The EBLIDA Newsletter is normally published monthly and deals with European library & information issues, programmes, news and events of interest to the library and the cultural community.

*** Special issue (3) ***

Guidelines on access policies, personnel security, social distancing and sanitation of collections

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Guidelines on access policies, personnel security, social distancing and sanitation of collections

*Editorial, by Ton van Vlimmeren, President EBLIDA*

Setting uniform rules concerning access policies, personnel security, social distancing and sanitation of collections is not an easy task. During and after the Covid-19 crisis, library practices have been, and will be, driven by three factors:

a.) national health regulations, which vary from one country to another within the general framework provided by the World Health Organisation;

b.) risk perception, which is different whether the library is based in Estonia, where half of all hospitalized patients are in the Saare island, or in Italy and Spain;

c.) the size and the arrangement of library spaces, which differs from one library premise to another.

A certain number of countries - Estonia, Ireland, The Netherlands, Germany (Public Library of Cologne), Italy, others will soon follow - have already produced recommendations and guidelines...
are returned), they follow different perspectives on other points. In the Netherlands, detailed instructions concern procedural rules for the different categories of people who access libraries. In Ireland and Italy more emphasis is put on the handling of physical collections. As for Germany, the experience of the Public Library of Cologne is included which focusses on organisational aspects.

The hottest issue is infected book returns after loan; the generalised suggested quarantine for books is normally set at 72 hours (but in Poland quarantine has been extended to two weeks). In Estonia, where library lockdown was belated and state libraries only stayed open with limitations, book circulation takes place with the following procedure: users choose books from catalogues, send their wishes to the library, librarians prepare book packages and leave them in special library rooms close to the library main entrance; in some cases, library use official postal services to deliver items. When books are returned, they are kept untouched for three days (the suggested quarantine for books 72 hours is the time suggested by the World Health Organization) and then re-shelved. (See special issue of April 2020 Newsletter: the EBLIDA Checklist in the face of the Covid-19 crisis)

We hope to offer a useful insight into the European Library community by providing the texts of the guidelines enacted in four European countries on access policies, personnel security, social distancing and sanitation of collections.

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**Germany**

**Public Library of Cologne**

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**Current State**

All employees of the City Library are currently in their home offices, with the exception of some emergency services for maintaining IT and other unavoidable matters.

The Stadtbibliothek works with subject-specific library software on its own servers. The usual municipal home office access is very limited. Employees have been entrusted with special tasks, including further development of digital services. The analogue media are currently not available to citizens. The City Library is working on various service models to enable contactless media use (models 2 and 3).

**Reason**

Many citizens need materials for education, training and further education from their home office - this also applies to pupils and people in training.

**Model 1 without visitors**

The City Library can employ its staff without opening the facilities and without customer contact, as there are many longstanding stock, administrative and organisational tasks and storage activities that cannot be carried out from home.
The first step would be to return from the home office and continue to provide a home office for risk groups. This measure also serves to prepare for the gradual opening to visitors.

**General conditions**

- Adherence to the prescribed hygiene standards (see also notices) and regular special cleaning by the relevant body (to be agreed with the cleaning company);
- Maintaining the minimum distances of 1.50 - 2 m;
- Blocking off common areas in the library and using common rooms as offices and distributing staff to the blocked-off public areas;
- Meetings to continue to be held through electronic channels until further notice;
- Provision of parking facilities as before the closure (see also city regulations);
- Work in small teams, if possible only 2 persons in one place, with adherence to the minimum distance or work in individual offices and spatially offset work (see above);
- Reduce meetings outside your own department / subject area (floor) / district library if possible;
- Delayed work after consultation with the department management;
- Daily home office only after agreement with the department management and in case of reasonable activity;
- Employees from risk groups are excluded upon presentation of a doctor's certificate - in the further course of the assignment on-site in accordance with city regulations;
- The protection of employees is a top priority; it is always based on the recommendations and guidelines of the city, state and federal government and is continuously adapted to these.

**Model 2 Municipal library-to-go - contactless service for pre-ordered media**

(electronically ordered media can be picked up without contact)

Models 1 and 2 can be implemented in parallel or in a short time sequence; model 2 requires relatively few employees on site. The opening hours could be arranged in such a way that there is no interaction between employees and customers, or very little interaction in the set-up model. The applicable protection regulations for employees and customers are observed.

In addition to the use of digital services, customers can also use the physical / analogue stocks. All media in the municipal library can already be researched and ordered via the online catalogue on the Internet.

New: with this system, customers can pick up their media without having to get in contact with the library staff. Customers order their media online, these are compiled by the library staff, ready for lending and can be collected by the user without personal contact - for example with an order number via a pick-up sluice / pick-up window / pick-up shelf in a certain timeslot. If necessary, they can be returned via the existing 24/7 external return service at the Central Library.

**Surface-mounted model 2/1**

Extensions of badges and, if necessary, brief consultations could be held in a limited space in the entrance area/foyer with protective equipment (spit protection device, mask), but should be kept to a minimum. The maximum number of users present is checked (admission control).

**Intermediate stage - Monday model**

We work here only at the 3 locations as on Mondays with guard duty on the floors and additional guard duty for the areas in front of the library. In the two district libraries there is one security guard per floor. Access control - only a limited number of visitors at the same time - is carried out by the security guards. These are equipped with visitor counters. Only lending and returning is possible - no other services yet. The employees are entrusted with internal work.
Model 3 - Supermarket model
(Without stay, only shelves and self-service with safety distances, seats will be cleared away and common areas blocked, if necessary only opening of partial areas)

Models 1 and 3 can be implemented in parallel or in a short time sequence; model 3 requires very few employees on site. The opening hours could initially be arranged in such a way that there is hardly any interaction between employees and customers. The applicable protective regulations for employees and customers are observed.

In the public areas of the municipal library, similar to a supermarket, the only opening hours are for taking media from the shelves, while the issue and return of media is self-service using the existing RFID self-service systems. The common areas are closed. Appropriate instructions on proper hygiene measures will be posted for all visitors*.

Staffing in the public area is greatly reduced. Extensions of badges and, if necessary, brief consultations could take place with protective equipment (spitting protection device, mask), but these should be kept to a minimum. Maximum number of users present is controlled (admission control).

Based on the recommendations of the state, the number of visitors is limited in such a way that 10 square metres are available per visitor, similar to the regulation in supermarkets.

Final model - with gradual reduction of the above measures

Re-opening with stay (if necessary, initially visitor restrictions and minimum distances) and programme (if necessary, initially with a limited number of participants) based on the respective regulations of the city, state and federal government up to normal conditions.

Ireland
Libraries Development, Local Government Management Agency (LGMA)

Recommendations for Handling Physical Material in Libraries in Relation to COVID-19

Note on recommendations

The following recommendations have been reviewed by Deputy Chief Medical Officer Alan Smith at the Department of Health. It is his recommendation that they are appropriate to support the handling of books and other physical library materials (e.g. CDs, DVDs) during the COVID-19 period.

The recommendations were prepared by Libraries Development, Local Government Management Agency (LGMA) in line with available international best practice regarding the handling of books and other physical library materials during the COVID-19 period. Additional feedback was sought...
being followed by libraries in Europe, North America, Asia and Australia. Where guidance does exist regarding the length of time the COVID-19 virus is active on surfaces (particularly cardboard, paper or plastic), it has been acknowledged and interpreted in a conservative manner to allow for as safe an environment for library staff as possible. (See Disinfecting circulating books, Mitigating COVID-19 When Managing Paper-Based, Circulating, and Other Types of Collections, medRxiv)

County and City librarians are advised to use their discretion in utilising the following recommendations, and if in any doubt at all, exercise the utmost caution when making available physical materials to the public during the COVID-19 period.

Existing Workplace Guidelines

Advice from the HSE:

- Appropriate physical distancing must be applied (at least 2 metres distance between people).
- Anyone with a fever or cough should stay at home, regardless of travel or contact history.
- See further information in the guidelines below regarding conditions where movements should be restricted.

Handling Physical Library Materials

To ensure the safety of staff and library users, all physical materials will be handled by staff applying physical distancing guidelines. After handling materials, hands should be washed for 20 seconds as per HSE guidelines.

Recommended quarantine period for library physical material

The recommended quarantine period for physical lending material (books, DVDs etc.) at risk of contamination from the COVID-19 virus is 72 hours. For this period, the materials should be placed in boxes, sealed and date marked and where possible, stored in a separate location.

Library materials within the library which have not been handled since the closure of libraries on March 12th 2020 are ready for lending as the 72-hour quarantine period has now passed.

Library materials that were returned before the closure of libraries on March 12th 2020, and have not been handled, are ready for lending as the 72-hour quarantine period has now passed since the item’s return.

Material may be at risk of contamination when returned to the library at any point after the closure of libraries on March 12th 2020, or if they have been handled by library staff following this date.

When making an assessment of risk, staff should consider:

- When was the item returned?
- When was it last handled?

If staff can confirm that an item has been isolated (i.e. quarantined or not handled) for 72 hours or more, then it can be considered for use in any delivery service that may be feasible.

Library Materials Delivery Service

Where feasible, local authorities can introduce, or continue to provide a limited service for the delivery of physical materials to members of the community. A delivery service is intended to provide access to reading material for members of the public most in need during this time, including the elderly, isolated and self-isolated. The members of the community to be offered the
Any service should be delivered in accordance with the following guidelines:

Preparation of physical material for distribution

- Physical material identified for distribution must meet the 72-hour quarantine period whether selected from stock within the library or returned from loan.
- Care should be taken in the handling of physical items for distribution. These should be packaged securely in a dedicated area in the library branch.
- Deliveries for each individual member of the public should be packaged separately and securely to avoid risk of cross-contamination en route.
- Appropriate physical distancing (at least 2 metres distance between people) must be maintained in the preparation for delivery of physical material by any means.

Delivery of Physical Material

- Packages of library material should be delivered only by library staff or other authorised personnel (staff / authorised volunteers from partner organisations).
- Appropriate physical distancing measures and other measures as advised by the HSE (see https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/protect-yourself.html) to protect against the spread of the virus must be adhered to in the delivery of the items.

Return of physical material

Any physical items returned since the closure of libraries on March 12th (e.g. by book drop or as part of the delivery service) are subject to a 72-hour quarantine. Items should be placed in a separate area where possible in boxes sealed and date marked on the day they are returned for the 72-hour quarantine period. After moving materials, hands should be washed for 20 seconds as per HSE guidelines.

This procedure applies to any items returned between now and the resumption of normal service. Libraries Development, LGMA, will provide City and County Librarians with models for different materials delivery services that can be implemented at local level, resources permitting.

General guidelines from the Department of Health (published 26 March 2020):

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand rub if your hands are not visibly dirty.
- Practice good respiratory hygiene, that is, when coughing and sneezing, cover your mouth and nose with flexed elbow or tissue – discard tissue immediately into a closed bin and clean your hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water
- Maintain physical distancing, that is, leave at least 2 metres (6 feet) distance between yourself and other people, particularly those who are coughing, sneezing and have a fever.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth – if you touch your eyes, nose or mouth with your contaminated hands, you can transfer the virus from the surface to yourself.
- If you have a fever or a cough, you should stay at home regardless of your travel or contact history.
- If you’ve returned from any other country, you should restrict your movement for 14 days.
- All household contacts of a suspected case (that is, a person who is awaiting a test or test result) should restrict movements until the test is reported negative or for 14 days.
- All non-essential indoor visits to other persons' homes should be avoided.

Covid-19 and health protection in libraries
A review of the literature and some recommendations on the handling of materials and the management of workspace
by Vittorio Ponzani & Rosa Maiello

Following the Covid-19 pandemic, many libraries in Europe and worldwide were subject to closure. Others introduced entry quotas, reduced the range of services they deliver and suspended programs normally taking place at the library such as reading promotion and information literacy. However, almost all libraries continue to offer distance services, and in many cases they have enriched them. Depending on the national situation or on case-focused risk assessment, in many countries library staff are working mainly or exclusively from home, presence on the library premises being limited to a few essential activities, while in others they continue working on site, or have just recommenced to do so.

In any case, libraries, from now on and in the perspective of a full re-opening at the end of the lockdown, shall put in place adequate measures to protect both staff and users. Risks go beyond those arising from the physical presence of people on the premises, met by the recommendations issued at governmental level to all public services. They comprise the adoption of distance working as the preferred standard during the whole lockdown; prescribing that people with Covid-19 symptoms do not go to work; ensuring that a safe distance is observed; banning gatherings and favouring social distancing measures; avoiding any sort of physical contact. Yet, risks derive also from the necessity to handle materials of various sorts (books and other documents, forms, postal parcels, devices, working surfaces, a.s.o.).

Apart from complying with governmental measures and recommendations from health authorities, it is advisable that the latest results of scientific research on the transmissibility of the virus be known so as to take adequate prevention measures regarding access to and the presence of people in the library spaces, safety of those spaces as regards treating, moving and using books and other materials as well as any physical equipment.
Here follows a review of the main information sources on the topic that were selected prior to drawing the conclusions in the last paragraph.

Literature review

As regards the persistence of Covid-19 on surfaces, the prevailing opinion in the scientific community agrees with the authoritative “New England Journal of Medicine”: up to 4 hours on copper, up to 24 hours on cardboard and up to 72 hours on plastic and steel.
The “Journal of Hospital Infection” points out that the endemic human coronavirus strain may remain infectious between 2 hours and 9 days, at room temperature, on inanimate surfaces such as metal, glass, or plastic. This research regards all coronaviruses, including SARS and MERS.

Kampf et al., *Persistence of coronaviruses on inanimate surfaces and their inactivation with biocidal agents*, “Journal of Hospital Infection”, 104 (2020), n. 3

**At least one meter apart** is the safe distance to prevent spread among apparently healthy individuals and the pathogenic potential of the aerosol on surfaces, as recommended by the Government following the measures of WHO (World Health Organization).

Nevertheless, it was observed that aerosols spread by infected, asymptomatic persons are contagious as well. Moreover, a recent study highlights that, in certain environmental conditions, gas clouds emitted during the breathing process can travel up to 7-8 meters far, meaning that a Covid-19 carrier may infect from that distance both people and materials, including ventilation, heating and air-conditioning systems.


The ISS (Istituto Superiore di Sanità, the Italian Higher Institution for Health) prepared recommendations on hygiene such as the disinfection of surfaces and the control of indoor air quality.


In particular, see the piece of advice on hygiene at the workplace (p. 6-9 of the Report), including control of ventilation, heating and air-conditioning systems (p.6-8) and the overall summary chart (p.9).

As regards library associations, the following documents are of interest:

- IFLA: [COVID-19 and the Global Library Field](https://www.ifla.org-info.org/covid19)
- American Library Association: [Pandemic preparedness: resources for libraries](https://www.alanet.org/)

Some practical guidelines

From the above review of scientific literature, it is possible to draw some conclusions, inspired, at the same time, by an essay on the disinfection of books and library hygiene. The latter may be outdated (especially as regards the types of disease and the disinfection methods), yet it is still useful, not only because it stimulates a reflection on the diverse aspects to consider, but also because it prompts us to think of the large variety of bacteria and pathogens that can be transmitted simply by touching materials, meaning that it shall be safe to maintain certain precautions also after virus Covid-19 is defeated.


Drawing from the decisions already enacted by National authorities and from scientific literature, the following measures seem advisable till the end of the epidemic, that is well past the end of the lockdown:

- maintaining entry quotas for staff and ensuring that all used workstations are at least one meter apart – though, considering the distance gas clouds can travel under certain
• recommending that such distance be respected during the permanence on the premises and that compliance with the measure be monitored;
• making disinfectant hand-rubs available at the entrance and inviting everyone to use them before moving on;
• recommending that nobody touch their eyes, nose and mouth to protect their and other people’s health and informing that this is necessary also to preserve the disinfection of surfaces (books, parcels, forms, tables, PCs, keyboards and any object in the library) and to avoid that they become contaminated.
• recommending everyone that they wash their hands frequently, or that they use an alcohol-based hand rub;
• recommending everyone that they cover their mouth and nose with flexed elbow or use a tissue when they sneeze or cough. The prohibition for Coronavirus-affected individuals to leave home remains in place and it is advised that anyone with a fever or symptoms of a respiratory infection call their GP;
• frequently cleaning surfaces with chlorine- and alcohol-based disinfectants;
• frequently airing indoor spaces;
• frequently disinfecting and sanitizing indoor spaces;
• making sure that ventilation systems, if present, are methodically monitored and maintained;
• during lockdown avoid using heating or cooling systems as much as possible, unless weekly cleaning of the filters can be guaranteed;
• envisaging that staff use disposable latex (or nitrile) gloves to handle books or other materials consulted or returned by users whose health condition is not known with certainty, and that the materials be put aside for 72 hours (3 days), better still in a well-ventilated area, preventing their use and lending for the same amount of time;
• the same measures shall be put in place to handle books and other materials of recent acquisition, donated to the library, returning from Inter-Library loan – extending the same caution to their packaging;
• moreover, recommend all users that they:
  o clean and disinfect their hands prior to handling library books;
  o avoid wetting their fingers with saliva prior to turning the pages;
  o avoid coughing or sneezing over the books;
• ask users that they declare, upon returning a book or any other document, whether the latter was in the possession of anyone who resulted Covid19-positive (ensuring that this declaration will simply entail higher caution in the treatment of the material and bear no consequences to the user.);
• prepare and hand out written instructions for staff and users and post them at the entrance, inside the offices and in the rooms accessible to the public.

It may be superfluous to reiterate that also after the end of the lockdown, until the epidemic is totally over, working from home should be promoted as much as possible, also by establishing new organizational routines and increasing distance, digital services.
Protocol protection and safety of library sector employees and visitors when library branches are reopened.

General:

- The protocol below applies to the entire library sector.
- Prerequisite for opening up the library is that the library complies with the guidelines below.
- If there are updates on these guidelines, they will be made as soon as possible.

1. Library organisations and library offices

- Rules will be hanging on the wall outside of the library, and must be repeated inside.
- Rules for visitors can also be found on the website (pop-up or homepage).
- Where possible, work from home.
- Specify the maximum number of visitors that may enter the library at the same time, and implement “access items – bags/baskets” of visitors as explained under point 5: “EXPLANATION SYSTEM OF ACCESS ITEMS”
- Make sure that everyone can keep a distance of 1.5 metres from each other in the library office, also in front of the library building. Use tape on the library floor and beyond to indicate the distance of 1.5 meters.
- Where possible, apply a 1-way routing system in the library branch, with separate entrance and exit.
- Close reading tables and do not allow visitors to continue reading material in the library.
- Appoint a corona officer.
- Give employees a detailed instruction on how to implement the covid-19 prevention protocol.
- Enforce the rules in and around the library branch.
- Instruct library staff to address visitors on undesirable behaviour when rules are not adhered to.
- Work as much as possible in teams.

2. Care for maximum hygiene

- Place cough screens at information desks.
- Make disinfectant gel with instructions available to all employees.
- Allow visitors contactless/self-service for lending and returning books.
- Clean lending points and access cards and areas regularly.
- Disinfect the access items (baskets/bags) after the visitor leaves the library and before other visitors use the area.
- Ordering additional collection items is done outside opening hours or in closed aisles.
- Clear aisles of obstacles.
- Keep facilities such as toilets and coffee machines closed to the public.
- Place returned books in quarantine for 72 hours after to prevent the spread of the virus.

3. For employees

- Maintain 1.5 meters distance.
- Don't shake hands.
Do not share your work supplies with others.
Wash your hands at least 6 times a day, according to the instructions. At least before eating, after visiting the toilet, before and after travelling by public transport, after cleaning.
Cough and sneeze in the elbow and bring paper handkerchiefs.

Stay at home if you have one of the following symptoms: nose cold, runny nose, sneezing, sore throat, light cough, temperature (up to 38°C).
Stay at home if someone in your house has a fever (from 38°C) and/or shortness of breath.

4. For visitors

- Keep 1.5 meters away.
- Don’t shake hands.
- Do not share your supplies with others.
- Wash your hands at least 6 times a day, according to the instructions. At least before eating, after visiting the toilet, after travelling by public transport, after cleaning.
- Cough and sneeze in the elbow and bring paper handkerchiefs.
- Stay at home if you have one of the following complaints: nose cold, runny nose, sneezing, sore throat, light cough, high temperature (up to 38°C).
- Stay at home if someone in your house has a fever (above 38°C) and/or shortness of breath.
- Come to the library alone or with a maximum of 1 other person from your household.
- Children under the age of 16 only have access when accompanied by an adult family member.
- Borrow specific books, preferably with booking in advance.
- Do not take remove books from the shelf unless you are actually going to borrow the book.
- Always follow the instructions of the staff.
- Use a library card. If you run out of library cards, we ask you to wait until a library card is available.

5. Explanation maximum number of visitors

- Libraries have a maximum number of visitors who are simultaneously allowed in the library building.
- The space allowance per person is 10 m². To regulate access, the library has a system of tracked access items, described below.
- An alternative system is only possible if it achieves the standard of a maximum of one visitor per 10 m² not being exceeded.

6. Explanation system of access items

- Visitors are required to enter the library premises with an available access item. It can be a basket, a bag or any other item, as long as it can be visibly worn or carried in the library.
- These access items are located at the entrance of the library.
- The number of access items available depends on the floor area of the library location, maximum 1 item per 10 m².
- For a library with a floor area of 100 m² this is 10 (100/10 = 10).
- It is not possible to enter the library without an access item.

7. Suppliers

- Visitors are required to enter the library premises with an available access item. This can be a basket, a bag or any other item, as long as it can be visibly worn or carried in the library.
- These access items are located at the entrance of the library.
- The number of access items available depends on the floor area of the library location, maximum 1 item per 10 m².
- For a library with a floor area of 100 m² this is 10 (100/10 = 10).
EBLIDA is promoting NewsGuard as well as any other software designed to combat disinformation and misinformation. NewsGuard’s peculiar feature is that it works on website evaluation; therefore, it examines the context of news, rather than its text. It does not apply filtering systems intended to eliminate information, nor uses lexical or combinatory systems forcibly based on more or less biased algorithms.

NewsGuard provides credibility ratings and detailed “Nutrition Label” reviews for the information websites that account for 90% of online engagement with news in each country in which it operates (France, Germany, Italy, the U.K., and the U.S.). The ratings are conducted by trained analysts from diverse backgrounds, who review and describe the websites’ adherence to nine journalistic criteria. Each news website receives a Green or Red rating. Green-Red ratings signal if a website generally is diffusing accurate and correct information or knowingly publishes falsehood and propaganda.

Here is the NewsGuard list of websites which diffused fake news or disinfomed citizens about Covid-19. For more detailed information, follow the Coronavirus Misinformation Tracking Center: https://www.newsguardtech.com/coronavirus-misinformation-tracking-center/

France

- AlterInfo.net
- AubeDigitale.com
- Cogito.com
- EgaliteEtReconciliation.fr
- EpochTimes.fr
- Fawkes-News.com
- FL24.net
- Fr.SputnikNews.com
- French.PressTV.com
- LesMoutonsEnranges.fr
- LesMoutonsRebelles.com
- LumiereSurGaia.com
- Medias-Presse.info
- NoSignalFound.fr
- NouvelOrdremondial.cc
- NS2017.Wordpress.com
- Panamza.com
- Patriote.Info
- ReseauInternational.net
- ResistanceRepublicaine.eu
- RiposteLaique.com
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