



Emergency Policy & Guidelines

General Facility Closure Guidelines

The DeWitt Community Library is a public service institution, and every effort is made to maintain regular hours for the public. The Library will be closed only when weather conditions deteriorate to the point where traveling is hazardous, when vital equipment in the building fails, or when there is a general emergency.

Inclement Weather: Snow Storms or Other Natural Disasters

The Library has an obligation to maintain regular hours whenever possible, and employees and volunteers should report to work unless otherwise notified. If the decision to close the Library during an emergency or catastrophe is to be made by the Library Director or his/her designee, it will be based upon:

- General conditions of roads in DeWitt, IA
- Condition of the Library's parking lots and walkways
- Availability to staff to open and operate the Library
- Condition of the building's equipment and facilities
- Requests for closure by local or state agencies.

When standard Library hours are temporarily changed, a notice will be posted on the doors of the library whenever possible. Notices will always be posted in local media outlets, and on the library's website and social media sites. A telephone tree will be developed to inform staff members of the change. When feasible, a contact person for groups scheduled to use the meeting rooms will also be notified. Library Trustees and City Administration will be notified in a timely manner if the library closes during normal scheduled hours.

Utility or Mechanical Outage

In case of loss of utilities or serious malfunction of primary mechanical systems, staff-in-charge will consult Public Works Department and/or respective utility company to determine the extent of the outage and possible course of action. With or without information from those agencies, staff-in-charge is authorized to close the facility if the power duration exceeds 30 minutes. A determination to reopen will be made once power is restored and facility is deemed secure.

Media Inquiry for Facility Closure

In cases of significant emergencies that result in the temporary closure of the library facility, all media inquiries will be forwarded to the Library Director or their designee, and the City Administrator, as necessary.

Response and Procedure for Other Emergencies:

a. Severe Thunderstorm and/or Tornado Watch/Warning:

- i. A Tornado or Thunderstorm WATCH is declared when conditions are favorable, but conditions are not yet dangerous. A WARNING indicates severe weather is imminent and residents should seek shelter immediately.
- ii. When a Severe Weather or Tornado WATCH is issued, library staff will notify patrons in the library that a WATCH has been issued and that the staff will notify patrons of any

changes in that status. The library's phone will be made available to anyone who needs/wants to be picked up from the facility.

iv. If the WATCH expires, staff will notify patrons. If the WATCH becomes a WARNING, the Staff will notify library patrons and advise them to seek shelter in the library's designated shelter area (the hallway near the public restrooms). Doors shall remain unlocked to afford accessible shelter to the public in need. Children who do not have parents with them will be taken to the designated shelter area by library staff.

b. Fire:

i. Patrons and library staff are required to leave the building should the fire alarms go off or if there is a fire in the building that somehow does not set off the fire alarms. Staff & patrons will remain outside the building until the local Fire Department declares it safe to return inside.

c. Health Emergencies:

i. Staff members should exercise caution when administering first aid of even minor nature because of the safety of the injured individual and the potential liability of the staff member. Without specialized training, it is not advisable for staff to undertake more than keeping the sick or injured patron comfortable and protected from needless disturbance until professional medical help arrives. Since each case is unique, staff members should use their own judgment to what is prudent and reasonable.

ii. In case of serious medical emergency, 911 should be called immediately for assistance and instruction. Staff should check the individual for a medic-alert bracelet or necklace.

iii. Do not move the individual unless safety is a concern. Try to clear the area of any on-lookers to provide a little privacy for the injured/sick individual.

iv. Staff should not dispense any medication, including aspirin, to patrons. However, there is a first aid kit at the Circulation counter stocked with band-aids, rubber gloves, and antiseptic wipes to treat small cuts and abrasions.

*Note: Library staff should notify the Library Director of any emergencies/issues as soon as it is feasible.

In all cases of emergency, evacuation, or shelter, adult patrons should be encouraged—but cannot be forced—to take shelter. To the greatest extent possible, unattended children will be taken into and kept in staff care until they can be returned to parental or law enforcement custody.

Reviewed and approved by the Library Board of Trustees 12/10/2018

Library logo and name updated 11/21/20