Handling Materials during COVID-19 (Effective May 15, 2020) ==Amended 7/27/2020==

The health and safety of our staff and patrons is a top priority. Materials handling is a key task in library operations. All libraries within the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System are to adhere to the following:

Safety First

For your safety and the safety of others, gloves and a mask (covering nose and mouth) must be worn at all times when handling library materials. Do not touch your face while wearing gloves. Remove gloves upon completing materials handling tasks. Follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) instructions for removing gloves. Wash your hands immediately after removing gloves. Social distancing (at least 6') should be employed, when practicable, while working with others.

Considerations

The following procedure limits staff contact with and handling of library materials, especially returned items. As of March 30, 2020, the CDC has identified time as the best disinfectant for paper, including library books with dust jackets, as well as DVDs and CDs in cases, etc. The CDC cites a 24-hour quarantine period for materials composed solely of paper.[1] The Northeast Document Conservation (NEDCC) Center further recommends "a 72-hour quarantine of collection items as the safest and most effective way to disinfect them after handling by staff and patrons."[2]

Note: The B&ECPL, for the safety and health of its employees, has chosen to follow the NEDCC guidelines.

Changes to materials handling procedures, including modifications to how a patron will return library materials, will be implemented. The B&ECPL System will provide signage for a preferred return area, as well as signage and material inserts explaining return changes.

Returned Materials—Quarantine Procedure

1. Establish a quarantine area for returned materials in non-public area.
2. Book trucks/carts, unused shelving in a workroom, or an unused meeting room, etc., can be used to store returned items.

- If equipment and/or space are limited, please store items in cardboard boxes. Contact Cindy Zubler (zublerc@buffalolib.org) if additional cardboard boxes are needed.

Procedure:
1. Retrieve returned materials from the drop box or preferred return location and place onto book truck/cart, or into containers, etc.
2. Disinfect the drop box.
3. Move the materials to the quarantine area.
4. Label the truck/cart, shelves, or boxes, etc., with today's date/time, as well as the date/time, 96 hours (4 full days) later, that the items can be safely handled again.
5. Disinfect any surfaces that may have been used during the procedure (e.g., a book truck/cart).
6. Remove and dispose of gloves, and promptly wash your hands.
7. After 96 hours, use the Discharging Bookdrop wizard to backdate items to the return date recorded in step 4.
8. Items may be shelved, set in delivery bins, or placed on the holds shelf.

Sources:
[1]Transcript of Webinar: Mitigating COVID-19 When Managing Paper-Based, Circulating, and Other Types of Collections, March 30, 2020
[2]NEDCC, Emergency Management, 3.5, Disinfecting Books and Other Collections

Additional Resources
Handling Library Materials and Collections During a Pandemic (ALA ALCTS Division).

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