

WESTCHESTER PUBLIC LIBRARY

CLOSING POLICY

October 2009

509 - EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

The Director is empowered to close or reduce the hours of operation of Library buildings due to unhealthy conditions, unsafe conditions or other emergencies such as heating or cooling problems or the lack of available staff. Library employees may be required to work their scheduled hours at a closed facility or at another library facility, even though a facility may be closed to the public. If a closing is made for unsafe conditions, employees may receive full payment for the regular hours scheduled to be worked at the discretion of the Library Director. Closing pay is not automatic.

The library will normally close or delay opening in conjunction with the Chesterton High School (not any Duneland School) when there are weather closings or delayed openings, unless the Library Director determines the weather is not severe enough to justify suspending library operations or if the weather improves significantly and the Director instructs the staff to report to work.

Employees who decide to leave early, or not to come to work, because of weather or other conditions, while the library system remains open will not be paid for hours not worked.

Should a health or safety emergency affect our community, the library will cooperate with local emergency responders, the Porter County Health Department, the Porter County Emergency Management Agency, and the Department of Homeland Security; and will comply with requests to assist in checking or minimizing the effects of the emergency.

This may involve closing, reducing, or extending hours of operation at some or all library facilities for the duration of the crisis.

If the Library Must Close:

In the event the library is closed or hours reduced due to health or safety, the Director will be responsible for decision-making and communications.

Communications with staff will be handled by telephone using the established "phone tree". Supervisors will be called by the Director and will be responsible for notifying the employees scheduled to work in their respective departments for the day. The Director shall communicate with the public via the regular media outlets and the internet.

Services

- a. All events scheduled to take place in library facilities may be cancelled.
- b. Overdue fees for borrowed materials may be waived for the duration of the closing.

- c. Every attempt will be made to maintain public services by means of electronic resources and services to provide information and recreation to the public.

Staff

- a. Staff may be instructed to stay home for the duration of the emergency.
- b. Some staff members may be required to report to library facilities for various reasons.
Examples would include security, maintenance, or housekeeping staff needed to protect and maintain library property, automation staff needed to keep essential computer systems in operation, management staff needed to direct library operations, business office staff needed to process payroll, or others as may be determined as needed.
- c. Regular staff required to report to work will be paid.
 - 1. Full-time staff will continue to be paid at their normal rates.
 - 2. Part time staff will be paid for time they actually work.

If the Library Remains Open:

- a. Staff members will be expected to report for work as usual and receive their regular compensation.
- b. Staff who are ill are expected to stay at home. Staff who are ill and report to work will be sent home.
- c. Full-time staff who need to remain at home in order to care for dependents or who may be quarantined because of illness in the household will be required to use accrued personal business or vacation leave or accrued compensatory time in order to have paid leave for this absence.

(If requested by public health officials, Library facilities may be made available to be used as staging, screening, or treatment sites, or for other purposes to help protect public safety and welfare.)