

NEUSE REGIONAL LIBRARY

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES POLICY

POLICY #2009-04

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I. Introduction

The Neuse Regional Library Board has adopted the following Emergency Procedures Policy to ensure the safety of staff, volunteers, and patrons. In any emergency, life is more important than property. In any serious or life threatening situation, staff should phone 911 or other emergency services contacts.

These guidelines outline what to do in the event of some specific emergencies. Not all situations can be anticipated. In the event of an unforeseen emergency situation, staff members are instructed to use their best judgment as to the proper action.

Under no circumstances should a staff member attempt to force a patron to comply with safety precautions. Staff members are not responsible for patrons who have been warned of dangers and decline to act appropriately.

The departmental supervisor or branch manager in charge is responsible for sending a detailed memo after the incident to the Library Director regarding any emergency situation. If in doubt, staff should always report an incident rather than fail to do so.

II. Bomb Threats

- A. Staff should keep the caller on the telephone as long as possible. Immediately, while the caller is kept on the line, another staff member should notify the police of the situation.
- B. Staff should ask the caller to repeat the message and try to write down every word that the person says.
- C. If the caller does not indicate the location of the bomb or the time of possible detonation, staff should ask for this information.
- D. Particular attention should be paid to peculiar background noises such as motors running, background music, and any other sounds that may indicate from which location the call is coming.
- E. Staff should listen closely to the voice for gender, voice quality (calm or excited), accents, and speech impediments.
- F. The building should be evacuated following the "Rules Governing Evacuating the Building." The police will handle the actual bomb search.

III. Disorderly Patrons

- A. Library patrons should be engaged in activities associated with the use of the Library. Patrons not engaged in reading, studying, or using library materials or computers may be required to leave the building.
- B. Any conduct interfering with the quiet, orderly use of the Library, library materials, or library property is prohibited. Persons who violate this policy or engage in illegal behaviors may be subject to sanctions, including: being asked to leave the library premises; being reported to the police; and legal prosecution. Repeat offenders may lose their library privileges.
- C. If a staff member or patron is verbally or physically threatened by a disorderly individual and feels that assistance is needed to secure a safe environment, local law enforcement should be notified and asked to come to the Library immediately.
- D. Staff members should distance themselves from the disruptive persons until the authorities arrive. Staff members should not approach disruptive individuals and should also keep other persons away.
- E. The departmental supervisor or branch manager is responsible for completing and sending a "Problem Report Form" to the Library Director regarding the situation immediately.

IV. Fire

- A. Staff should notify the Fire Department or phone 911 as soon as possible.
- B. The building should be evacuated following the "Rules Governing Evacuating the Building."

V. Medical Emergencies

- A. Staff should notify the proper emergency services personnel or phone 911 as soon as possible.
- B. Unless they are certified, staff members should not attempt to provide first aid of even a minor nature because of the safety of the injured individual and the potential liability of the staff member and the Library. Staff members should only attempt to keep the sick or injured person comfortable and protected from needless disturbance until medical help can be obtained.
- C. No medication (including aspirin) should be dispensed.
- D. All injuries, whether to staff or patrons, should be immediately reported in a detailed memo to the Library Director.

VI. Rules Governing Closing the Library

- A. In cases of severe weather and other emergencies, the Library Director will decide whether or not to close the library. In the absence of the Library Director, the departmental supervisor or branch manager will consult the Library Director by phone on the decision to close.

- B. The Library Director or the Administrative Assistant will notify the supervisors of each department or branch location of the closing.
- C. The supervisors of each department or branch manager will notify the staff members in their departments or library.
- D. If the library is being closed during normal operating hours, the staff members will notify patrons who are present.
- E. If appropriate, an authorized staff member will notify WITN Channel 7 regarding the closing.

VII. Rules Governing Evacuating the Building

- A. In the event of emergencies, it may be necessary to evacuate the Library. The decision to evacuate the Library at the time of the emergency will be made by the Library Director. In the absence of the Library Director, the departmental supervisor or branch manager will consult the Library Director by phone on the decision to close. In the event of a dire emergency that requires rapid reaction, the supervisor in charge of the Library may make the decision to evacuate and file a report to the Library Director when the Library reopens.
- B. The first priority is to get everyone out of the building. As long as it seems safe, staff members should walk through the building quickly to check for patrons and direct them to the exits. Staff members should conduct this “walk through” quickly, without putting themselves in danger.
- C. The appropriate emergency services personnel (such as the Police and the Fire Department) should be notified as soon as possible.
- D. All persons should be instructed to wait across the street from the building for safety.
- E. The departmental supervisor in charge or branch manager should try to determine who was working at the time and account for all staff members, if possible. If someone is not accounted for, the departmental supervisor in charge should inform the emergency services personnel.
- F. Once the building has been evacuated, only emergency services personnel should enter.
- G. Staff and patrons should follow the instructions of the Library Director or the emergency services personnel.
- H. In order to be prepared to handle minor building emergencies, staff should be familiar with the location of water cut-offs and electrical panels in their buildings.

VIII. Severe Weather

- A. Severe weather may require closing the Library or evacuating the library building. In these cases, Staff should refer to the “Rules Governing Closing the Library” or the “Rules Governing Evacuating the Building.”
- B. When severe weather threatens, staff should monitor local radio or television stations for information.

C. Staff should monitor WITN Channel 7 for notification regarding library closings and re-openings.

D. Considerations for specific weather conditions:

1. Floods

- a. When flooding is imminent but only if time permits, all utilities in the building should be turned off at the main power switch. Staff should not touch any electrical equipment unless it is in a dry area.
- b. Staff should follow all emergency instructions and be prepared to evacuate.
- c. If staff members are caught in the building by rapidly rising waters, they should call 911 for help, then move to a higher floor or to the roof.

2. Hurricanes

In the event of a hurricane watch or a hurricane warning, the Library Director will decide whether or not to close the library. In the absence of the Library Director, the departmental supervisor or branch manager will consult the Library Director by phone on the decision to close. If the decision to close the Library is made, staff should follow the "Rules Governing Closing the Library."

3. Thunderstorms

Normal thunderstorms should not require any major precautions. Surge protectors should protect library computers. If the power goes off, staff should wait 15 minutes to see if the power comes back on. If it does not come back on, staff should follow the instructions of the Library Director who will decide whether or not to close the library. In the absence of the Library Director, the departmental supervisor or branch manager will consult the Library Director by phone on the decision to close. If it is determined that the building should be evacuated, the "Rules Governing Evacuating the Building" should be followed.

4. Tornadoes

If a tornado warning is in effect or if a tornado has been sighted, staff should ask patrons to move to safer areas, i.e., an interior part of the building away from windows, doors, and outside walls.

5. Winter storm warnings

In the event of a winter storm warning, the Library Director will decide whether or not to close the library. In the absence of the Library Director, the departmental supervisor or branch manager will consult the Library Director by phone on the decision to close. If the decision to close the Library is made, staff should follow the "Rules Governing Closing the Library."

Revised and adopted by the Neuse Regional Library Board
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