

Support for the Resumption of Activities and the Reopening of Local Libraries to the Public

(Updated version, incorporating the provisions of Decree 2020-663 of May 31, 2020)

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This document aims to support libraries in the absolute priority of the health and safety of officers, employees and the public. It builds on, with focus on libraries under the jurisdiction of local authorities and their groups, the recommendations made by the ministries responsible for occupational health and safety, which are the relevant authorities for health recommendations.

It takes into account the health situation at the date of its drafting, and it will therefore have to be adapted in the event of any development of this situation. These recommendations apply to the process of lifting of restrictions on library services and buildings under the jurisdiction of local authorities and groups of local authorities.

They are the result of a process that has involved the services of the Ministry of Culture and five professional associations: the Association of Librarians of France, the Association of Departmental Librarians, the Association of Directors of Municipal Libraries and Intercommunal Groups of the Cities of France, Bibliopat and the Association for the Cooperation of Music Information Professionals.

As of 29 April 2020, they were the subject of consultation with the associations of elected representatives in the context of regional sessions of the Council of Local Authorities for Culture, organised by the regional directorates of cultural affairs. Library professionals preparing their business recovery plans will find more methodological advice, including building a gradual 4-phase re-opening scenario (see below – admission of the public), on the website of the five professional associations associated with this collective approach: <http://www.biblio-covid.fr/>

In general, reading the information from the <http://www.biblio-covid.fr/> site is a natural extension of these health recommendations, as all the information has been designed collectively and in a fully coordinated way.

Covid-19 Virus (SARS-CoV-2) – a Reminder of the Facts

Based on current knowledge, the virus is mainly transmitted through:

- Inhalation of viruses projected in the form of droplets emitted during coughing, sneezing, but also when talking (specks of spit);
- Direct contact with an infected person: handshakes, hugging, kissing;
- Indirect contact: contact of the hand with contaminated objects or surfaces (because they are affected by an infected and contaminating person) and then contact with the mouth, nose or eye of the contaminated hand.

Because they admit an intergenerational audience and manage flows of collections, in premises used for multiple purposes, the application of preventative measures in libraries is of particular importance:

- Inside and outside, a physical distance of at least one metre between any two people must be respected. A free space of 4m² around each person is requested. When this distance cannot be maintained, the wearing of the mask is mandatory;
- Library collections, materials and furniture must be regularly disinfected to avoid indirect contamination;

- Hand hygiene (HDM) measures must be applied by both users and agents.

I. General measures

Cleaning rooms and furniture

- If the building was closed during lockdown and was not frequented within the last 5 working days before reopening, we can settle for a simple cleaning (with or without detergent) and a ventilation of the premises.
- A procedure for cleaning and disinfecting premises and furniture on a regular basis should be planned, in consultation with the technical services of the local authority. Frequently touched surfaces (stairways, door handles, hospitality banks, elevator buttons, etc.) will need to be cleaned at least twice a day with bio-cleaning products meeting the NF EN virucidal standard 14476. If possible, doors will be kept open to limit need to touch things.
- Aeration of the premises must be carried out every 3 hours for 15 minutes a time, and after each disinfection.
- The library's opening hours can be adapted to take into account preparation and cleaning times for the premises.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for Staff

- Equip agents with consumer masks (cotton, washable at 60oC) and/or visors in spaces open to the public.
- It is not advisable to wear gloves except for certain tasks such as disinfection; on the other hand, library officers in contact with the public must be able to wash their hands regularly with soapy water or disinfect them with a hydroalcoholic gel.
- Wearing cotton gowns, washable at a minimum of 60oC and washed daily is recommended for handling, quarantine, disinfection and cleaning operations.
- After use, place disposable PPE in dedicated garbage bags. When these are almost full, they should be closed and placed in a second plastic bag. Waste is stored in this format for 24 hours before disposal via the household waste chain.

Adaptation of Welcome Desks

- Allow each staff member to have a dedicated position, separated by at least one metre from other staff.
- Install a plexiglass-type protective screen in front of the welcome desk. This will be regularly disinfected with a suitable product (beware of Plexiglas or PMMA that does not support contact with alcoholic solutions).
- Provide ground markings near the welcome desks in order to make clear the distance of at least one metre between each user.

Air conditioning and air treatment equipment

- Make sure the filters are well maintained;
- Ensure, where facilities permit, that the settings of the devices provide for renewal of air, not recycling.

II. Library Collections Provisions

a. Documents that remained in libraries and have not been manipulated during lock-down

There is no need to provide for disinfection of collections left in the library during lock-down, as the presence of infectious SARS-CoV-2 deposits on dry surfaces is negligible after several days. This also applies to shelving and furniture.

b. Documents returned to the library (whether they were loaned before the installation containment or after the implementation of the loan service)

The length of time documents can present SARS-CoV-2 in an infectious state varies depending on the composition of the objects. The risk of contamination through indirect contact is therefore determined by the lifespan of the virus.

According to the results of two studies published in February and March 2020¹, the lifespan of the virus (SARS-CoV-2) on surfaces is low, ranging from a few hours à a few days depending on the nature of the materials, the viral load present on surfaces and thermo-hygrometric conditions.

Studies suggest that SARS-CoV-2 remains viable:

- 3 hours in the air in the form of aerosols (particles at 5m)
- 24 hours for 48-hour cardboard and for textiles
- 3-5 days for metals, paper and glass
- 4-5 days for wood
- 3-9 days for plastics

The resulting quarantine time must also take into account the uses of documents and audiences. Caution therefore calls for longer quarantine times for public reading libraries that allow a wide range of the public to borrow documents to take home, in comparison with uses of the same media by heritage services, such as archives. They do not lend books for use at home, most of their materials are not openly accessible and their users comprise a much smaller share of children than public reading libraries. These specificities therefore justify periods of quarantine that vary between lending libraries and archives.

It will therefore be recommended that the following rules be applied:

| Type of document | Treatment recommended |
|---|--|
| Paper documents without plastic elements | Quarantine of at least 3 days |
| Paper documents (monographs or periodicals) with laminated covers | 10-day quarantine - or disinfecting blankets with a ethanol-infused wipe or isopropanol 70% respecting the drying time, followed by 3 days of quarantine before being re-entered to shelves to ensure that the virus is no longer viable on paper surfaces |

¹ Studies carried out by scientists at the Centre for Disease Control (CDC), the University of California, Los Angeles, and Princeton: Van Doremalen N, Bushmaker T, Morris DH, et al. Aerosol and Surface Stability of SARS-CoV-2 as Compared with SARS-CoV-1. *New England Journal of Medicine* (2020) published online March 17, https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMc2004973?query=featured_home
Kampf, G. et al. Persistence of coronaviruses on inanimate surfaces and their inactivation with biocidal agents, *Journal of Hospital Infection*, Volume 104, Issue 3, March 2020, 246 – 251. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhin.2020.01.022>

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| Plastic documents (CDs, DVDs, cases, etc.) | 10-day quarantine, or disinfection with an wipe soaked in ethanol or isopropanol at 70% while respecting the drying time, followed by a 3-day quarantine (if there are documents paper in CD or DVD cases such as booklets) or reintegration into shelves (if no paper documentation inside the cases). |
| Documents with textile elements (children's books) | Awaiting recommendations from the High Council for Public Health |

The quarantine of documents must be done in a dedicated room or, failing that, in a specific space (part of store or reading room that can be easily rearranged insulated). It should be designed, with shelves available and/or tables on which to store documents, making sure that this space is not accessible to the public. This space will also accommodate parcels, including book orders or other types of documents, for which a 3-day quarantine (once opened) must be made before handling the works.

A library that cannot provide a space isolated from the public for this quarantine operation will have to:

- Either mobilize an outdoor space to store the documents loaned before the beginning of the lockdown period and since returned;
- Or forego organising a document lending service, which would involve activities which are too complicated to manage between the library and the storage room.

As soon as lending activities resume, set up a document processing circuit so as not to put in contact documents that have been processed (disinfected, quarantined) with those that have been handled by users or staff.

General advice on handling and circulation of collections:

- Separate the spaces dedicated to documents that have been returned or touched from the spaces dedicated to documents that will be lent or accessible to the public (for example, provide tables for each type of document);
- For cataloguing and document processing operations (equipment, binding), provide for the disinfection of documents and the washing of hands or disinfection with a hydro-alcoholic solution before handling;
- When document transport is done by vehicle (home transport, serviced by departmental libraries), service vehicles must be regularly disinfected. - Loan and return automatons used by the public should be disinfected regularly, if possible, after each use.

III. Admission of the Public

Taking an incremental approach to the resumption of services is essential in order to test and verify the safety of the measures taken in the previous phase. It is therefore recommended to follow a phasing-in approach for the reopening of services and premises, depending on the implementation of the material conditions, but also the pandemic context and general guidelines:

Phase 1

First, do not allow access to the premises, except for the spaces required for the borrowing of documents and focus on the internal work of preparing the admission of the public in the next

phase. Free access to collections is not recommended in Phase 1 given the risk of indirect contamination by the works, which cannot be cleaned.

Phase 2

In a second phase, a partial opening of the premises to the public and small groups.

Phase 3

A third phase in which activities can be resumed again, and the public can move more freely.

Phase 4

Resuming normal activity and assessing the actions taken during the Pandemic.

The different services that can be implemented in each of these phases are described with the appropriate recommendations. Of course, the public must be admitted in accordance with the rules recalled in Parts I and II (wearing facemasks, processing collections).

1. Access to collections without access to premises

Access to the collections will be determined by the level of preparation of the premises and the institution's ability to implement the guidelines of the High Council of Public Health (HCSP).

Loan and return service of documents with withdrawal at the library

Initially, a document lending service with withdrawal to the library can be envisaged, without users having access to openly accessible collections and the various spaces of the library.

- Limit attendance by opting for advance reservations and recommendations by phone, email, or on the library's website, by setting arrival times to be respected in order to spread out the presence of readers and by bringing readers in one by one.
- Install a sign at the entrance of the library with all the information that will be useful for the user (reminder of the instructions, organization of the loan-return service, payment terms of registration fees)
- Preferring payment by card or cheque and avoiding the passage of money from hand to hand).
- Organize queues and mark out the route to be taken by users with signs and ground markings providing a reminder of social distancing rules.
- Make available materials necessary for hand hygiene (e.g. hydro-alcoholic products at the entrance to the building or at the welcome desks).
- Provide staff who can go to shelves to pick up documents requested by readers.

Setting up delivery services for documents

Books can also be brought to the homes of people with travel difficulties, through volunteer librarians or in partnership with associations or local social services.

- Give preference to advance reservations and recommendations by phone, email, or on the library's website.
- Promote delivery in partnership with other social services, and link this service with, for example, the delivery of meals at home.
- Provide hydro-alcoholic gel and soap and single-use towels at water points.
- Disinfect service vehicles.
- On the return of documents, quarantine and then process these as indicated above.

Long-term loans and deposits of collections (especially youth) to other community services or social associations

- Give the partner involved a document explaining instructions for quarantining and disinfecting documents;
- Make sure a suitable space is set up, with a counter loan.

2. Admission of the Public to the Premises

Access to public spaces should only be possible if physical distance can be respected and if it is possible to implement preventative measures. In accordance with Article 27 of Decree No. 2020-663 of 31 May 2020, the wearing of masks in public library spaces is mandatory for anyone aged 11 and over.

General measures for users' access to premises

- Provide a reminder about hygiene measures and preventative gestures with clear signage and encourage each user to disinfect their hands at the entrance and exit of the library. Limit the number of people on the premises
- Set a suitable standard: each establishment must set a maximum capacity, below the average attendance. The capacity must be calculated on the basis of a free space of 4m² per person, without touching others.
- Equip yourself with a counting device to check the number of people present in the building.
- Ensure that the public is spread across in all accessible areas of the establishment.

Organizing the flow of users

- Organize queues that could emerge outside by providing markers reminding visitors of the physical distance required.
- Establish and mark out a route to allow users to move around without the need to cross paths within the spaces and to guarantee a distance of one metre between each of them.
- Provide staff to regulate flows.

Organizing spaces

- Suspend access to water fountains and coffee machines.
- Remove furniture that cannot be disinfected properly (e.g. cloth-covered seats) or prevent access to it (e.g. use tape).
- Identify materials where it is possible to use virucidal products meeting the EN 14476 standard.
- Prohibit access to other equipment that cannot be machine-washed at 60°C for at least 30 minutes.
- Carpets can be cleaned with a rotowash®-type auto-cleaner.

Possibly provide for a differentiated opening of the library's spaces (workspaces, user-friendly spaces, etc.)

- Give access only to spaces that can be disinfected and opened while respecting safety distances.
- Display signs sign indicating the rules of use and the standards relative to the space.

- If it is not possible to open spaces while guaranteeing the required conditions, close the spaces and, in the case of open spaces, use tape or any other device of this type.

Specific guidelines for consultation rooms for heritage documents

- Absolutely prefer on-demand reproductions and remote searches / instead of the reader, especially if the sanitary conditions available to the service are deemed insufficient. - Bring and install the documents yourself, one by one, for readers. - Create a quarantine for the documents consulted, different from that of open access. Users put the document directly on the quarantine table under the supervision of the librarian. - Create a quarantine for consultation materials: futons, lecterns etc. Disinfect with a 70-degree alcohol solution, which can be disinfected according to the recommendations of the health authorities. Regularly switch to the washing machine the fabric supports, preferably at 60 degrees minimum for at least 15 minutes. - Systematic hand washing by the soap reader before any consultation. - Do not provide gloves or encourage gloves as they can cause damage to paper heritage documents. - Provide for the filing of personal belongings in lockers to avoid the temptation to handle personal objects that may be contaminated (such as mobile phones).

Free access to collections

Free access to collections is not recommended in Phase 1 given the risk of indirect contamination by the works, which cannot be cleaned. If access to collections is permitted, the following rules should be applied:

- With clear signage, indicate that books that have been handled should not be placed on the shelf, but put back in trolleys installed at the head of the shelving, so that they can be processed before being stored by the agents.
- Provide traffic rules between shelves with markings on the ground and clear signage to prevent users from passing by each other among the shelves.
- Limit the number of people moving around on the premises (note the standard here) to see below.
- Also remember that hand hygiene rules must be applied before and after touching books.
- Suspend access to the daily press (the need for quarantine for the paper makes it impossible).

Access to equipment, including computer equipment, made available on premises

- Space out computer stations to at least 1 meter apart, or give access to only one station out of two when the furniture cannot be moved.
- Provide a protective screen similar to the one installed at supermarket checkouts for computer stations facing each other.
- Organize session times by focusing on a remote booking system (phone) and limiting sessions over time.
- Systematically allow a time to disinfect the equipment and protective screens between each session. Disinfect materials with a moistened microfiber cloth with a mixture of 70% isopropyl alcohol and 30% water. All the equipment and furniture of the computer station must be disinfected: chair, table, keyboard, mouse, any part of the central unit that has been touched, screen. Users can clean the equipment themselves as long as clear signage is established.
- The control boxes of printers and scanners should be disinfected regularly, if possible, after each use.

- In case of individual accompaniment for the use of a computer station, the agent and the user must wear a mask. Where possible, it is recommended to stay at a distance behind the user in order to guide him in his practice rather than take his place at the computer station.

Group activities

Cultural action, group workshops

- Set appropriate standards for the premises where the activities take place (4m² per person), set up a management of the flow of people.
- Organize the intervention in such a way as to comply with the rule of a distance of 1 metre between all participants.
- Provide hydroalcoholic gel or wipes for cleaning pens and workshop equipment.
- Prefer the use of a personal pen by readers.
- Disinfect digital tools and tablets between each user.

Groups and classes

- If possible, limit group receptions to 10 people simultaneously in a room (including leader).
- Respect a distance of one metre between each person and an area of 4m² per person.

On-site exchanges in departmental libraries

- Give preference to individual appointments and supervise schedules.
- Monitor the number of people welcomed at the same time in order to ensure follow-up and limit contact.