



Serving Appling, Bacon, Clinch, Pierce, and Ware Counties

Emergency Plan

Approved by the Regional Library Board of Trustees on May 1, 2023

PURPOSE

This policy will serve to govern the actions and procedures to take in the event of an emergency situation or disaster. With all events or situations, the safety and well-being of patrons and staff is the primary concern.

REPORTING AN EMERGENCY

In the event of an emergency, any employee present is able to call 911 even if they do not have a supervisor's permission at the time of the emergency.

An employee witnessing a safety, security, or medically-related incident in or near the library should do the following:

- 1) Secure their immediate safety;
- 2) If possible, ensure the safety of those around them;
- 3) If necessary and possible, remove themselves from immediate danger;
- 4) Call 911 and follow the dispatcher's instructions;
- 5) Notify their supervisor of the incident;
- 6) Supervisor should notify Director as soon as possible;
- 7) Fill out an OKRLS Incident Report and give to supervisor.

EMERGENCY PHONE TREE

Each person whose name is underlined is responsible for the group listed under his or her name. These are the "callers." If, for any reason, a person with a call responsibility cannot make the calls, the caller above that person must take responsibility for those calls.

Director

Board of Trustees for the affected branch/es
OKRLS Assistant Director
OKRLS Human Resources & Business Manager
OKRLS Systems Manager
Affected Branch Manager

Assistant Director

STAT Courier or PINES, if issue affects OKRLS Headquarters
Adult Services Librarian
Technical Services Manager

Affected Branch Manager

Branch Staff

EVACUATION OF THE BUILDING

In the event of an emergency resulting in necessary evacuation, these guidelines are to be followed only if possible. Do not attempt to follow the guidelines at the risk of personal, staff, or patron injury.

General Guidelines for Evacuating the library:

- 1) Call authorities.
- 2) Branch Manager or lead staff should notify staff and patrons to exit the building through the nearest safe exit and assist anyone needing help. *If a person refuses to comply or follow directions, leave them. Notify the authorities that there is still someone in the building;*
- 3) Leave lights on;
- 4) Close, but do not lock inside doors;
- 5) Make sure exterior doors are closed, if possible;
- 6) If possible, take personal items (keys, purses, etc.);
- 7) Leave the building and wait in safe area;
- 8) Branch Manager or lead staff should make sure everyone has evacuated and is safe;
- 9) Follow instructions from the authorities who show up on the scene;
- 10) No one is allowed back into the building without approval from the authorities, branch manager, and/or lead staff.

BUILDING CLOSURE

OKRLS libraries make every effort to maintain regular operating hours. However, when situations such as inclement weather, utility disruptions or other emergency conditions require the library to close during regular operating hours, the guidelines discussed below will apply.

The Director (or designee) may close an OKRLS library:

- 1) When the library's infrastructure malfunctions resulting in the temperature falling below 65 degrees or exceeding 78 degrees;
- 2) Due to inclement weather;
- 3) For required building repair and maintenance;
- 4) Due to loss of electrical power or essential utilities;
- 5) Due to safety or security concerns.

Employees

A decision to close one OKRLS library does not necessarily mean that another site will be closed. The Emergency Phone Tree will be followed for staff communication of the opening/closing status.

Any employee designated in advance as essential to dealing with emergency situations is expected to be prepared to report to work as assigned. Other employees may also be called to work for an emergency situation, even if not designated in advance.

OKRLS values the safety of its staff and does not advise employees to take unwarranted risks when traveling to work during inclement weather. Road conditions can vary from one area to another, and employees must make individual decisions about their ability to safely travel. Any employee who does not feel he or she can safely get to work should notify his or her supervisor as soon as possible.

Compensation and Reporting

Regional employees and branch managers will be expected to work from home during their normally scheduled hours. Depending on internet access and available technology, all other employees may be assigned online professional learning not to exceed their normal hours. OKRLS will compensate employees for hours they were scheduled to work during the period of closure (to be reported as administrative leave). When

the work site is open, employees who do not work their scheduled hours must use annual leave. Employees who were on a pre-arranged absence (e.g. scheduled day off, sick, vacation, leave of absence, etc.) when a closure occurs will not be affected by the closure and the absence will be charged as originally planned.

FIRE EMERGENCIES

Anytime an employee hears the fire alarm, they should assume it is not a test and follow the evacuation guidelines immediately. If there is a test of the fire alarm, all staff will be given written and verbal warnings prior to the test being conducted.

- 1) In the case of fire, pull the nearest fire alarm;
- 2) Call 911;
- 3) Evacuate the building following the guidelines from previous section, "Evacuation of the Building";
- 4) NEVER go back into a burning building.

For fire extinguisher use – remember "PASS."

- *Pull the pin on the extinguisher handle*
- *Aim low at the base of the fire*
- *Squeeze the handle*
- *Spray from side to side*

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

Unless it is a life-threatening situation, do not attempt to render first aid before emergency first responders arrive.

- 1) Call for emergency medical aid;
- 2) Keep non-essential personnel and patrons away from the emergency;
- 3) Do not move a person who has fallen and appears to be in pain;
- 4) When the situation is complete, report to your supervisor and complete an Incident Report.

POWER-RELATED EMERGENCIES

Flashlights are kept at the Circulation Desk and should be checked regularly to make sure they are working.

In the first 5 minutes of power loss:

- ✓ Instruct staff and patrons to remain where they are until the power comes back on;
- ✓ Use flashlights as needed, and proceed cautiously if you need to move within the building.

Power loss between 5 minutes and 30 minutes:

- ✓ Branch Manager or lead staff should determine the reason behind the power loss;
- ✓ Instruct staff and patrons to continue remaining where they are until the power is restored.

Power loss after 30 minutes:

- ✓ Branch Manager or lead staff will announce that the library is closing due to the power outage and patrons need to collect their belongings and exit the library;
- ✓ Once all patrons have left the building, library staff should secure the facility and lock exterior entrances.

Branch Manager or lead staff will continue to investigate reason for outage and get estimates for when the power will be restored.

Based on the information available and depending on conditions in the building, supervisors or lead staff will determine if it is safe for staff to continue to work in the building.

- If it is not safe to stay in the building, Branch Manager or lead staff will prepare the location for closure. Staff will be paid according to their normal work schedule during closure. Branch Manager will be expected to use Nextiva app to answer branch phone calls during normal operating hours during closure.

When power is restored, staff will inspect all computer equipment, telephones, and other necessary electronics to conduct library business to make sure everything has restarted correctly. Any issues will be reported to the Branch Manager or lead staff.

SECURITY EMERGENCIES

Lockdown & Lockout

Lockdown is a response when there is an immediate threat to anyone in the building. Staff and patrons are secured in designated rooms throughout the building and are NOT allowed to leave until the situation has been resolved. The purpose of a lockdown is to keep staff and visitors safe.

- 1) Branch Manager or lead staff will announce to the library, "Attention. We are in a lockdown situation. Staff will guide you to the nearest safe area."
- 2) Call 911 and inform them of the emergency situation. Do not hang up until directed to do so by the Dispatcher.

Lockout is a response to secure the building so no one may enter. The purpose is to keep staff and visitors safe from a dangerous situation outside the library building, such as an explosion, hazardous materials leak, violent situation, etc.

- 1) Supervisors or lead staff will lock all entrances.
- 2) Supervisors or lead staff will announce to the library, "Attention. There is a situation happening outside the library. Staff and visitors are not allowed to leave until the situation has been resolved. Staff will guide you to the nearest safe area."
- 3) Call 911 and inform them of the emergency situation. Do not hang up until directed to do so by the Dispatcher.

Depending on the situation, it may be necessary to modify these procedures. Common sense should prevail.

Suspicious Object or Mail Threat

If you suspect a suspicious object or mail threat, do the following:

- 1) Isolate the damaged or suspicious mail piece or package. Cordon off the immediate area.
- 2) Ensure that all persons who have touched the mail piece wash their hands with soap and water.
- 3) Notify your supervisor immediately.
- 4) Call 911, if not already done.
- 5) List all persons who have touched the mail piece. Include contact information and have this information available for the authorities. Provide the list to the U.S. Postal Inspection Service.
- 6) Place all items worn when in contact with the suspected mail piece in plastic bags and have them available for law enforcement agents.
- 7) Shower with soap and water as soon as is practical.
- 8) Call a Postal Inspector at 877-876-2455 or at the number provided by a Postal Inspector contact to report receiving a letter or parcel in the mail that may contain harmful substances.

Signs of a suspicious package:

- No return address
- Strange color
- Poor handwriting

- Foreign postage
- Excessive postage
- Strange sounds
- Misspelled words
- Restrictive notes
- Stains
- Unexpected delivery method
- Incorrect titles

Active Shooter

An active shooter is an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and populated area, typically through the use of firearms. Victims are usually selected at random and the event is unpredictable and evolves quickly. Law enforcement is usually required to end an active shooter situation.

In the event of an active shooter situation:

- 1) **EVACUATE.** Run if you can. Have an escape route and plan in mind. Leave your belongings behind. Keep your hands visible.
- 2) **HIDE.** Hide in an area out of the shooter's view. Block entry to your hiding place and lock the doors. Silence your cell phone.
- 3) **TAKE ACTION.** ****As a last resort and only when your life is in imminent danger should you attempt to incapacitate the shooter. Act with physical aggression and throw items at the shooter.**

Call 911 when it is safe to do so. After the threat has passed, let your supervisors know you are okay. When you call 911, tell the operator the location of the active shooter, number of shooters, the physical description of shooters, number and type of weapons held by shooter, and number of potential victims at the location.

When law enforcement arrives, remain calm and follow their instruction. Put down any items in your hands, raise your hands, spread your fingers, and keep hands visible at all times. Avoid quick movements toward the officers, screaming, pointing, or yelling. Do not stop to ask officers for help or direction when evacuating.

Bomb Threat

If you receive a bomb threat by telephone:

- Remain calm and keep the caller on the telephone line as long as possible. Listen carefully, be polite, and show interest. Try to keep the caller talking to learn more information. Pay attention to the tone of the caller's voice, gender, and background noises. Ask the caller the following questions:
- 1) Where is the bomb located?
 - 2) When will it go off?
 - 3) What does it look like?
 - 4) What kind of bomb is it?
 - 5) What will make it explode?
 - 6) Did you place the bomb?
 - 7) Why?
 - 8) What is your name?

While on the phone:

- ✓ Have another staff member call the authorities, or 911.
- ✓ Do not transfer the call or interrupt the caller.
- ✓ Notify your supervisor.

If you receive a bomb threat by email:

- 1) Call 911.

- 2) Notify your supervisor.

If you are informed about a bomb threat:

- 1) Evacuate immediately.
- 2) Call 911.

SEVERE WEATHER

Severe weather includes, but is not limited to, hurricanes, tornados, snow, and ice. Typically, the Director or designee will follow the lead of each library's funding agency responsible for the care and upkeep of the building and grounds. However, depending on the severity of conditions at a library, the Director or designee may need to close the library even if the local funding agency's offices are open.

- Appling County: Appling County Board of Commissioners
- Alma-Bacon County: Bacon County Board of Commissioners
- Clinch County: City of Homerville
- Pierce County: Pierce County Board of Commissioners
- Waycross-Ware County: Ware County Board of Commissioners

Tornados

At Notice of a Tornado Watch:

- The branch manager or lead staff member on duty will be responsible for monitoring their county's emergency management agency for updates.

At Notice of a Tornado Warning:

- The branch manager or lead staff member on duty will warn staff and visitors of the possible danger, and lead staff and patrons to a designated location within the facility. This location should be an interior room with few, if any, windows or glass doors.
 - Appling County: Staff Hallway outside Staff Bathroom
 - Alma-Bacon County: Computer Lab
 - Clinch County: Handicap Restroom in the Foyer
 - Pierce County: Public Women's Restroom
 - Waycross-Ware County: Stairwell
- When the threat is over, assess any damage and call authorities if needed.

Hurricane

At Notice of a Hurricane Watch:

- Regional Staff and Branch Managers will check emergency numbers, review the Emergency Phone Tree with their staff.

At Notice of Evacuation (voluntary or mandatory):

- Libraries in affected areas will close as soon as they have prepared their location for closure.
- Staff members living in areas designated for evacuation but whose work locations are not in areas designated for evacuation are given the option to use their PTO or leave-without-pay.

PANDEMIC EMERGENCIES

**Replaces the Re-Entry Plan, COVID-19 Pandemic*

A pandemic occurs when there are more cases of a disease than normal, and the libraries may be required to take unique measures to help slow the spread of the illness including, but not limited to, closing down by order of federal, state, and/or local public health officials. OKRLS will follow all executive orders as issued by the Office of the Governor and will follow mandates from the CDC and Georgia Department of Public Health.

Closing Decisions

The Director (or designee) will base their decisions for preparing and closing OKRLS libraries in the event of a pandemic by a mandate order or recommendation for closure issued by public health officials on the local, county, and/or state level. The Director (or designee) may close OKRLS libraries, reduce operating hours, or limit services temporarily (e.g. programming) in the event that there is not sufficient staff to maintain basic library service.

Minimum Staffing Levels

Minimum staffing level for a temporary period of time is defined as:

- Appling County: Two (2) healthy employees available to be present at a library during all open hours
- Alma-Bacon County: One (1) healthy employees available to be present at a library during all open hours
- Clinch County: One (1) healthy employees available to be present at a library during all open hours
- Pierce County: Two (2) healthy employees available to be present at a library during all open hours
- Waycross-Ware County: Three (3) healthy employees (including Regional Staff) available to be present at a library during all open hours

Cleaning

Disinfecting and/or cleaning procedures issued by public health officials will be followed as possible. Staff may be assigned to cleaning duties as needed.