

WESTCHESTER PUBLIC LIBRARY

EMERGENCY POLICY

(Revised January 16, 2003)

GENERAL PROVISIONS

In the event of emergency, it is the primary responsibility of the library staff present to do whatever is necessary to insure the safety of the library patrons and the remainder of the staff. The secondary responsibility of the library staff is to minimize the damaging effect of the emergency to property only if it poses no threat to anyone's personal safety.

Remember; people first, property second.

General guidelines for action in any emergency situation are:

1. KEEP CALM
2. Quickly gather as much information as possible in a reasonably short period of time, such as the nature and location of the emergency.
3. Evacuate the area if the threat of danger is imminent and secure the area from entry by all by trained emergency personnel.
4. Summon the appropriate emergency agency (police, fire or ambulance) by calling 911 and stand available to direct them to the source of the problem.
5. Contact the Director.
6. Senior supervisory personnel should interview all staff and patrons involved or witness to the incident and report to the Director.

PROCEDURES IN SPECIFIC SITUATIONS

ACCIDENT

In the event of an accident involving a staff member or patron, determine if you can handle the problem with reasonable care or if it is serious and requires the summoning of an ambulance. Provide whatever assistance you can until help arrives. *If blood or other bodily fluids are present, use gloves and take other universal precautions.* Call for assistance if necessary and then notify the Director.

- Do not attempt to move the person if the injury is serious. Make the person as comfortable as possible.
- Ask them to sit or lie down.
- Let them call family or call for them.
- Ask for the name of the injured or ill person and gather information about what happened.

- Get the names of witnesses.
- If physical trauma is the result of a crime, do not attempt any cleanup.

All staff members involved in the incident or witnessing the accident should immediately prepare a written report and turn them in to the Director.

BOILER

If a major steam leak is evident, turn off the main boiler switch if possible. Do not attempt to turn off or "wrap" the leak yourself. Summon assistance for any injuries. Notify the Director and Custodian immediately.

BOMB THREAT

Gather as much information from the reporting caller as possible. Attempt to learn as much from the caller as you can, such as the planned time of explosion, the type of bomb and its location in the building. Evacuate the building and call the police immediately. Notify the Director.

DEATH OR SEVERE MEDICAL PROBLEM

Do not presume that a death has occurred. Staff or patrons trained in CPR should provide assistance. Summon an ambulance immediately. Notify the Director. Staff members and volunteers with severe medical problems should notify their supervisors and co-workers of any problems and any standard emergency treatment related to the problem.

DRUG AND PSYCHIATRIC EMERGENCIES

Don't argue with anyone who appears to be experiencing a drug or psychiatric crisis. Be alert to the possibility of violence. One staff member should engage the person in conversation and patiently listen while another calls the police and the Director. A lone staff member should use the intercom to signal for assistance by using the library help signal. Attempt to continue talking with the person until help arrives. Notify the Director.

HELP SIGNAL

Ask your Department Supervisor what is the library help signal. A staff member hearing the help signal from another staff member should immediately summon the police to the caller's location. Notify the Director.

EARTHQUAKE

Keep calm. Do not run or panic. Remain where you are. If you are outdoors, stay outside; if you are indoors, stay inside. If you are indoors sit or stand against an inside wall or in a doorway; or else take cover under a desk or table. Stay away from windows and outside doors. If you are outdoors, stay away from buildings, overhead electrical wires, poles, or anything else that may shake loose and fall.

ELECTRIC SHOCK

Do not approach the victim if the hazard of shock is still present. Secure the area. Attempt to remove the source of the shock if possible with insulated material (dry, wooden broom handle, etc.) or open the electrical circuit at the main breaker. Start CPR and summon ambulance. Notify the Director.

ELEVATOR FAILURE

In the event that a person becomes stranded in the elevator, reassure them until help arrives. Do not attempt to pry open the doors. There is an emergency access key in a red plastic box at the Circulation Desk. Notify the Director and the Custodian.

EVACUATION OF THE BUILDINGS

If the threat of personal danger is imminent, immediately evacuate the building.

Step 1. Announce the evacuation verbally, using the public address system if possible. Pull the alarm for all fires. Ask everyone in the building to remain calm and walk, don't run to the nearest exit. Familiarize yourself with the location of alarm pulls before a problem occurs.

Step 2. Notify emergency assistance by calling 911.

Step 3. If possible, check the building for stragglers as you exit. Please be sure to check the restrooms and the second floor of the Thomas Library before you leave.

Step 4. Move the crowd away from the building.

Step 5. Stand ready to direct the emergency assistance to the exact location of the problem.

Step 6. Prevent anyone from reentering the building until it is determined to be safe.

FIRE

Familiarize yourself with the location of fire extinguishers and alarm pulls before a problem occurs. Activate the alarm and evacuate the building. Then summon the fire department. You may attempt to extinguish a small fire with an extinguisher yourself after you have activated the alarm. Notify the Director.

FLOODING AND WATER LEAKS

If an area is found to be flooded, clear the area and secure it from entry to prevent the possibility of electric shock. Notify the Director and the Custodian. Small leaks are also to be reported. Immediate action may be taken to protect library material if the threat of electric shock is not present.

MECHANICAL FAILURE OR DIFFICULTY (Furnace failure, broken glass, etc.)

Notify the Director and the Custodian. If the problem is broken glass, do not allow patrons in the area or attempt to remove broken panes yourself.

POISONING (Real or suspect)

Attempt to establish the source of the poison and follow any immediate corrective action printed on the label. Additional information may be obtained by calling the Indiana Poison Control Center at 1-800-382-9097. Summon an ambulance and retain the suspected source of the poison for the emergency personnel. Notify the Director.

SEVERE WEATHER (Tornado)

Evacuate the second floor of the Thomas Library and assemble all patrons in the center of the main floor away from windows. Assemble on the lower level when in the Library Service Center. Restrooms and offices without glass are preferred areas. Tune the radio to a local station for updates.

THEFT OR ROBBERY

Report all thefts to the police and the Director as soon as discovered. Cooperate with robbers and notify the police as soon as it is safe.

TOXIC FUMES (Real or suspect)

Evacuate the area and summon the fire department. Remove any affected person to a ventilated area and give resuscitation if necessary. Notify the Director.

CLOSINGS

The Director is responsible for closing the library due to unhealthy conditions, unsafe conditions or other emergencies. If the Director is unavailable, the Assistant Director will make the decision to close. If the Director and the Assistant Director are unavailable, the Administrative Assistant will make the decision.

When the decision to close is made, the Director will notify department supervisors and the local radio stations. Supervisors will be responsible for notifying members of their departments.

ACCIDENT REPORTS

Library employees are required to report all accidents to the Library Director in writing. The time, place, nature and circumstances of the accident are to be included in the report. The report should also list the names of any library employees or patrons who may have witnessed the accident.