

Chapter 6 (Safety)

Consistency and formal rules can help the library stay a safe public space. Library staff must share responsibility for the safety and security of patrons as well as staff members. The issue of library safety and security covers a wide range of concerns, from natural disasters to more serious incidents such as theft and assault. Emergencies can happen anywhere, at any time. Planning for emergencies is necessary at the most basic levels. All libraries should address emergency preparedness.

Safety Standards

1. The library provides a list of emergency call numbers at all staff phones in the library. Emergency call numbers include police and fire contacts.
2. A library floor plan shows entrances, exits, location of emergency supplies, fire alarms, and fire extinguishers.
3. The library has an emergency manual and a disaster plan that include instructions for all types of emergencies that might occur in a public library. The plan addresses: bomb threats, chemical release, earthquake, fire, gas leak, serious medical injury or illness, theft, threats to staff and patrons including active shooter, missing child, suspicious packages, severe weather, and lockdown procedures.
4. The library provides annual emergency training for staff in the following areas: fire and tornado drills, use of fire extinguishers, and location of the first aid kit. If the library has a NARCAN® kit and/or automated external defibrillator (AED), staff training is provided.
5. The library provides a call list and contact information that is reviewed biannually. Call list includes staff and library board members. Contact information is available for contractors who provide building maintenance, telecommunication support, deliveries, damage assessment, insurance benefits, landscaping and grounds support, legal advice, supplies, financial records, utilities, and disaster assistance.
6. Emergency medical supplies are stored in a designated location and are accessible to staff.
7. Emergency equipment such as electric, gas and water switches, fire extinguishers, and fire alarms are noted on a library floor plan and are tested biannually.
8. Safety of patrons and staff is paramount in an emergency. If there is time to consider property, a prioritization list shows what should be salvaged in order of importance.
9. A building safety checklist includes daily, weekly, quarterly, semi-annual, and annual safety procedures. Examples include fire and tornado drills, fire extinguisher operation, backflow test, entrances and exits clear, and leaks.
10. The library has a procedure such as a phone tree for letting staff know when it is unsafe to enter the library building.
11. The library has a designated tornado shelter.
12. Emergency exits and evacuation routes out of the library and to the tornado shelter are clearly marked for patrons throughout the library. Fire extinguisher locations are clearly marked.
13. The library provides adequate security for staff, users, and collections.
14. The library has a strong relationship with local police and community safety personnel and communicates with them on a regular basis about safety issues affecting the library.

15. At least two people (one may be a volunteer) shall be on duty during all open hours of operation.
16. Copies of the emergency manual and disaster plan are provided to community safety personnel.
17. Libraries with security cameras must have a policy for use and guidelines including real time access, archived access, and records retention. Signage notifying the use of the cameras must be displayed.

Safety Checklist

- The library provides a list of emergency call numbers at all staff phones in the library.
- The library has a floor plan that shows entrances, exits, location of emergency supplies, fire alarms, and fire extinguishers.
- The library has an emergency manual and disaster plan.
- The library provides emergency training for staff, including fire and tornado drills, use of fire extinguishers, and location of the first aid kit, NARCAN® kit, and an automated external defibrillator.
- The library provides a call list and contact information that is reviewed biannually.
- Emergency medical supplies are stored in a designated location and are accessible to staff.
- Emergency equipment such as electric, gas and water switches, fire extinguishers, and fire alarms are noted on a library floor plan and are tested biannually.
- A prioritization list shows what should be salvaged in order of importance.
- A building safety checklist includes daily, weekly, quarterly, semi-annual, and annual safety procedures.
- A procedure exists for letting staff know when it is unsafe to enter the building.
- The library has a designated tornado shelter.
- Emergency exits and evacuation routes out of the library and to the tornado shelter are clearly marked. Fire extinguishers are clearly marked.
- The library provides adequate security for staff, users, and collections.
- The library has a strong relationship with local police and community safety personnel and communicates with them on a regular basis about safety issues affecting the library.
- At least two people (one of whom may be a volunteer) shall be on duty during all open hours of operation.
- Copies of the emergency manual and disaster plan are provided to community safety personnel.
- A policy for security camera usage has been adopted and signage is posted.