

Parry Sound Public Library COVID-19 Safety Plan

Business name: Parry Sound Public Library

Revision date:

Date completed: January 1, 2021

Developed by: R. Orr, CEO

Date distributed: January 14, 2021

Review date: February 1, 2021

The COVID-19 pandemic is an evolving situation – it remains incumbent upon the CEO to review the plan regularly and make changes as required. Refer to the Ontario government's COVID-19 website for up-to-date information.

This Safety Plan outlines how the Parry Sound Public Library will keep staff and the public as safe as possible during the COVID-19 pandemic. This plan has been prepared as required under the legislation Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020, S.O. 2020, C.17 and O. Reg 642/20: and will remain applicable until such time a pandemic response is no longer relevant, working in conjunction with the following Parry Sound Public Library policies/manuals:

HR-09 Health and Safety
HR-15 Mental Health and Safety
OP-02 Safety, Security and Emergencies in the Library
OP-09 Reopening Post-Epidemic/Pandemic
OP-17 Epidemic/Pandemic
OP-26 Handling of Materials During a Viral Pandemic
OP-28 Curbside Pick-up
Parry Sound Public Library Emergency and Safety Manual 2020

1. How will you ensure all workers know how and are able to keep themselves safe from exposure to COVID-19?

The CEO will monitor the North Bay Parry Sound Public Health Unit for updated information about COVID-19, at minimum on a regular weekday basis to ensure current information is provided to staff.

Any changes that are likely to impact our policies and/or procedures are conveyed in a verbal manner for immediate implementation, shared in writing via email, and additionally discussed at staff meetings (virtual or otherwise), to ensure all staff are aware of regulations and the reasons for which these changes are necessary. Continuing to ensure mental health and safety has been at the forefront for all staff of the Parry Sound Public Library since the beginning of the pandemic and ongoing.

Staff have been involved in the development of the procedures and processes in the Parry Sound Public Library's current service model. While policies, procedures and processes evolve as necessary, staff drive the development of appropriate safe practices. The CEO monitors evolving guidelines and recommendations regularly to ensure our policies and procedures are up to date and meet legislated requirements, health & safety recommendations, municipal policies, and ministerial guidelines.

The CEO will ensure staff are aware of, and have access to: Library policies, Library manuals, public health and workplace safety guidance for COVID-19.

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When we are able to safely reopen and provide in-house services, the Parry Sound Public Library has prepared and will post appropriate information on the Parry Sound Public Library website, social media accounts and physical signage to inform the public and mitigate the risk to staff and community.

These postings will provide information:

- for those entering the workplace
- in both official languages
- using resources available from the Government of Ontario, the Town of Parry Sound, and other agencies as appropriate
- regarding our protocols that will help to mitigate their staff and public risk.
- available in accessible formats upon request

2. How will you screen for COVID-19?

The Parry Sound Public Library employs daily screening to collect information regarding symptoms and interactions that may result in higher risk in the workplace. Based on the information provided, entry to the library space may be prohibited until further assessment or symptom resolution occurs.

Staff are expected to continue adherence to library policies and with the current protocols and procedures, at the direction of the Ontario Chief Medical Officer of Health which includes daily self-screening through the public health screening tool as adapted for the Parry Sound Public Library workplace. The checklist is to be completed each workday morning at arrival. (Refer to the workplace screening tool provided by the Government of Ontario, Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/>).

Staff are additionally expected to be responsible to themselves and to each other by fully disclosing any travel or potential contact with infected persons that may place them or their colleagues at risk, and by staying home if they have COVID-19 symptoms that are new, worsening or unexplained by an existing condition.

The CEO or designate are available for staff notifications if an individual is unable to work due to self-isolation, or symptomology. Additionally, the CEO has an obligation to the remaining staff members to implement mid-shift screening if apparent symptomology presents throughout a work day, and staff may be sent home if deemed appropriate – such actions are not punitive, but simply will provide staff with the assurance that all precautions are considered. Staff may also request to return home if symptoms present.

External contractors who will be spending extended time within the workplace, will also be required to complete the screening process at arrival.

Anyone, staff or worker, who does not pass the screening:

- may not enter the workplace
- should go home to self-isolate immediately
- should contact their health care provider or Telehealth Ontario (1-866-797-0000) to find out if they need a COVID-19 test and for further instructions

Upon entry to Parry Sound Public Library, the public will be provided with the opportunity to self-screen, with clear signage referring those who are symptomatic to our continuing curbside pick-up services as an alternative.

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Active public screening and / or contact tracing, as additional levels of risk mitigation, will be employed when mandated under legislation or Public Health direction.

3. How will you control the risk of transmission in your workplace?

COVID-19 can be spread by people who are asymptomatic, highlighting the magnitude of establishing effective control measures in the workplace. Early on, the Parry Sound Public Library CEO and Board determined that physical distancing, physical barriers, ventilation, proper sanitization, and PPE were essential for ensuring a safe environment for staff and public alike. In accordance with these unprecedented circumstances, new policies were developed and implemented as quickly as possible.

The Public Service Health & Safety Association, Ontario Ministry of Labour and library specific resources were consulted in determining policy content and best practices.

Hierarchy of controls

The hierarchy of controls (description below) has assisted in the appropriate controls for the Parry Sound Public Library. The numbered levels in the hierarchy of controls, in order from most effective to least effective, are:

1. elimination
2. substitution
3. engineering controls
4. administrative controls
5. personal protective equipment (PPE)

The higher the control is on the list, the more effective. The first three types of controls are more effective because once in place they do not usually require additional action by a worker. The effective use of administrative controls and PPE requires workers and others to implement them properly and consistently.

Even with the rapid and collaborative response to COVID-19, there are still many uncertainties about the disease. As new findings emerge, what we know about the risks and best practices for controls may change, so it is important to stay current with the most relevant information available. This safety plan approach allows for the incorporation of new information as it becomes available. It should be noted, substitution includes replacing a hazardous substance with something less hazardous; for an infectious disease such as COVID-19, substitution is not an option.

Elimination:

Initially, the Parry Sound Public Library completely mitigated risk by having all staff stop working or work from home, if possible. Within a library workplace, providing public service requires the use of engineering and administrative controls and staff use of PPE as appropriate.

Engineering Control:

Maximum protection to each person is offered by creating a physical barrier:

- Parry Sound Public Library installed plexi-glass barriers to maintain separation as the primary means of control for staff / public service interactions

Maximize physical distancing and separation

The most effective way to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission is to maintain physical distancing. Where possible workers can, in specific circumstances, continue to work from home and meet virtually.

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Public service requires most Parry Sound Public Library employees to work on site. To enable workers to maintain a physical distance of at least 2 metres from other people in the workplace, Parry Sound Public Library has implemented the following engineering and administrative controls:

- scheduling and other administrative changes to reduce the number of people who must share the same work space including during shifts and breaks
- providing adequate distancing by re-aligning the public space and placing highly visible markers indicating appropriate distancing
- providing adequate distancing by repurposing and realigning all available work areas

Source control masking

Using masks as source control involves having workers, visitors and clients in the workplace wear a mask to protect those around them. Parry Sound Public Library advises employees to use source control masking in combination with other existing control measures.

Masks are especially important indoors and help to reduce the risk in situations where physical distancing cannot be consistently maintained.

Source control masks are not to be used as a substitute for physical distancing – both control measures lower risk and should be used together (unless otherwise legislated or directed):

- As of January 14, 2021, staff are required to wear masks and maintain physical distance of at least six feet apart within the building, until further notice.
- All clients, customers and visitors to the Parry Sound Public Library will be required, as per public health and municipal guidelines, to wear face coverings (for example, non-medical mask, cloth mask) to help protect staff and to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 in the community.
- Additional requirements under the *Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act* may be (or become) applicable.
- Additional directives issued by the Government of Ontario; Chief Medical Officer of Health may also apply.

Even with other controls in place, including physical distancing and source control masking, there may be situations where PPE will be required. As the Parry Sound Public Library is a non-healthcare workplace, a non-surgical mask worn as part of PPE works as source control and would normally meet any requirements for face coverings; additionally, using gloves for incoming items may provide a further sense of protection for the employee.

Ventilation and air flow

The risk of COVID-19 transmission is higher in enclosed and crowded spaces. Parry Sound Public Library attempts to ensure that air-handling (HVAC) systems are maintained according to the manufacturer's instructions and meet appropriate safety standards.

Additional steps could include:

- the use of portable air cleaners

Additional steps currently include:

- keeping doors and windows open as much as possible in warmer weather
- capacity limits within the library
- continuing ventilation and air exchange after regular business hours
- use of available outdoor space whenever possible (for example, for breaks, and client interactions such as curbside pick-up)

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Reduce transmission from surfaces and objects

The virus that causes COVID-19 may be transferred to surfaces or objects. Workers can be infected if they touch their face with contaminated hands.

The public health recommendation is to clean high-touch surfaces at least twice a day. To reduce the risk of transmission, Parry Sound Public Library has identified:

- commonly touched surfaces and areas to be routinely cleaned and disinfected
- high-touch surfaces that need to be cleaned and disinfected more often (once the library is open to public service twice daily – at start and middle of each shift)
- tools, equipment and workstations to be assigned to single users during each shift
- the need to regularly clean and disinfect any shared equipment and tools
- time limits and appointments required for public access computers (once open to the public), with time between each appointment for disinfection and cleaning
- “Do not reshelve” designated boxes for patrons to place items removed from shelves but not wanted (once open to the public) to disinfect and quarantine prior to reshelving (see below)
- disinfection and quarantining (72 hours) of all items returned to the library prior to recirculating

Support good hand and respiratory hygiene

The same everyday steps recommended by public health officials to stop the spread of COVID-19 are essential in the workplace as well. One of the most important things we can all do is to wash our hands often with soap and water.

Parry Sound Public Library:

- posts reminders to wash hands, use proper cough and sneeze etiquette and avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth
- provides ways to properly clean hands by providing access to soap and water and, if that is not possible, alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- ensures that workers can clean their hands frequently and whenever needed
- have sanitizers available so that all workers and visitors can properly clean their hands before entering the building and after contact with objects and surfaces others may have touched

Personal protective equipment

Parry Sound Public Library staff have determined that at times, personal protective equipment (PPE) may be needed to ensure the mental or physical health and safety of the employee. Correct use of PPE can help prevent some exposures, but it does not take the place of other control measures – PPE must be used alongside other control measures already in place.

Following policies developed and implemented, Parry Sound Public Library staff using PPE will include those employees working in the space reserved for quarantining items – returning library materials and / or incoming shipments and mail – performing routine circulation functions for those items, as they enter into the 72-hour quarantining period.

Any PPE that staff employ should be appropriate for the purpose. The effectiveness of PPE depends on every person wearing it correctly and consistently. Staff received instruction regarding the limitations of as well as proper use and care of the available PPE.

Parry Sound Public Library is a non-healthcare setting; thus, PPE will normally include:

- an appropriate mask, and may include eye protection (face shield or goggles)
- Aside from receiving items from the exterior return bin (where gloves are required), gloves may be utilized as a matter of personal preference.

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Workers that wear PPE for protection against workplace hazards besides COVID-19 must continue to use that PPE as required. This includes gloves for new cleaning and disinfecting products that workers use because of COVID-19.

4. What will you do if there is a potential case, or suspected exposure to, COVID-19 at your workplace?

Step 1. Excluding symptomatic persons from the workplace:

Parry Sound Public Library employees follow the required checklist screening process either before arrival, or as they arrive at work each shift, to ensure that those who are sick stay home, or return home.

If the employee informs the CEO of symptoms, close contact with someone with symptoms, or that they were potentially exposed, they are required to complete the Government of Ontario self-assessment (<https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/>). The employee is required to follow any recommendations given by the tool, including being tested and self-isolating.

Additionally, potential exposure risks will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, with employees providing full disclosure to the CEO to allow for reasonable risk mitigation, which may include the employee being advised to refrain from entering the workplace.

If anyone shows symptoms in the workplace, they are required to return home, and if appropriate, complete the Government of Ontario self-assessment (<https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/>). The employee is required to follow any recommendations provided, including being tested and self-isolating. If they cannot leave the workplace immediately, they should be isolated until they are able to leave. (To isolate from other staff members and the public, the employee can go into the Quarantine Room.)

As in any medical emergency, contact with their designated emergency contact will follow, if appropriate and necessary. If the person is very ill, a call for 911 assistance with advice to the operator that they may have COVID-19.

Ask the person to contact their doctor or Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000 for further directions about testing and self-isolation.

Step 2: Contact Public Health

Local Public Health:

North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit (www.myhealthunit.ca)

Parry Sound Office – 70 Joseph St. Unit #302 Parry Sound 705-746-5801

In case of an exposure, contact with the local public health is crucial to ensure all guidelines and recommendations are followed. This would include sharing the requisite contact tracing information with the health unit.

To support contact tracing, Parry Sound Public Library has a system in place to provide information about which people had close interactions with an affected worker / visitor / patron. This will include information such as:

- dates and times of interactions
- approximate length and frequency of interactions
- full names
- contact telephone numbers
- addresses (for workers) or the name of the visitor's business

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Step 3: Follow public health direction

Local public health unit may require that:

- other workers who were exposed are notified and sent home to self-isolate, self-monitor and report any possible COVID-19 symptoms
- the workplace be shut down while the affected workplace or area and equipment are disinfected
- other public health measures are implemented

Clean and disinfect surfaces that may have been touched by the ill person as soon as possible. Read Public Health Ontario's COVID-19 fact sheet about cleaning and disinfection for public settings.

Self-isolation and return-to-work

Specific direction for each situation is provided by your local public health unit (North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit) based on provincial guidance on the management of cases and contacts of COVID-19. Follow the directives of the public health unit.

Workers should self-isolate if they are either:

- having symptoms
- have had close contact with an individual with symptoms or a confirmed diagnosis
- have travelled from the local health region to a more restricted region in the province
- have travelled inter-provincially or internationally.

Close contacts may include people who have spent time less than two metres away from the infected person in the same room, workspace, or area without barriers or protective equipment and people living in the same home.

In general:

- A worker who had close contact with someone known to have COVID-19 should self-isolate for fourteen (14) days. If they do not develop symptoms, according to current public health guidelines, they may usually return to work and other activities fourteen (14) days after their last contact with the case.
- A worker with COVID-19 symptoms should self-isolate for at least ten (10) days from when the symptoms started.
 - If a worker who has symptoms receives a negative COVID-19 test result, they may usually return to work before ten (10) days if they do not have a fever and their symptoms are getting better.

Some symptomatic workers may need to self-isolate for longer based on the advice of public health or their health care provider. These timelines for self-isolation include time spent waiting for COVID-19 test results.

Step 4: Inform any workers who may have been exposed

Parry Sound Public Library will advise workers if they may have been exposed in the workplace.

Parry Sound Public Library will give all workers information about the date and time of the potential exposure and where it took place and attempt to avoid identification of the infectious person.

Parry Sound Public Library takes seriously the duty to inform workers and recognizes that it is independent of any public health direction, although it may be fulfilled by steps taken under public health direction as part of contact tracing.

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Step 5: Report to Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development

If advised that an employee has tested positive for COVID-19 due to exposure at the workplace, or that a claim has been filed with the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB), Parry Sound Public Library will provide notice in writing within four (4) days to:

- the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development
- the workplace's joint health and safety committee or a health and safety representative
- all staff with potential risk of exposure

Additionally, Parry Sound Public Library will report any occupationally acquired illnesses to the WSIB within three (3) days of receiving notification of the illness. The CEO or designate is responsible for ensuring staff self-screen at the start of each shift, and follow reporting guidelines while on-site. Any follow-up may involve the employee, public health, the Joint Health & Safety Committee, the Parry Sound Public Library Board, the Town of Parry Sound, and / or the Ministry of Labour.

How will you manage any new risks caused by changes to the way you operate your business?

In placing paramount importance on the mental health and safety of all staff members, the Parry Sound Public Library CEO has established daily team check-ins to inquire and engage employees to share how they are coping with changes to the workplace and challenges they may be facing. Weekly catch-up sessions and discussions about any relevant policy changes/additions, new procedures and processes will continue as the circumstance evolves.

The CEO or designate is responsible for anticipating, assessing and mitigating risks. Any follow-up may involve the employee, the Ministry of Health, the Joint Health & Safety Committee, the Parry Sound Public Library Board, the Town of Parry Sound, and / or the Ministry of Labour.

New policies, procedures and processes have been implemented to keep both staff and the public as safe as possible. Challenges include how to assess 'best practices' that are in flux as scientific knowledge of COVID-19 increases.

For example:

- disinfection and quarantine periods for returned materials are being regularly reviewed for new scientific evidence/recommendations
- ensuring inclusion/sharing of information with an immunocompromised staff member working from home
- required step by step procedure for the appropriate removal and disposal of specific PPE (gloves)
- while not new, Parry Sound Public Library requires employees to go / stay home if they are feeling ill
- Parry Sound Public Library requires employees to provide full disclosure of any potential exposure risk, no matter how minor

Parry Sound Public Library will need to consider physical distancing / masking requirements during emergency procedures, especially once the public is again permitted in the library space.

If staff are told to self-isolate because of potential exposure to COVID-19, the employee may be authorised to work from home, use vacation time, or may be able to switch shifts with another employee – under the direction of the CEO. This is also all dependent upon the staff member's role and whether the staff member is full-time or casual, and also dependent upon the timing of the employee's next shift. There is no guarantee that any hours would be compensable.

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Remote work may pose its own risks. This may include technological barriers, mental health, and ergonomic challenges.

New risks have been introduced by:

- staff having been away from their work
- changes to processes and procedures
- stress and change – thus the daily check-ins, weekly discussions and monthly staff meetings – that allow for disclosure and sharing to ensure supports are in place

Consideration of differing skill sets and communication regarding evolving procedures is critical to ensure staff engagement and safety. New policies that have been developed and implemented since the beginning of the pandemic are readily available to staff and have been reviewed to ensure understanding and responsibility of all staff members. All additions to the Parry Sound Public Library Emergency and Safety Manual have been highlighted and are readily accessible to staff.

The commitments of family life and individual concerns of each staff member has become part of the broader workplace considerations in work assignment and schedules. Family will continue to play a role as the stages of service evolve.

5. How will you make sure your plan is working?

The plan will be reviewed monthly, to ensure it continues to meet the appropriate level of risk mitigation. Staff will review the initial document, the Board will receive a copy, and the plan will be shared with the Joint Health & Safety Committee and Alicia Lesperance, Town of Parry Sound Human Resources Coordinator, and other town staff, as appropriate. The snapshot portion of the plan will be posted for the public and as a reminder for staff. Feedback will be taken under advisement by the CEO and integrated as appropriate and necessary.

The CEO will update and adapt the plan as more information / legislation / guidelines evolve. Any updates to the plan will be shared with employees and other stakeholders in a timely manner. The CEO will monitor compliance regarding safety protocols.

All staff have been part of the planning process for reopening and have received or will receive applicable training required to meet safety requirements and to ensure compliance with all protocols.

To mitigate risk as much as possible, all staff are expected to

- comply with policies, procedures and protocols as established
- continue full-disclosure practices to comply with the Occupational Health & Safety Act, requiring employees and employers to inform each other regarding potential risk factors.

While risk cannot be completely eliminated, any breach that presents potential risk to staff or public, will be taken very seriously. Disciplinary action will follow according to the Parry Sound Public Library policy HR – 11 Professional Development, Performance and Discipline, Section 7: Problem Resolution and Discipline.

Incident reports are available to all staff and can be found in the Parry Sound Public Library Emergency and Safety Manual. Filing incident reports allows the Library to keep track of incidents that occur and to assess if any remedial action is required (e.g., banning, training, new policies or procedures, the filing of a Form 7 with the WSIB).

COVID-19 Safety Plan – Snapshot

Business name: Parry Sound Public Library

Date completed: December 31, 2020

Review: Monthly

Measures we are taking

How we are ensuring workers know how to keep themselves safe from exposure to COVID-19

- Monitor North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit for updates to information
- Develop policies / procedures / protocols re: legislation & guidelines
- Providing signage to inform
- Post information on our website and social media accounts
- Provide accessible formats upon request

How we are screening for COVID-19

- Province of Ontario self-assessment screening tools
- Contact tracing

How we are controlling the risk of transmission in our workplace

- Plexi-glass barriers
- Maximizing physical distancing and separation
- Source control masking
- Ventilation / air flow
- Supporting appropriate hygiene
- Quarantining of incoming materials
- PPE as appropriate and needed

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Cleaning

- One-person workstations / computers – with sanitization between
- Increased cleaning of high-touch areas

Other

- Working remotely when necessary and possible

What we will do if there is a potential case, or suspected exposure to, COVID-19 at our workplace

- All staff remain at/or go home
- Contact North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit
- Follow Ministry of Health directions
- Contact trace as directed
- Inform staff
- Report to JH&S committee, Town of Parry Sound, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labour as necessary

How we are managing any new risks caused by the changes made to the way we operate our business

- Acknowledge stress induced by personal uncertainties
- Acknowledge stress induced by constantly evolving workplace procedures
- Build consensus and support for evolving scheduling and assignments
- All stakeholders provided with opportunities for input

How we are making sure our plan is working

- Initial staff review and feedback
- Inform Board, Town of Parry Sound, and JH&S Committee
- Monthly review