

Grimsby Public Library – Inclement Weather and Unscheduled Closure Policy

Number:

O-13-15

Approval Date:

January 12, 2022

Effective Date:

January 12, 2022

Review Date:

December 2023

Notes:

- Approved: December 12, 2013
- Revised: December 9, 2015
- Revised: December 13, 2017
- Revised: December 11, 2019
- Revised: January 12, 2022

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline roles and responsibilities in situations where the Library temporarily suspends or curtails operations due to an emergency situation, such as severe weather as well as in cases when the Library remains in operation but some staff may experience difficulty reporting to work due to inclement weather or other emergency conditions.

Guidelines

The determination to close the Library shall be made by the CEO or designate in consultation with the Director of the Art Gallery except where evacuation is essential for staff and public safety or by order of police or fire officials.

If the CEO is not available, the person in charge that day will make the decision in consultation with the Art Gallery Director or designate.

Conditions Warranting Closure

Non-emergency closing: Failure of heating/cooling equipment during periods of extreme weather, lack of electrical power, lack of water (water main break) or inadequate staffing levels.

Emergency evacuation:

Building problems resulting in clear and present danger to employees and/or patrons (e.g. gas leak, noxious/toxic fumes, fire) or any event such as a criminal investigation, severe accident involving injury, or severe building damage.

Non-openings, delayed openings or early closings:

Severely inclement weather. In such cases the decision to close will be based upon:

- General conditions of roads.
- Condition of parking lots and walkways.
- Availability of staff to open and operate the Library.
- Requests for closure by local or provincial agencies.
- Severe Weather Warning as issued by Environment Canada

If the Library closes prior to the scheduled closing time, all full-time employees and any part-time employees already present at work shall be paid for the remainder of their shift. Any employees, who have not yet arrived for their scheduled shift, shall be paid for their scheduled shift.

If the Library is not to be opened to the public at all, every effort shall be made to make this determination at least two hours before the scheduled opening time and to alert all scheduled staff. All employees scheduled to work during hours when the Library closes unexpectedly shall receive their normal day's pay.

If a closure continues beyond one day, staff is responsible for remotely accessing their work email accounts or the Library website each day for instructions as to whether the Library is open or closed. If staff is unable to access email online from home they should call their immediate supervisor or the CEO. Compensation for missed time for extended closures may be referred to the Library Board.

In some cases, such as temporary power outages, the Library may be closed temporarily to the public, however staff will be required to stay on site until the situation is resolved or more information is available regarding the timeline of an expected resolution. If the outage is expected to continue past 5:00 PM, or if no information is available regarding an expected return of service as of 4:30 PM, the Library will be closed for the remaining regular hours of operation. All full-time and part-time employees scheduled to work during such an event shall receive their normal day's pay.

Staff Responsibilities

During periods of poor weather, employees are expected to make every reasonable effort to report for work as scheduled. It is recognized, however, that inclement weather may cause significant transportation problems or locally hazardous conditions. Employees are expected to give first consideration to their personal safety in evaluating their ability to commute to work. In such cases, the following protocol shall be observed:

1. An employee may decide not to come to work or leave early at such time as information is broadcast that:
 - A public road is closed by the police (due to weather) that is a main arterial route to the facility from that employee's residence.
 - School Buses are not operating.
 - A major storm is imminent which, for purposes of clarity, is a Severe Weather Warning issued by Environment Canada that directly affects the Town of Grimsby, the employee's place of residence, or route to work.
2. In all of the situations found in Number 1, the employee is expected to contact their direct supervisor as soon as practicable and advise the reason(s) that they will not be coming into work or will be leaving work early. Such day, or portion of a day, will be taken as earned vacation, floater day or as time in lieu of overtime. If there is a loss of pay, an employee may request an opportunity to make-up the time if appropriate or use accumulated paid leave except sick leave.
3. The employee and supervisor shall mutually ensure that there is minimum negative impact on operations when making such a decision.

Communication of Closure

In cases where Library closure is determined prior to regular hours of operation, the CEO or designate will directly communicate the closure to Library staff, members of the Library Board, Town of Grimsby CAO via email or phone. In addition, Art Gallery staff should be notified as well as any community partners expected in the facility on that day. Public notice of the closure will also be posted on the Library's website, Social Media channels, and the Library's phone system as well as applicable media outlets.

In cases where the Library closes after some period of operation, in addition to the above, signage will be posted on the door and a message will be added to the Library's phone system. Staff will inform the visiting public of the closure and ensure that they exit the Library safely and have time to arrange for transportation if necessary. Efforts will be made to inform any impacted program registrants or volunteers if possible.

Related Policies

Employee Code of Conduct, Performance and Disciplinary Action Policy