observe the following points related to non-medical masks:

- Wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds (or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available) before and after touching the mask, including putting it on and taking it off.



- Before putting on a mask, ensure it is clean and dry and that there are no tears or holes in it.
- Ensure your nose and mouth are both fully covered by the mask for the entire time you are wearing it.
- Avoid touching the mask while wearing it. If you do accidentally touch your mask while you are wearing it, wash your hands immediately after.
- Change your mask as soon as it becomes damp or dirty.
- Discard your disposable mask in a plastic-lined garbage bin immediately after you remove it.
- When you remove a re-usable mask, place it directly into a bag that you can use to transport the mask home for laundering.
- Do not leave a used mask within the reach of others.

Refer to: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/covid-19-safely-use-non-medical-mask-face-covering.html> for more instructions on the safe use of non-medical masks from Public Health Agency of Canada.

### Face Shields

Face shields are not a replacement for or an alternative to non-medical masks. Face shields provide the wearer with additional protection from respiratory droplets from another person's cough or sneeze, for example. In particular, they protect the wearer's eyes.

ECRL will provide face shields for employees to wear if they choose. Wearing a face shield will not exempt the employee from the need to wear a non-medical mask. Wearing a non-medical mask is mandatory for ECRL public service staff. Face shields will be provided if employees choose the option of wearing one *in addition to* a non-medical mask. ECRL's focus remains on maintaining physical distance of 2 meters between library staff and library members at all times during a member's visit.

Employees must not share face shields and should clean and disinfect their face shield before and after each use.

### Disposable Gloves

Frequent and thorough hand washing remains the most effective way to prevent the spread of infection through touching objects with your hands. Wearing disposable gloves for prolonged periods of time can create a false sense of security for the wearer. If not used and disposed of properly, wearing gloves may provide another surface for the virus to live on – potentially encouraging virus transmission.

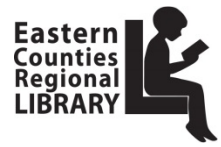
ECRL will provide disposable gloves to employees that can be used for completing specific tasks like emptying book drops to transfer library items into quarantine, and cleaning high-touch surfaces.

Employees must wash their hands immediately before putting on a pair of gloves, complete the task which requires gloves, then directly remove their gloves before touching any other surfaces, and wash their hands again immediately after removing the gloves.

# ECRL Pandemic Response Plan

## Appendix E: Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

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Gloves are not a substitute for frequent and thorough hand washing. For some tasks, it is appropriate for employees to wear disposable gloves *in addition to* hand washing before and after the task, but it is never appropriate to wear gloves instead of washing hands.

Other aspects of proper glove use include:

- Gloves should be changed if they become soiled or torn.
- Change gloves if you touch your face – eyes, nose or mouth – or cover a cough or sneeze with your hands while wearing gloves.
- Disposable gloves should be thrown out and not used again once they have been taken off.

### References

Nova Scotia Government: <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/staying-healthy/#masks> Accessed 2020-07-28

Public Health Agency of Canada: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/covid-19-safely-use-non-medical-mask-face-covering.html> Accessed 2020-07-28

Canadian Thoracic Association: [https://cts-sct.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/June-5\\_2020\\_Face-Mask-position-statement-1-2.pdf](https://cts-sct.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/June-5_2020_Face-Mask-position-statement-1-2.pdf) Revised June 5, 2020

Alberta Health Services: <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-ncov-2019-public-faq.pdf> Revised June 26, 2020

In this document, where “wash hands” is noted, it is understood to mean wash hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds, and dry with paper towel.

### **Booking Library by Appointment Timeslots**

- Each branch will have a specific number of library by appointment slots for the week, depending on employee shifts, and the need to continue providing curbside pick-up service for customers who do not wish to enter the library space.
- The number of customers who can book the same appointment time will be branch-specific because it will be dictated by the square footage of the public space, location of the circulation desk, location of computers, etc. Ensuring staff and customers are able to maintain physical distancing of 2m is essential.
- Appointments will be 60 minutes in duration. Appointment length may be adjusted based on demand.
- There will be at least a 10-minute window in between each library by appointment timeslot, allocated for staff to clean and disinfect high touch surfaces. Staff breaks will be scheduled separate from appointment timeslots and also separate from cleaning times.
- Customers can book a library by appointment timeslot by calling or emailing their nearest library branch. They will need to provide their library card number in order to book an appointment. New library users can sign up for their card on the phone, and will be given their card when they arrive. Those without a library card and who are unwilling to sign up for a card will not be permitted to book a timeslot.
- An internal (i.e. not available to the public) Google Calendar will be set up for each branch. It will show library by appointment timeslots. Library staff will use this calendar to schedule customer visits during the available timeslots.
- Library staff will ask the customer at the time of booking whether they will need to use a public computer during their visit. Only one customer can be booked per public computer during a specific timeslot.
- Library staff will inform the booking customer of their responsibilities with regards to library by appointment, including the need to maintain physical distancing with those outside of their household bubble, the requirement to wear a non-medical mask and use hand sanitizer, new payment methods for printing and copying services, and stressing the fact that they should not visit if they feel unwell in any way. A script will be provided to library staff for this purpose.

### **Customer Use of Library During Timeslot**

- Staff will keep doors locked outside of library by appointment timeslots. At the beginning of each timeslot, staff will wash their hands, then unlock the door and allow customers to enter, keeping physical distance of 2m (6ft.).

- Returned library items will only be accepted in dropboxes. Branches without dropboxes will be provided with temporary boxes that will be put out at the beginning of a shift and brought in at the end of the shift.
- 
- Staff will establish whether any of the customers are in a household bubble with each other, in order to monitor whether physical distancing is being appropriately observed.
- Staff will provide collection or very limited computer assistance to users while maintaining 6ft physical distancing
- Customers will be permitted to browse the collection. Library users will be asked to use hand sanitizer before browsing physical collections. Materials touched by users while browsing can be returned to the shelf, and will not be subject to the same 72hour quarantine period required for returned items. In the unlikely event that a library user coughs or sneezes on a library item as they are browsing, that item should be placed in 72-hour quarantine
- 
- Customers will not be permitted to bring or eat food in the library space. Closed top beverage containers will be permitted.
- Staff will facilitate contactless checkout of items for customers. A “check-out station” will be set up more than 2m away from the staff workstation. It will include a wireless barcode scanner and a wireless receipt printer. Staff will open the appropriate wizard in WorkFlows at their workstation, direct customers at the check-out station when to scan their library card, and again when to scan the barcodes on their items. Due dates will not be stamped in items, but the wireless receipt printer will print a record of loans and due dates for users who wish to have one.
- Cash will not be accepted. Payment of fees can be completed with a secure credit/debit card payment option. The card reader will be placed at the check-out station, continuing to allow physical distancing between staff and customers. Payment by cheque will also be accepted.
- Staff will provide a 10 minute warning when an appointment timeslot is about to end
- Staff will ask users to leave the library when the timeslot is ending

### **Staff Responsibilities Between Timeslots**

- Staff will wear gloves to protect their hands during cleaning and disinfecting. They must wash their hands prior to putting on the gloves.
- They will use disinfecting wipes to clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces, including door handles, surfaces at the check-out station, surfaces at public computer stations including mice and keyboards.
- Use disinfecting wipes to wipe down surfaces in the washroom, including door handles, taps, counter tops, toilets.
- Remove gloves and dispose of directly into a lined garbage bin.
- Wash hands immediately after removing gloves.

- At least once per day, all windows and doors will be opened for a period of 10-15 minutes to encourage air circulation and the dispersal of respiratory droplets.

### Staff Breaks

- Staff will only be permitted to eat during designated breaks.
- Staff must clean and disinfect the surfaces around where they will be eating (e.g. circulation desk) before eating. Staff must then wash hands after cleaning and before eating.
- The same surfaces must be cleaned and disinfected after eating, and hands washed afterwards.
- Where possible, meal breaks will be extended to encourage staff to go home to eat.

### At the End of Each Day

- Remove all keyboards and mice from staff and public computers. These pieces of equipment are waterproof. They must be thoroughly sprayed with a disinfectant spray, ensuring adequate contact time before wiping and rinsing with wet paper towel if necessary, and left out to dry overnight.
- Label a bin with the current day's date, wash hands, put on gloves, go outside and bring the temporary dropbox inside. Remove items from dropbox and place in the bin. Also place any items that were touched by library by appointment customers, but not checked out, in the bin. Remove gloves, wash hands, close bin and place it in a designated area for 72-hour quarantine.
- If the branch has a permanent dropbox, label a bin with the current day's date, wash hands, put on gloves, go outside and retrieve items from the dropbox and place in the bin. Keep gloves on to bring the bin inside and place in the designated area for 72-hour quarantine. Add any items touched by customers but not checked out, then close the bin. Use a disinfecting wipe to wipe the outside of the bin, remove gloves, wash hands.

Janitorial staff will thoroughly clean and disinfect high touch surfaces and the bathroom after each day of library by appointment.

In this document, where “wash hands” is noted, it is understood to mean wash hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds, and dry with paper towel.

### Customer Use of Library Space

- Customers will be able to drop in to the library at their convenience during open hours. As long the number of visitors to the library remains below the capacity for maintaining social distancing, the length of their visit will not be limited.
- Signage will communicate that all customers will be required to wear a non-medical mask for the duration of their visit. They will be asked to use hand sanitizer provided when they enter the library. They must maintain 2m/6ft of physical distance from library staff and other visitors outside their household for the duration of their visit.
- Signage will communicate that people should not enter the library space if:
  - They are feeling unwell or have any symptoms of COVID-19.
  - They have travelled outside the Atlantic Bubble in the last 14 days.
  - They are waiting for the results of a COVID-19 test.
  - They have been in contact with anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19.
- Staff will provide collection or very limited computer assistance to users while maintaining 6ft physical distancing.
- Customers will be permitted to browse the collection. Library users will be required to use hand sanitizer before browsing physical collections. Materials touched by users while browsing can be returned to the shelf, and will not be subject to the same 72-hour quarantine period required for returned items. In the unlikely event that a library user coughs or sneezes on a library item as they are browsing, that item should be placed in 72-hour quarantine.
- Due to the limited number of computers in each library location, pre-booking a computer timeslot is recommended. Computer bookings can be made by calling or emailing the library branch you wish to visit. Computer access can be booked for 55-minute time slots, leaving 5 minutes for staff to clean/disinfect before the next user. Users will be instructed to use hand sanitizer before and after computer use. The user can extend their booking beyond 55 minutes if no one else has booked or is waiting to use the computer after them.
- If you are 15 minutes late for your computer booking and someone else wants to use the computer, your appointment will be given away to them.
- Users who have not booked a computer-use timeslot in advance will be asked to wait until the current user’s 55 minutes is up. All public and staff computers are equipped with a waterproof keyboard and mouse, allowing for disinfection between users and at the end of each day.
- If the library reaches its capacity, library staff will post a sign on the door indicating that no more visitors are permitted at this time, and for any visitors arriving to knock on the door or phone the library, to alert staff that they are waiting. Library staff will then let the visitors in the library know that another customer is waiting, and encourage them to be mindful of their time. After

ten minutes if everyone remains in the space, library staff may ask the visitor who arrived first to end their visit to allow the waiting visitor to enter.

- Returned library items will continue to be accepted in bookdrops only. Branches without permanent bookdrops have been provided with temporary boxes that will be put out at the beginning of a shift and brought in at the end of the shift.
- Customers will not be permitted to bring or eat food in the library space. Closed top beverage containers will be permitted.
- Staff will facilitate contactless checkout of items for customers. A “check-out station” will be set up more than 2m away from the staff workstation. It will include a wireless barcode scanner and a wireless receipt printer. Staff will open the appropriate wizard in WorkFlows at their workstation, direct customers at the check-out station when to scan their library card, and again when to scan the barcodes on their items. Due dates will not be stamped in items, but the wireless receipt printer will print a record of loans and due dates for users who wish to have one.
- Cash will not be accepted. Payment of fees can be completed with a secure credit/debit card payment option. The card reader will be placed at the check-out station, continuing to allow physical distancing between staff and customers. Payment by cheque will also be accepted.

### **Staff Responsibilities during Unscheduled Public Access**

- Staff will wear gloves to protect their hands during cleaning and disinfecting. They must wash their hands prior to putting on the gloves.
- They will use disinfecting spray and paper towel to clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces, including door handles, surfaces at the check-out station, surfaces at public computer stations including mice and keyboards.
- Use disinfecting spray and paper towel to wipe down surfaces in the washroom, including door handles, taps, counter tops, toilets.
- Computer stations: desks, keyboards, mice will be cleaned and disinfected after each user.
- As much as it is feasible, staff should strive to disinfect high touch surfaces after each user. If that is not possible, surfaces should be disinfected at least every 2 hours, ensuring a safe environment for the next users.
- Remove gloves after cleaning activities and dispose of directly into a lined garbage bin.
- Wash hands immediately after removing gloves.
- At least once per day, all windows and doors will be opened for a period of 10-15 minutes to encourage air circulation and the dispersal of respiratory droplets.

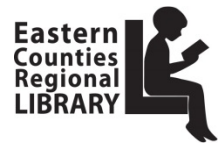
### **Staff Breaks**

- Staff will only be permitted to eat during breaks. Where possible, meal breaks have been extended to encourage staff to go home to eat.

# ECRL Pandemic Response Plan

## Appendix F: Unscheduled Public Access Procedure

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- Staff are entitled to a 15-minute paid break in the afternoon. They will need to take this break while remaining in the library branch, when no customers are in the branch or during a slow period.
- Staff must clean and disinfect the surfaces around where they will be eating (e.g. circulation desk) before eating. Staff must then wash hands after cleaning and before eating.
- The same surfaces must be cleaned and disinfected after eating, and hands washed afterwards.

### At the End of Each Day

- All keyboards and mice from staff and public computers are waterproof. Once the computer is turned off, the waterproof equipment must be thoroughly sprayed with a disinfectant spray, ensuring adequate contact time before wiping and rinsing with wet paper towel if necessary, and left to dry overnight.
- Label a bin with the current day's date, wash hands, put on gloves, go outside and bring the temporary bookdrop inside. Remove items from bookdrop and place in the bin. Remove gloves, wash hands, close bin and place it in a designated area for 72-hour quarantine.
- If the branch has a permanent bookdrop, label a bin with the current day's date, wash hands, put on gloves, go outside and retrieve items from the bookdrop and place in the bin. Keep gloves on to bring the bin inside and place in the designated area for 72-hour quarantine. Close the bin. Use a disinfecting wipe to wipe the outside of the bin, remove gloves, wash hands.

Janitorial staff will thoroughly clean and disinfect high touch surfaces and the bathroom after each day of library by appointment.