

# Governance



Credit: Philip Crocker

## Section 1: Index of Key Considerations

The following questions can assist your thinking as you prepare to re-open, and can also be considered for generative discussions with your Board over the coming months, with preparatory reading drawn from the resources provided in Section 2.

1. Is your corporate strategy still relevant? To what degree are you prepared to re-invent your role?
2. What policies and relationships need to be in place before you open?
  - a. What is the state of labour relations as a result of the actions taken during the pandemic? Is corporate culture likely to be more positive or more negative?
3. What do you need to be ready for rapid decision making over the next 12-18 months?
4. Do you have what you need for crisis management in this area?
5. Do you need to reassess your risk identification and mitigation plans?
6. How can you best support stable governance?
  - a. Is the board skills matrix still applicable? How will you include trusted advisors?
  - b. Will your board be willing to delegate more authority to the CEO?
  - c. What has your provincial government demonstrated in terms of their knowledge of public libraries and does that require information/intervention/advocacy?
  - d. Is the law an obstacle to effective response and how do you mitigate its impact?
7. Do your existing policies support vulnerable populations' use of library services? (membership policy, longer loan periods, no overdue fines, use of cards or cash)
8. Is your library/community prepared to move away, even temporarily, from traditional public library openness to everyone, in favour of a preferential system that may first focus on vulnerable populations, supporting school children, etc.?
9. What is your policy for physical distancing given your specific situation?
10. How will you develop your plan for re-opening and follow these steps as an iterative process: analysis of your situation and the needs; designing your reopening plan; validate and implement the various steps of the plan; collect data and evaluate your impact?

## Section 2: Best & Leading Practices

The following sections identify policy areas to consider addressing before you open and to assist with planning for ongoing operations during COVID-19 health restrictions, as well as links to resources that may guide your policy development, and examples of policies where available. The sections include policy considerations before you open, for the first few months of operations, considerations for maintaining stable governance, and suggestions for virtual Board meetings.

If your provincial government or health authority has provided specific guidelines for libraries, refer to these for any policy considerations. An early example of a sector plan from Manitoba is available here: [Museums, Galleries & Libraries](#). Some may find the retail and curbside guides from Ontario more helpful: [Ontario Sector Specific Guidance for Re-opening](#). The Province of Alberta's [Guidance for Museums and Art Galleries](#), [Guidance for Restaurants, Cafes, Pubs, and Bars](#) & [Workplace Guidance for Business Owners](#) may also be helpful. The National Post has provided links to restart plans across the country: [COVID-19 reopenings: Here are all the plans by province and territory to ease coronavirus lockdowns](#).

## PATRON MANAGEMENT

Codes of conduct for patrons may require revision, as well as policies for when you deny service to individuals. See The Built Environment section of this Toolkit for further considerations. Consider:

- Are you supplying sanitizer, cleaning materials to patrons?
- Are you screening? Turning away symptomatic patrons? Offering masks?
- Will you deny library access to patrons who break physical distancing repeatedly? Don't wear a mask if required? Cough openly?
- Where are you documenting maximum capacity for a space? Consider both the staff and public in identifying the maximum capacity. For example, provincial retail guidelines suggest 1 person per 4-5 sqm of open floor space.
- How will you count people? Will you use a counting device?
- How will you organize the waiting line outside? Will you mark on the ground recalling the physical distance?
- How long can patrons stay? Consider starting with short stays to pick-up holds, print jobs and briefly use a computer.
- Is group use allowed? How large a group?
- How do you enforce requirements in self-service locations? Consider increasing monitoring of the security cameras.

## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY

Policies in this area may need updating, or a temporary policy will be required. See the Staffing section of this Toolkit for further considerations. OH&S responsibilities and committees may need to change for this period. Areas to consider include:

- physical distancing (one on one, behind desk, during training/groups)
- supply of personal protective equipment (PPE)
- personal hygiene expectations
- screening, which may include temperature checks or signed verifications prior to shifts
- cleaning, disinfecting
- continued liberal allowance for paid sick leave for staff who may get ill or show symptoms (related to risk management)
- written guideline for each scenario of illness, self-isolation and leave

### Resources

- [Canada.ca: Preventing COVID-19 in the workplace \(in french\)](#)
- [WorkSafe BC: COVID-19 and returning to safe work operation](#)

### Sample Policies & Guides

- [Hamilton PL's Health and Safety Considerations for Reopening](#)

## WORKING FROM HOME

Authorities are encouraging people to continue to work from home to reduce exposure. In a unionized environment, include the union in discussions about considerations for working at home. Areas to consider include:

- equipment availability
- ergonomics
- working alone check-in procedures
- activity management
- flexibility of scheduling in the new environment/when working from home
- continuation of working from home on an indefinite basis

### Resources

- [BC government: Safety Inspection for Working at Home](#)
- [COVID-19 Update: The “New Normal” – Facilitating Work-from-Home Arrangements – McCarthy Tetrault Employer Advisor law firm \(good guidance & includes some information by specific provinces\)](#)
- [Canadian Centre for Occupational Health & Safety Telework/Telecommuting](#)
- [A Crash Course in Protecting Library Data While Working From Home – ALA/LITA](#)

### Sample Policies & Guides: Public Libraries

- [Edmonton PL’s COVID-19 Temporary Work From Home Procedures](#)
- [Hamilton PL Working from Home Guidelines COVID-19](#)
- [Working from Home: Calgary Public Library Staff Information Package](#)
- [Vaughan PL: Working Remote Guidelines for Employees](#)
- [Vancouver PL Work From Home Guidelines](#)

### Sample Policies & Guides: Other Sectors

- [City of Edmonton Remote Work Policies](#)
  - [Alternative Work Strategies – Administrative Directive](#)
  - [Alternative Work Strategies – Administrative Procedures](#)
  - [Alternative Work Strategies, Benefits and Tools](#)
- [NorQuest College Remote Work Procedure](#)
- [Dalhousie Telework Policy & Procedures for Staff](#)
- [Toronto: Alternate Work Arrangements \(Remote/Telework & Flexible Work Week\) Policy](#)

## RISK MANAGEMENT

Consideration of liability for public exposure should be considered. For example, if you have staff who work at multiple locations, do you need to consider changes to reduce exposure risk in an outbreak, as they have in long term care?

### Resources:

- [Risk informed decision-making guidelines for workplaces and businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic – Canada.ca](#)
- [Sample risk matrix template](#)

- [EPL's Enterprise Risk Management Report & Risk Register](#)

## PRIVACY

If your library is considering screening patrons or staff, taking temperatures or collecting information about patrons for contact tracing, privacy legislation will apply, and your privacy policy may need revision. The following documents provide relevant considerations for revising your privacy policy.

- [Privacy considerations when screening – Bennett Jones](#)
- [Joint Statement by Federal, Provincial and Territorial Privacy Commissioners for contact tracing and similar apps](#)
- [A privacy, cybersecurity and data governance framework for return-to-business planning – Torsys LLP](#)

## VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

Do your policies revisions and existing policies support vulnerable communities in using the library and reducing transmission? You may wish to consider longer library loan periods, waiving fines, hours for seniors only, and the impact of requiring contactless payment. Are there new partnerships that are arising as a result of this period that would make sense to continue, such as with food banks?

### Resources

- [Bank of Canada asks retailers to continue accepting cash](#)
- [Working Together: Community Led Libraries Toolkit on designing policy, p.124](#)
- [Collective Impact Postpandemic| A Framework for Response, Recovery and Resilience – Tamarack Institute](#)
- [Responding to COVID19: Cities Responding to Poverty – Tamarack Institute](#)
- [Startling disparities in digital learning emerge as COVID-19 spreads: UN education agency – UN](#)

## STABLE GOVERNANCE AND RAPID DECISION-MAKING

Health orders or community expectations may change rapidly during this period. Libraries should prepare for multiple waves of health restrictions that may require immediate action. The following are policies that can support rapid decision-making.

- Emergency meetings section/policy: allows you to call emergency meetings on short notice and appropriately considers that some trustees may not be reachable in an emergency.
- Delegated authority that gives the CEO the authority to act as needed in an emergency, which may include power that would normally be held by the Board, e.g. for significant financial issues or closure decisions. This should be explicit about decisions and notifications, and often includes delegated authority for financial controls.
- How does the CEO make decisions in emergency situations when the Board cannot be reached? e.g. set of criteria for making decisions that is approved, followed by an information report to Board.
- Succession policy for the CEO in case of illness



- Closure and re-opening policy or established criteria. Who will you need to align with? Public health authority? City direction? Other community facilities? Other libraries in the region?

### Sample Language for Delegated Authority:

- Example: The CEO shall have, subject always to the general and specific instructions and directions of the Board, full power and authority to manage and direct the business and affairs of the Library (except for the matters and duties as by law must be transacted or performed by the Board), including power and authority to enter into contracts, engagements or commitments of every nature or kind in the name of and on behalf of the Board and to recommend, engage, and employ and to dismiss all managers and other employees and agents of the Board other than officers of the Board.
- Toronto – In the midst of the COVID-19 public health emergency, it is prudent for the Board to delegate additional authority to the City Librarian to make awards and enter into agreements, which are deemed urgent and necessary, allowing for emergency procurement and awards in excess of \$500,000. All awards made under this additional delegated authority would be reported at the next Board meeting.
- Edmonton – Authority and responsibility for purchasing goods and services, and construction contracting for EPL is delegated to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Purchasing commitments will be made within the funding approved in the EPL Board budget. Treasury Management Policy
- Edmonton – The Board of the Edmonton Public Library delegates authority to the CEO for the temporary closure of a library service point due to renovations, relocations, emergencies and other events. The CEO may consider the provision of library service from an alternate location if the estimated time of closure is deemed sufficient. Temporary Library Service Point Closures

### Sample Policies for Emergency Meetings

- Hamilton – The Chair may, or upon the written request of any two members of the Board, call a Special Meeting by giving, through the Secretary or designate, at least three days written notice to each member, specifying the purpose for which the meeting is called. The purpose of a Special Meeting shall be specific. No business shall be transacted or considered at such a meeting other than that specified in the notice.
- Toronto – Special meetings of the Board may be held at any time at the call of the Chair or at the call of the City Librarian subsequent to receipt of a petition signed by a majority of the Members requesting a special meeting. There must be at least 24 hours' notice from issuance of the notice of special meeting and the time of the meeting. Notice to Members will be given by the Secretary in writing. The purpose of the special meeting must be stated in the notice and no other business will be transacted at that special meeting except in accordance with rules associated with urgent matters. Notice of special meetings will be posted on the Library's website. All meetings are open to the public, except for meetings or portions of meetings that satisfy the requirements of the Act for closed meetings.

## VIRTUAL MEETINGS

During physical distancing, many Board practices will need adjustment. Libraries' policies will need to allow for virtual and phone meetings, and ensure that decision making still meets legislative requirements in the jurisdiction. Examples of approaches to Board meetings are

described in Section 3: Stories from the Field, including using external coordination, Zoom, and Microsoft Teams. [Google Hangouts](#) is another option.

- Does your provincial legislation allow you to meet virtually? If not, do you have an exemption?
- Does the procedure policy allow for virtual meetings?
- How does the public participate? Do they need to register in advance?
- How do you ensure confidentiality of in camera items?
- Does your technology solution allow the coordinator to mute everyone, or remove someone from a meeting?
- Can you ensure the privacy of a closed meeting with your technology solution?
- Will your solution support the number of people that you expect to attend?

### Resources

- [9 Tips for Board Decision Making During COVID-19](#) – Southern Ontario Library Service (SOLS)
- [Board Oversight during COVID-19: A Director's Checklist](#) – Osler
- [Partnership in a Time of Pandemic: The CEO and the Board](#) – BoardSource

### Sample Policies and Guides:

- [Toronto PL: Delegation of authority for COVID-19](#)
- [Vancouver PL: Succession Plan](#)
- [Toronto PL: Procedural By-law amendment for virtual meetings](#)
- [Edmonton PL's Policy and Board Handbook sections on Virtual Meetings](#)
  - [Electronic Voting and Meeting Procedures](#)
  - [Participation in Board Meetings via Remote Communications Means Policy](#)
  - [Board Handbook – Meetings](#)
- [Mississauga PL: Board Meetings s.A.10](#)
- [Ontario Information Sheet on Electronic Board meetings](#)

## CRISIS MANAGEMENT

In the worst case scenario, with all the health and safety measures in place, you may still have an infected staff member, volunteer, or member of the public who has used your facility, and you could have to deal with an outbreak. See the Marketing & Communications section of the Toolkit for additional support in crisis planning. In preparation for crisis management, areas to consider:

- Health & safety checklist: who do you need to advise in an outbreak? Will you need to close for cleaning? Who is notified? How is it different if public, if staff?
- Reputation management/crisis communication plan. What do you need to have on hand? e.g. your cleaning checklist, how you are managing risk.
- Who is your spokesperson?

### Resources:

- [Crisis Communication Planning](#) – ALA
- [Outbreak Management](#) – Alberta Health Services

- [The Board's Role in Crisis Management – PDF, Osler](#)
- [Crisis Communications: Four Things Your Board Needs to Know – PDF, Boardsource](#)
- [Thoughtfully responding to the coronavirus \(COVID19\) crisis – PDF, Osler](#)
- [Hamilton PL Crisis Communication Presentation during COVID-19](#)

## Section 3: Stories from the Field

Flexible, stable governance rarely reaches media, however, libraries across Canada have been amending procedures and finding new ways to meet during COVID-19 that ensure appropriate governance continues with Board and stakeholder participation.

From Paul Takala, Chief Librarian/CEO: “[Hamilton Public Library is amending its Bylaws](#) to enable virtual meetings as well as calling emergency meetings. HPL is on Office 365 and is using [MS Teams Live](#) to support this. Board members and senior staff are set-up as “Presenters” and they can speak and be shown. Paul as CEO is the “Producer” and has been in the BoardRoom with the Board Chair, controlling who has control of the screen. The meeting is live streamed and it can be recorded, which we do. We are required to allow remote participation and are doing this through the Live Chat. The meeting generates a URL that anyone can follow, if you are not a producer of a presenter you are only able to watch and contribute via chat. We can go in-camera by turning the Live Recording off and then only presenters and producers can participate. Delegations that want to speak, need to be approved by the Board Chair in advance.”

From Christina de Castell, Chief Librarian: “Vancouver Public Library used Zoom for our board meeting in April. We set up two meetings, one public and one in-camera, with passwords for each, and we invited registration of the public on our website (no public attended). This allowed us to meet at our regular time, and the use of video meant participants felt more connected to each other and staff than had been possible for our March teleconference meeting. Our trustees successfully used the features like raising their hands, chatting, and using “thumbs up”. We didn’t record as we don’t normally. We’re anticipating that we’ll be able to continue virtual meetings in this way as long as physical distancing restrictions are in place with little adjustment.”

From Vickery Bowles, City Librarian: “Toronto used Webex for the virtual board meeting and hired a third-party service to facilitate and run the technology for the meeting. It was important to ensure members of the public who wanted to depute on any of the Board agenda items could do so, the public could hear/view the meeting and that the Board could go into closed session at the end of the meeting to discuss confidential matters. Members of the public who want to depute have to register in advance of the meeting. All voting is conducted as a recorded vote with the name of each Board member read for each vote and the Board member declaring ‘In Favour/Opposed’. This ensures transparency so members of the public listening to the meeting know how Board members are voting.”

From Pilar Martinez, CEO: “Edmonton Public Library held its first virtual board meeting tonight and along with regular board business prioritized time on the agenda for a generative discussion regarding COVID19 and the financial challenges we are facing. The discussion was rich and inspiring. We used the Tamarack Institute’s [Planning for the Future During Uncertainty](#) as one of the items on the pre-reading list, along with several questions including: 1) How do you think



the pandemic and the financial crisis will change behaviors? 2. What risks do changing citizen behaviors and economic challenges pose for EPL? 3. What are your fears / worries for our city, our province, our country? 4. What opportunities might this situation provide for EPL?

It was a robust and rich conversation that will be instrumental in our recovery planning. I am sharing comments that resonated most. We need to stay true to our north star and keep our fundamental values at the forefront, even though we may be using a different lens and applying different actions. With change, particularly global change of this magnitude, people crave certainty during uncertain times. The library is extremely well positioned because we are seen as a trusted friend, and individuals are looking for institutions they can trust. Now more than ever customers are dependent on digital access. What can we do to leverage this situation to ensure that our customers get equitable access to these resources and take full advantage of digital content. I am fearful that we will forget the lessons that we have been learning through this pandemic, that we will forget the care and compassion that we have shown. Public libraries could be such a huge asset and support for people in being entrepreneurial; they are critical institutions when times are tough. As one of the last true public spaces, the value we provide to seeking public space cannot be underestimated. Libraries can lead in terms of promoting humane values and democracy.”

## Section 4: Resources

- [Governance advice during COVID-19 – BLG](#)
- [Planning for the Future During Uncertainty – Tamarack Institute – great generative discussion resource for Boards](#)
- [On Not Letting \(Another\) Crisis Go to Waste – Tamarack](#)
- [What Nonprofit Board Members Should Be Doing Right Now to Address the COVID-19 Situation – BoardSource](#)
- [Hamilton City Template to document restrictions and plans for re-opening](#)

## FRENCH RESOURCES

- [Aide pour la reprise d'activité et la réouverture au public des bibliothèques territoriales + Recommandations – Gouv. France](#)
- [Aide-mémoire pour tous les secteurs : Réouverture du milieu de travail – Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail \(CNESST\).](#)
- [Aide-mémoire pour tous les secteurs : Distanciation physique en milieu de travail – Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail \(CNESST\)](#)
- [Aide-mémoire pour tous les secteurs : Liste de vérifications quotidiennes – Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail \(CNESST\)](#)
- [COVID-19 : Reprise des activités : Exemples pour le secteur municipal – Association paritaire pour la santé et la sécurité du travail, secteur « affaires municipales »](#)
- [Informations générales sur la maladie à coronavirus \(COVID-19\) – Gouvernement du Québec](#)
- [Mesures de prévention pour la santé des travailleurs et des travailleuses – Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail \(CNESST\)](#)
- [Pistes de réflexions pour planifier la réouverture de votre bibliothèque : Balises, services au public, Webinaire \(in French\) – Bibliothèque et archives nationales du Québec \(BAnQ\)](#)

- Prévention de la COVID-19 sur les lieux de travail : Conseils aux employeurs, aux employés et aux travailleurs des services essentiels – Gouvernement du Canada
- Site ressource pour accompagner le déconfinement en bibliothèque / Fiche n°1 : Reprise du travail et organisation interne – Biblio.covid.fr (5 library associations in France)

## **Section 5: Authors & Acknowledgements**

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