



Unscheduled Closures and Inclement Weather

Human Resources

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline roles, responsibilities and guidelines for situations where the Brantford Public Library closes or limits operations due to an unexpected or emergency situation, such as severe weather, as well as in cases when the Library remains in operation but some staff may experience difficulty reporting to work due to inclement weather or other emergency conditions.

Policy

The Library has a responsibility for maintaining services and therefore the application of this policy must consider both the operational obligations of the Library as well as the safety of Library staff and customers.

The determination to close any or all branches of the Brantford Public Library shall be made by the CEO/Chief Librarian (or designate), except where evacuation is essential for staff and public safety or by order of police or fire officials.

Conditions warranting closure include but are not limited to:

- Non-emergency conditions (including lack of electrical power; lack of computers at staff service points for extended period of time; inadequate staffing levels);
- Emergency evacuations (including building problems that result in extended, clear and present danger to employees and/or patrons; events such as criminal or accident investigations);
- Severely inclement weather.

Inclement weather closure decisions will be based upon a combination of factors:

- General conditions of roads
- Closure of local, municipal facilities and services
- Condition of parking lots and walkways
- Advisories issued by local or provincial agencies
- Severe Weather Warning, as issued by Environment Canada, with consideration as to whether conditions are expected to improve or deteriorate.

Communication of Closures

If the Library is not to be opened, every effort shall be made to make this determination no later than one hour before the scheduled opening time. The designated communication channel(s) for staff will be updated to convey closure once the decision is made. Staff will check the designated communication channel(s) to receive information. If there is no announcement of a closure by the prescribed time, it is understood that regular operations will continue.

If new or changing information results in a decision to close after one hour prior to opening, including throughout the Library's operational hours, efforts will be made to communicate in a timely manner with individual staff scheduled to work that day, directly.

The CEO/Chief Librarian (or designate) will communicate a closure to the Chair of the Library Board.

Closures will be communicated to the public via the Library website, telephone system, and social media.

Compensation

When the decision is made to close the Library due to inclement weather or other short-term, unexpected circumstances, employees shall be paid for their scheduled hours, at their normal rate of pay, without premiums.

If the Library remains open but individual employees decide that they need to leave before the end of a scheduled shift or refrain from travelling to work for reasons of personal safety, they will be granted such leave. Employees can opt to use available vacation or lieu time for the missed time. Alternatively, if there is a loss of pay, an employee may request an opportunity to make up the time, in part or all, before the end of the next pay cycle, if organizational needs and timing permit. Scheduling of this shift shall be at the discretion of the employee's manager.

Roles and Responsibilities

Employer responsibilities

- Make every effort to maintain service for the public despite disruptive conditions, while keeping the safety of Library staff and customers in mind during periods of inclement weather or other emergency situations
- Make timely decision on whether to close based on information available, as outlined above
- Communicate to staff, public, and Board Chair using prescribed methods, giving as much notice as possible
- Grant leave for individuals who make personal decision not to come to (or remain at) work due to safety concerns
- Make reasonable efforts to schedule make-up shifts upon request
- Make reasonable efforts to be proactive and prepare ahead of time if inclement weather is forecasted, reminding staff of policy and procedures
- Make reasonable efforts to place employees at a more accessible location, if possible.

Employee responsibilities

- Employees are expected to make every reasonable effort to report for work as scheduled
- During periods of inclement weather, check prescribed work communication channel(s) prior to opening to confirm whether Library will be open or closed. In the absence of any communication, normal operations are presumed
- Leave enough time to travel safely when extra caution or preparation is required
- Make the decision to not come in, or to leave early, as determined by factors affecting individual safety, providing adequate notice using prescribed communication channels
- Following an inclement weather absence, inform administrative staff if using vacation or lieu time, or submit request to Manager to make up time, as soon as possible
- Inform customers of impending closure and ensure they exit the Library safely, with time to arrange for transportation if necessary
- Make reasonable efforts to inform impacted program registrants or volunteers if possible.

History

Supersedes: Not applicable

Background documents, related policies: Employment Standards Act; Unscheduled Closure and Inclement Weather Procedures

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