



EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & DISASTER RESPONSE POLICY

Avoidance/Preparation:

- Library staff will secure the building at closing time, checking all exits as listed in closing procedures.
- Staff should be familiar with the location, type and application of the fire extinguishers and fire pulls in the building.
- The LCSD shall arrange for periodic inspections of the building.
- If in need of police, staff should call the village police first at 845-292-4422 because they are located next door.
- All staff should be aware that 911 is the all-purpose emergency number to be used in event of an emergency that requires immediate assistance from the fire department, police or of serious medical emergency.
- The work paths and exit paths within the building will be kept clear of any clutter or storage of materials.
- Staff need to be aware of the physical condition of the library, reporting any leaks, running water, broken glass or anything out of the ordinary to the library director or library trustee.
- A supply of garbage bags, paper towels, latex gloves and other cleaning supplies will be kept for any initial, small cleanups. Mops & bath towels are also kept in janitor's room.
- All staff should be trained to use fire extinguishers, periodically.
- All staff should be periodically trained in deescalation, and the "Run, hide, fight technique" with either video or police instruction.
- The Library Director and designee(s) should know how to silence fire panel and who to call to investigate any issues and to reset the panel.

Emergency Contact List:

A list of contact numbers for building and computer/networking emergencies is maintained on the bulletin board in the director's office and posted in the staff work area.

Emergency Closing:

Emergencies or catastrophes, including, but not limited to, extreme weather, utility failure, bomb threat, fire, explosion, or terrorism may require closing the library.

The primary consideration in any emergency or catastrophe is the safety of all persons in the building and on the property. The library cooperates fully with public safety agencies and emergency service providers.

The library Director or the staff person in charge at the time of the emergency will determine when to close the library during an emergency or catastrophe. Whenever possible, the Library Board President will be contacted in advance of the closing.

Initial Procedures in a disaster:

If fire or water damage has occurred:

1. Advise the Library Director or President of the Library Board (or another board member if the president is not available) of the situation.
2. If there is standing water on the tile floor, use mop & towels to remove as much water as possible. If necessary, cover floor outlets in program room with plastic bags, taping them down to prevent further water from coming in.
3. Use fans to expel humid air from the building. DO NOT TURN UP THE HEAT. This will prevent mold and mildew damage as much as possible.

- **If vandalism has occurred, but no fire or water damage:**

1. Advise the Library Director or President of the Library Board (or another board member if president is not available).
2. Take a visual assessment of the damage. On paper, document what you see and take photographs of the damage. Do not touch anything in the area until directed by the Library Director or Board member. They will make the call to the police to investigate the situation.

The library director will call and/or email LCSD staff (Buildings & Grounds) to report the issue. The library director may call RCLS to apprise them of the situation and request their assistance.

Health Emergencies:

Staff members should exercise caution when administering first aid of even a minor nature because of the safety of the injured individual and the potential liability of the staff member. Without specialized training it is not advisable for staff to undertake more than keeping the sick or injured patron comfortable and protected from needless disturbance until medical help can be obtained. Since each case is unique, staff members should use their own judgment to do what is prudent and reasonable. 911 should be called immediately in the event of any serious problem. Liberty PD is next door and can also be called to assist and evaluate the situation since they have a very fast response time. No medication should ever be dispensed to the public.

Problem Patrons:

For minor problems, like noise issues or food in the building, calmly approach a patron with another staff person with you if possible, to discuss with them what behavior needs to change. Each situation is unique, so if you feel threatened in any way, call police at (845)292-4422. In situations of any violent or erratic behavior, try to keep other patrons away from the area while you wait for police to respond. It is always a good idea to keep a barrier between you and the patron – such as the circulation desk. Patrons should be given 2 warnings before being asked to leave. Report the problem to the Director immediately or leave her a note/email with as much information as possible about the incident. An incident report should be filed (blank forms are available at the circulation desk, or an electronic copy is pinned at the top of the lib@rcls.org general email folder.)

If a Person has a Weapon: Do not Panic! Try to stay calm! Immediately have one staff person call Liberty PD at 845-292-4422 and call 911 for emergency response.

While waiting for police to respond, try to de-escalate the situation if possible, or initiate Run, Hide, Fight if it becomes an active shooter situation.

- *De-escalate:* Actively listen, repeat and emphasize what the person is saying. Use positive body language (e.g., nodding and agreeing). If the person is fixated on something, try to shift their attention to something else. Avoid saying things like "calm down" or "I'm calling the police" as these can escalate the situation.
- *Run, Hide, Fight:* For detailed instructions, view the [FBI training video](#).
 - *Run...* Depending on the location of the dangerous person, you can quickly escape out any of the main exits. The staff office door is an ideal emergency exit because it leads to the street near the police station. If you are upstairs, you can use the emergency stairwell to escape to the main street – be aware that a door alarm will be activated.
 - *Hide...* Some safe spots to hide include:
 - *Main floor-* Under the circulation desk, the study room (duck under tables and stay away from windows), the staff office/break area (that door can be shut and locked and you can escape to police station), or the director's office under the table or desk.
 - *Downstairs-* Janitor's closet area or bathroom (for a smaller number of people). If working with patrons in a program, make sure to gather them and take them to a hiding spot if you cannot escape outside.

- *Upstairs-* behind one of the bookshelves; in the emergency stairwell or in the IT closet (located inside the emergency stairwell) (*note that a door alarm will sound and that the It closet could only fit 1-2 people.*
- *Fight-* If you cannot escape or hide, throw chairs or books or tables at the person... Kick, hit, scream, if necessary. Do whatever you can to protect yourself.

Lockdown Situation:

Potentially Dangerous Person: If you see a potentially dangerous person carrying a weapon and they have not yet entered the building, if there is enough time, quickly take the door key (Allen wrench) and lock the exterior door to prevent their entry. Then follow the same “hide” procedures listed above to stay away from any glass window areas and to contact law enforcement immediately about the threat. If you do not have enough time, get people to run away from the person and exit the building from the safest exit possible.

School or other community lockdown:

If the library receives communication regarding a lockdown situation happening at an adjacent site- like the Elementary school, staff should lock the building at the front entrance and shelter in place in the building until we know that the situation has been resolved. Staff should calmly inform any patrons inside the building as to what is going on and urge them to stay in the building until it is safe.

Person Stuck in the Elevator:

There is an active phone in the elevator for emergencies. If you can communicate with the person stuck in the elevator, have them use that calling system and keep them calm. Reassure them that you are getting help. Also call the elevator repair number listed on the emergency contact sheet.

Bomb Threats:

- *Phone call threats:* Keep the caller on the line as long as possible. Ask the caller to repeat the message and try to write down every word spoken by the person. If the caller does not indicate the location of the bomb or the time of possible detonation, **ASK FOR THIS INFORMATION.** Pay particular attention to peculiar background noises such as motors running, background music and any other sounds which may indicate the location from which the call is originating. Listen closely to the voice (male, female), voice quality (calm, excited), accents, and speech impediments. Check the phone for the phone number on the caller ID. Immediately after the caller hangs up, call 911. Clear the building. The police will handle the actual bomb search. Notify the Library Director.

- *Suspicious Packages/Objects:* If staff sees a suspicious object, do not touch the object. Law enforcement should be alerted as soon as possible advising them of the suspicious item.

Approved by the Board of Trustees on Dec. 30, 2025.