

West Allis Public Library Temporary Safety Practices Policy in Response to COVID-19

On March 17, 2020, the City of West Allis declared that a state of emergency exists due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to spread among the citizens of Wisconsin and the City of West Allis, sustaining the health emergency that underlays the City's March 17, 2020, declaration of emergency. As of March 31, 2021, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services indicated that 577,195 people in Wisconsin have tested positive for COVID-19, including 100,722 people in Milwaukee County.

Based on reported evidence from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) regarding the effectiveness of cloth face covering in supporting the prevention of spreading COVID-19, the West Allis Public Library Board of Trustees requires patrons to wear a face covering while inside the West Allis Public Library ("Library") building, and follow all other CDC COVID-19 guidelines to ensure the safety of all patrons and staff. Published scientific research has shown that the probability of transmission during exposure between a person infected with COVID-19 and an uninfected person is 17.4 percent if face coverings are not worn and 3.1 percent if face coverings are worn.

This policy shall be repealed at the discretion of the Library Board. Until then, the Library requires the following:

- Everyone age 5 or older wear a cloth face covering or mask that covers the mouth and nose while inside the Library building

"Face covering" means a piece of cloth or other material that is worn to cover the nose and mouth completely. A face covering includes but is not limited to a bandana, a cloth face mask, a disposable or paper mask, a neck gaiter, or a religious face covering. A face covering does not include face shields, mesh masks, masks with holes or openings, or masks with vents.

The following individuals are exempt from compliance with the above item:

- Individuals who have trouble breathing
 - Individuals who are unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance
 - Individuals with medical conditions, intellectual or developmental disabilities, mental health conditions, or other sensory sensitivities that prevent the individual from wearing a face covering
 - When communicating with an individual who is deaf or hard of hearing and communication cannot be achieved through other means
- Maintain at least 6 feet of social distance from others inside the Library building except for members of a person's own household
 - Masks are not required in outdoor, Library sponsored activities when social distancing rules are applied.

Staff Procedures:

Library staff will remind any patron not adhering to the policy to properly wear a face covering. Staff will offer a mask to the patron if necessary. Staff will inform the patron about options available to them that do not require the guest to be inside the Library building. This includes but is not limited to curbside and virtual services. Free Wi-Fi access is available 24 hours a day in the parking lot and outside both Library building entrances.

If a patron states that they are unable to wear a mask due to a disability, Library staff should not challenge that claim. However, in such instances, staff should remind the patron that 6-foot social distancing remains applicable, and the patron should maintain that social distancing while in the Library building.

If a patron refuses to comply with staff's request to wear a face covering (other than stating that they are unable to do so due to a disability), the staff person will ask the patron to leave the premises. If the patron refuses the request to leave the Library building, staff will phone police and request assistance with escorting the patron from the Library building. Staff should complete an Incident Report documenting the policy violation and forward it to the Library Director. Repeated violations of this policy can result in a person having their Library privileges revoked or restricted.

Library Board Approval
April 15, 2021,
Revised May 26, 2021