

WHICH MEASURES SHOULD BE TAKEN IN LIBRARIES DURING THE COVID-19 EPIDEMIC

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In addition to the established good hygiene practices applicable to individual services, it is necessary, at the time of the COVID-19 epidemic, to take into account the additional measures we refer below.

The most important route of transmission of the new Coronavirus is through excretions from the respiratory tract and through contaminated hands. Hands should be considered contaminated by default, and only seen otherwise directly after their washing or disinfection. Taking into account all of these measures, we will reduce the possibility of infection and thus protect ourselves and others. For the proper implementation of self-protection measures, responsibility must be taken by each individual. There is no complete security.

Measures for staff and readers

We recommend taking all general measures to protect against infection with the new Coronavirus listed at [this link](#). We recommend to look at the materials on the topic of washing and disinfecting hands, hygiene of cough and correct mask installation.

We advise taking reasonable account of the recommendations for shops and their employees faced with the novel Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 epidemic at [this link](#).

- Employees and readers must be healthy, without signs of respiratory tract infection (e.g. sneezing, coughing, throat pain, fever, taste disturbances, odour...).
- When entering the library, the hands should be disinfected (e.g. with a disinfectant based on 60 to 80% Alcohol).
- Do not touch the face, especially the mouth, nose and eyes before the hands are washed or disinfected.
- Take into account the hygiene when sneezing and coughing.
- Employees and readers should wear masks and be well acquainted with the correct way of wearing and removing masks. The mask must reach from the bridge of the nose until under the chin, and not be touched while it is being worn. The mask must be replaced every two to three hours or before it gets wet. The hands must be thoroughly washed or disinfected before and after use of the mask.
- Touch different objects and surfaces as little as possible, just as much as is strictly necessary.
- Older users and patients with chronic non-communicable diseases with a higher risk of the heavier course of the disease should take particular account of preventive measures and be further protected. Until the pandemic is resolved, it is advised that these people consider the necessity and timing of visiting libraries.
- We recommend contactless payment.

Actions for staff

- The maximum number of parties in the room should be consistent with the food trade recommendations of 20m² per visitor.
- The library must provide the possibility for employees to wash and disinfect hands, and for visitors to disinfect hands.
- Sanitising stations should be installed at the entrance to the library, at the counter where the books are issued and on exit.

- A bin for used masks should be installed at the exit.
- Employees should check that when visitors enter your library, they use the sanitiser and wear masks.
- Enforce the distance between persons, at least 1.5 to 2 metres.
- We suggest that you install markers on the floor every 2 meters for people waiting at the counter.
- Employees should frequently wash or disinfect their hands (e.g. after using the phone, computer, cash registers, money, after handling shelves, books,...). This is also required before touching books previously touched by readers, and after contact with money or library cards.
- Clean or disinfect areas that are often touched by people, such as hooks, racks, handles, shelves, desks, tills, service point terminal keys.
- For cleaning and disinfection of premises, the [recommendations](#) for cleaning and disinfection of premises outside the medical institutions during the COVID-19 epidemic shall be used mutatis mutandis.
- The premises of the library need to be continuously and effectively ventilated. In the case of mechanical ventilation, the air should only be exchanged with fresh outdoor air, without recirculation (air circulation). It is advised to take into account the [instructions](#) for ventilation of premises other than medical institutions during the spread of COVID-19.
- In the first phase, it should only be possible to borrow materials that have been pre-ordered, and which has been prepared in advance for each reader separately. The number of materials that can be borrowed should be limited. For vulnerable groups, home delivery of materials is still possible (in various ways).
- Readers should not be able to choose books themselves, or touch them freely. The reading room should remain closed for the time being. Access to shelves and other parts of the library can be prevent with tape.
- After each checking of library cards and/or the registering of books, the surfaces that have been touched (e.g., the issuing desk, the material recording apparatus, the terminal of the service point), as well as the hands shall be disinfected.
- Employees should have some masks in stock for example if a customer arrives without a mask.
- Employees should use a mask and gloves as personal protective equipment, as well as a protective apron, which is used when carrying material on hold or disinfecting material.

Those instructions for employees are given from the perspective of maximising hygiene. More detailed instructions for individual jobs are to be provided by an authorised specialist in workplace health who knows in more detail the organisational process and risks in individual workplaces.

Handling of the material in the library

It is important to separate spaces used for contaminated materials (returned materials) and those used for clean materials (to be loaned).

Based on known facts about the survival of the new Coronavirus (following current known data from literature based on laboratory research, the new coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 can survive 3 hours on printing and textile paper, on cardboard 24 hours, on smooth surfaces such as glass and banknotes, 4 days, smooth surfaces such as steel and plastics, 7 days.) we advise you to keep returned material isolated for a certain period of time before it goes back into circulation. Given that the material (sheets, cover, wrapper) consists of a variety of materials, the precautionary principle would suggest working with the longest currently known possible time of virus survival. However, since the

information on the new virus is not definitive, it is advised to extend this maximum time. We recommend that you store books and other materials for at least 7 days before they go into circulation again.

We recommend that the location of the materials "in quarantine" and rules for the handling of these materials (i.e. not touching them) is brought to the attention of all employees who have access to these premises. We advise you to mark such quarantined stores of material with the date you deposited them.

Measures for Readers

- Only healthy persons should entering the library, i.e. without signs of respiratory tract infection (e.g., sneezing, coughing, throat pain, fever, taste disturbance, odour...).
- Keep visits to the library as short as possible, limiting it to only as long as necessary for the planned borrowing
- We recommend that readers borrow books from the library by prior order. We also recommend using the mobile application (mCOBISS) to book and rent books.
- At the entrance to the library and at the exit, readers should be required to sanitise their hands.
- Readers should touch different surfaces and objects as little as possible, among other things avoiding leafing through books. If necessary, they should disinfect their hands properly beforehand.
- We recommend contactless payments and other ways of doing business.
- Before exiting, readers should sanitise their hands, remove and deposit their masks in the bin and re-sanitate their hands.

Handling Material at Home

After arriving home, we advise you to put borrowed materials in an inaccessible place, and to start using them only after at least as long as the virus is currently known to survive on the material from which the material is made. If the book or other work material is made from a variety of materials, consider the time for the material on which the virus spends the longest. You can shorten the time if you follow the steps described below.

In the case of books ordered by post, we advise you to put the unopened package in an inaccessible location and leave the packaging unopened for at least 3 days. After a minimum of 3 days, you can open and review what material the borrowed work is made from.

If the material in the shipment is exclusively made of paper and cardboard, you can use it after at least 3 days. However, if it is made of plasticized material or protected (wrapper) with plastic material, wipe it thoroughly with disinfectant (70 to 80% ethanol or 0.1% sodium hypochlorite solution (solution preparation procedure can be found [here](#)) or leave the material to stand for another 4 days (i.e. a total of 7 days). You can safely use the material after the expiration of this time.

Make sure that you do not touch your face (especially eyes, nose and mouth) while handling the package and its contents, and always wash or disinfect your hands after handling.

If you cannot wait to use the material (e.g. exam deadlines), wash or disinfect your hands before and after reading the material, and after reading the material, disinfect the surface on which the material has lain.

Do not leaf through the material with wetted fingers. Always follow all recommendations to prevent infection (do not touch your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands; observe proper hygiene when coughing and sneezing, wash or disinfect hands...).

In the case of strict adherence to all protective measures, the probability of transmitting a new virus infection through books will be low, given the current knowledge about the virus, and the work of employees relatively safe. If new insights emerge regarding working in the library, we will publish them.

References:

1. Chin, A. W. H., Chu, J. T. S., Perera, M. R. A., Hui, K. P. Y., Yen, H.-L., Chan, M. C. W.... Poon, L. L. M. (2020). Stability of SARS-CoV-2 in different environmental conditions. The Lancet Microbe. doi: [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2666-5247\(20\)30003-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2666-5247(20)30003-3) (2. april 2020).
2. Neeltje van Doremalen et al. (2020). Aerosol and Surface Stability of SARS-CoV-2 as Compared with SARS-CoV-1. The New England Journal of Medicine (6. april 2020).