

Inclement Weather Policy

I. Purpose of Policy

At times when the weather becomes hazardous to the health and safety of the public and/or library staff, the library will close or take safety precautions.

II. Library Closures:

There are times prior to opening, especially in winter, when the weather could threaten the safety of the public and library staff and would make reasonably safe travel to the library impossible. At such times, it may be necessary to not open the library in part or in full. Furthermore, there are times during operating hours, especially in winter, when the weather threatens the safety of the public and library staff and would make reasonably safe travel to and from the library impossible. At such times, it may be necessary to close the library early. The decision to close or postpone the opening of the library due to inclement weather is at the discretion of the Library Director or his/her chosen substitute.

III. Library Safety Measures Due to Inclement Weather:

- A. There are times when the weather becomes dangerous while the library is open. At times, this may require closing the library so staff and the public can get home safely. Library closures are at the discretion of the Library Director or his/her chosen substitute. Other times, the library may need to take safety measures to protect staff and the public. This is especially true in the spring, summer, and autumn when thunderstorms and tornadoes are possible.
- B. When the National Weather Service issues a Severe Thunderstorm Warning the library will notify patrons of the impending weather. When a Severe Thunderstorm Warning is in effect, Severe Weather signs will be posted at the service desks that read: “The National Weather Service has issued a Severe Weather Warning. Take necessary precautions. Dangerous Lightning, Wind, Hail, and possible Tornadoes can develop. If a Tornado Warning is issued, the library will require you to take cover or leave the library immediately.”

Additionally, an announcement on the Public Address System will be made alerting patrons that reads: “The National Weather Service has issued a Severe Weather Warning. Threatening weather conditions may develop. If a Tornado Warning is issued, the library will require you to take cover or leave the facility immediately.”

- C. When a Tornado Watch is issued, library staff will inform patrons of the possibility of a tornado developing. The Severe Weather signs will be posted at service desks, and the following announcement will be made: “The National Weather Service has issued a Tornado Watch. Threatening weather conditions may develop. If a Tornado Warning is issued, the library will require you to take cover or leave the facility immediately.”
- D. In the event of a Tornado Warning, the following announcement will be made: “The National Weather Service has issued a Tornado Warning. At this time, the library requires you to take cover under the direction of the library staff or leave the facility immediately.” Library staff will strongly encourage the public to remain at the library and take cover in the designated areas for their safety, but staff cannot require that they remain in the library. For the safety of staff and the public, public areas of the library must be cleared. Once in the designated safety areas, staff and patrons will stay in those areas until the Tornado Warning expires. Weather radio, flashlights, water are located in the Storage Room main shelter area. If possible, staff should bring these items to other designated areas and bring a personal mobile phone to all designated areas.

E. Designated safety areas for Tornado events include: the Storage Room located in the staff area, the Community Room Kitchen, the Community Room table and chair Storage Room, and the Family Restroom in the Children's Department. These are reinforced areas of the library specifically designed as tornado shelters. The vestibule bathrooms are a good secondary space if all reinforced areas will not accommodate everyone. The bathrooms are not reinforced, but they do not have windows. As a last resort, the book drop room can be used. It is not an interior room, but it does not have windows.

IV. Staff Compensation Related to Inclement Weather Situations:

If the library closes, or if an employee is unable to reach or remain at the library because of inclement weather, he/she may utilize available vacation leave, personal days, or comp time in lieu of time missed on that day. Employees may otherwise choose to make up missed hours caused by inclement weather during that week.

This policy replaces any previous policy regarding inclement weather or emergency closings.

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