

Pick-Up and Delivery Services: Guidance for Public Libraries

On May 14th, the Ontario government [announced](#) the retailers, seasonal businesses and health and community service providers who will be permitted to open or expand their services on Tuesday, May 19, 2020 at 12:01 a.m., as part of the first stage of the government's reopening framework. Public libraries are included in the "[Detailed List of Stage 1 Openings](#)" as being allowed to do 'pick-up or delivery'. With this provincial order, permission is given by the province so that libraries may start curbside pick-up, however, the decision to proceed with this service would be a local one. Local health unit permission is not required, although permission from the owner of the library facility may be required if the library is in a school or other facility. Within the framework of the health and safety guidelines, the procedures can be developed locally. This document provides guidance and options as you develop your local procedures.

Staffing

For the purposes of pick-up or delivery services, only staff required to implement and operate the services need to be onsite. The library building remains closed to the public. Pick-up and delivery services can be offered at all library locations or select branches.

Health and Safety Guidelines

As you contemplate offering pick-up or delivery services to your community, it is important to implement and adhere to health and safety guidelines to keep staff and patrons safe. Under Ontario law, employers have the duty to keep workers and work sites safe, and workers have the right to [refuse unsafe work](#). Before implementing pick-up and delivery services, adequate health and safety training should be provided to staff, including:

- Outlining potential risks associated with library pick-up and delivery services
- Proper sanitization practices, including handwashing, use of alcohol-based sanitizer or sanitizing products for surfaces
- Proper procedures for material handling
- Proper use of [Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\)](#), if used

Library staff should also follow general health and safety guidelines when providing pick-up and delivery services to the community:

- Staying home if feeling ill
- Physical distancing of two meters from people in public and within the library building
- Washing hands frequently OR using an alcohol-based sanitizer if soap and water is not available
- Wearing a face covering when social distancing is not possible during pick-up and delivery
- Increasing cleaning of frequently touched surfaces, including where materials to be picked up are placed or organized
- Redesigning spaces and interactions to make them safer, including workspaces within the library

Guidance on health and safety for curbside pick-up and delivery has been provided by provincial and federal bodies, such as the [Ministry of Health](#) and [Workplace Safety and Prevention Services](#).

Procedure Possibilities

Different libraries will establish different procedures for implementing pick-up and delivery services, which could include interlibrary loan or inter-branch services. The procedures for selecting the materials to be picked up will vary from library to library. Some libraries may have patrons select and place holds on materials through the library catalogue which would then be picked off by library staff and set aside for pick-up. In smaller communities, some patrons may just call the library and ask for some reading materials of a certain genre or specific format.

Guidance for pick-up services:

- One option is for patrons arriving by vehicle. The expectation is that patrons would stay in their vehicle and remotely open the trunk. Staff would deliver books to the trunk using disposable gloves. For large numbers of orders, it may be necessary to plan a traffic and pick-up route.
- Another pick-up option is for patrons to arrive at a specific walk-up spot outside the library, such as a front porch, to find their labelled packages full of their holds in labelled packages.
- The choice of packaging for the items would also be a local decision. Some are using paper bags so that they can write the person's name on the bag. Others are providing cloth library bags, and some are using plastic bags in case of inclement weather.
- In terms of timing, the library could set appointment times for pick-up. Another option would be to set aside a specific time for the pick-up, for example from 4 to 6 pm Monday to Thursday.

Guidance for delivery services:

- Equip delivery personnel with alcohol-based hand sanitizer, tissues, and disinfectant wipes to clean frequently touched surfaces (e.g., car door handles, steering wheel) and provide them with instructions on their appropriate use and disposal.
- Delivery personnel should use alcohol-based hand sanitizer between deliveries.
- Wherever possible, deliveries should be contactless, with items being left at the door of the customer.
- Keep in mind that materials can also be delivered to patrons using Canada Post Library Book/Materials Rate.

Guidance for returning materials:

- Public libraries may accept returning material through drop boxes, to ensure contactless handling of that material.
- Although there is no scientific consensus, it is recommended that returned materials be quarantined for a period of [72 hours](#). Local decisions can be made about the specific period of time or processes.
- Libraries may choose to delay materials return depending on space and capacity to quarantine materials.

Communicating pick-up and/or delivery protocols

Once the decision has been made to offer pick-up and/or delivery services to your community, and have developed the appropriate protocols internally, it is important to communicate protocols to your users in order to ensure the safety of all.

Some libraries might also make the decision *not* to offer pick-up or delivery services for various reasons, including health and safety concerns, needing more time to plan the service, etc. This decision, along with the reasoning, should also be communicated to the community.

Methods of communication:

- Library website or partner websites
- Social media
- Email
- Telephone
- Radio
- Local newspapers and other print sources
- Posters on exterior doors or other places outside the library where users might look for information
- Printed pamphlets to accompany materials that are picked up or delivered

Ensure that your communication about new protocols reaches all library users, including those who may not have access to a computer or internet service.

Examples of communication from public libraries in Ontario:

- [Vaughan Public Libraries](#): Vaughan Public Libraries' curbside pick-up webpage includes an explanation of how the services works, a request form, and frequently asked questions about the service.
- [Parry Sound Public Library](#): Parry Sound Public Library's curbside service has been limited to three days a week, and to specific hours during those days.

This document is posted in the [COVID-19: Information Resources for Public Libraries](#) guide. Ontario Library Service staff will be updating the guide as more information becomes available.
