



Inclement Weather and Unscheduled Closure Policy

Created: February 2024

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline roles and responsibilities in situations where the Lincoln Pelham Public Library temporarily suspends or curtails operations due to an emergency situation, including but not limited to severe weather events or power disruptions, as well as in cases when the Library remains in operation but some staff may experience difficulty reporting to work due to inclement weather or other emergency conditions.

Guidelines

The library is responsible for maintaining services, so applying this policy must consider both the operational obligations and requirements of the library and the safety of library staff and customers. The library will make every effort to maintain services despite inclement weather or other circumstances that could disrupt its normal operations. The determination to close any or all branches of Lincoln Pelham Public Library shall be made by the CEO/Chief Librarian or designate, except where evacuation is essential for staff and public safety or by order of police, fire officials or relevant Town stakeholders.

For those library service points that are located within shared facilities, any determination made by the hosting or partner organization to close a facility will influence the Library CEO's evaluation. The full Library Board will be promptly informed of any closures via email. Consultation with the Towns of Lincoln and Pelham and relevant divisions and officials will be initiated where appropriate.

Conditions Warranting Closure

Non-emergency closing: Failure of heating/cooling equipment during periods of extreme weather, lack of electrical power, lack of computers available at staff service points for an extended period, or inadequate staffing levels.

Emergency evacuation: Building problems resulting in clear and present danger to employees and/or customers (e.g. gas leak, noxious/toxic fumes, or fire) or any event such as a criminal investigation, severe accident involving injury, severe building damage.

Non-openings, delayed openings or early closings: Severely inclement weather. In such cases the decision to close will be based upon:

- General conditions of roads
- Condition of parking lots and walkways
- Availability of staff to open and operate the library
- Requests for closure by local or provincial agencies
- Severe Weather Warning(s) as issued by Environment Canada
- Closure of municipal facilities

If the Library closes prior to the scheduled closing time, all full-time employees and any part-time employees already present at work shall be paid for the remainder of their shift. Library operations will be resumed when feasible. All employees will be deemed to be “on call” for what would otherwise be a regular workday and available to return to work upon notification by library management or other library communication channels. Employees who can perform their regular duties from home may be required to work remotely until they are recalled to the branch. If the Library is not to be opened to the public at all, every effort shall be made to make this decision at least two hours before the scheduled opening time and to alert all scheduled staff.

Employees instructed by the employer not to report for their scheduled shift or to leave work due to an emergency will be compensated at their normal hourly rate for the balance of their shift.

- a. For employees whose positions do not allow for remote work, this compensation is provided on the basis that, during the emergency, they are to remain available for a call-in to work to complete the balance of their shift as deemed necessary by the CEO/Chief Librarian or designate.
- b. Employees whose position allows for remote work, regardless of their scheduled location of work, are expected to work remotely during unexpected facility closures unless otherwise directed by the CEO/Chief Librarian or designate, though may also be recalled to a branch as referenced above.

c. When circumstances require the closure of only select branches, their staff may be redeployed to other branch locations. This may result in a change in the number and/or timing of scheduled shifts. Employees who refuse scheduled shifts at alternate locations will not be compensated for any shifts cancelled due to the closure. Compensation for missed time for extended closures, where redeployment is not feasible, may be referred to the Library Board. If closure continues beyond one day, staff shall be responsible for remotely accessing their work email accounts and the library's public website (if operational) each day for instructions as to whether the library is open or closed. In some cases, such as temporary power outages, the library may be evacuated and closed temporarily to the public, however staff will be required to stay on site for up to two (2) hours until the situation is resolved or more information is available regarding the timeline of an expected resolution. If the outage is expected to continue past 5:00 PM, or if no information is available regarding an expected return of service as of 4:30 PM, the affected library branches will be closed for the remaining regular hours of operation. In addition to the immediate evacuation of customers, failure of electricity for more than 30 minutes after dark will also prompt closure of the impacted service point(s) for the remainder of the day.

Staff Responsibilities

During periods of poor weather, employees are expected to make every reasonable effort to report for work as scheduled. It is recognized, however, that inclement weather may cause significant transportation problems or locally hazardous conditions.

Employees are expected to consider their safety in evaluating their ability to commute to work. In such cases, the following protocol shall be observed:

1. An employee may decide not to come to work or leave early at such time as information is broadcast that:

- A public road is closed by the police (due to weather) that is a main arterial route to the facility from that employee's residence.
- A major storm is imminent which, for purposes of clarity, is a Severe Weather Warning as issued by Environment Canada that directly affects the Towns of Lincoln or Pelham or the employee's place of residence.

2. In all situations found in Number 1., the employee is expected to contact their direct supervisor as soon as possible and advise the reason(s) that they will not be coming into work or leaving work early.

a. For employees who are not able to perform their regular duties remotely, such day, or portion of a day, will be taken as earned vacation or as time in lieu of overtime. If there is a loss of pay, an employee may request an opportunity to make-up the time if organizational needs and timing permit. The scheduling of this shift shall be at the discretion of the employee's supervisor.

b. Employees who can perform their regular duties from home but are scheduled to attend a branch must consult their manager when considering the feasibility of working remotely due to inclement weather.

3. In all cases, the employee and supervisor shall mutually ensure that there is minimum negative impact on operations when making such a decision.

Communication of Closure

In cases where library closure is determined prior to regular hours of operation, the CEO/Chief Librarian or designate will initiate communication of the closure to library staff, members of the Library Board and the Town's relevant divisions and officials via email or phone.

Public notice of the closure will also be posted on the library's website (if operational), social media channels and applicable media outlets. Outgoing messages for phone lines with remote access will also be updated. Employees who are scheduled to work and need to determine the library's operational status in an emergency are encouraged to consult the above noted information sources to receive instructions concerning their work assignment and status. In the absence of any communication by phone or on the library's website or via email, normal operations are presumed.

In cases where the library closes after some period of operation, in addition to the above, signage will be posted on the door and a message will be added to all library phone lines. Staff will inform the visiting public of the closure and ensure that they exit the library safely and have time to arrange transportation if necessary. Efforts will be made to inform any impacted program registrants or volunteers if possible.