

Recommendations for reopening libraries (as of April 23, 2020)

(Unofficial Translation of Guidance Produced by the German Library Association)

Libraries can be opened according to the joint federal/state decision, subject to conditions of hygiene, access control, queue avoidance and maintaining physical distancing of 1.5m to 2m. Decisions about each library type and when they can open is specified in the individual regulations of the federal states. In addition, many detailed questions have to be clarified with the institution on site, e.g. concerning structural, spatial, financial or demand-related framework conditions.

The reopening requires the strict implementation of measures to comply with hygiene standards, contact restrictions, access restrictions and thus service restrictions. Whenever there is no quick solution to the provision of a particular service, it is advisable to refrain from this service for the time being. This is the case, for example, with the library information service, where you often go to the shelf with the library customer or take a look at the OPAC together. The development and offer of alternative consulting options must then be examined, e.g. by e-mail or telephone. If there are branch offices, consider whether to gradually open the facilities or reopen them at all locations at the same time.

When drawing up a local concept or hygiene plan, all hygiene-relevant areas of the facility should be taken into account. The points listed here should be understood as a suggestion, individually reviewed and defined in a local concept or hygiene plan according to needs.

1. Hygiene measures for employees and users:

- Thorough and regular hand washing
- Do not touch your face with your hands (danger of infection)
- Press buttons, doorknobs and door openers preferably with your elbow
- Employees to wear protective masks covering the mouth and nose, and to have access to disposable gloves
- Users are strongly recommended to wear protective masks covering the mouth and nose, unless this is already a mandatory requirement. Hand sanitizer with dispenser in the entrance area/toilets for users
- Protection against liquids made of plexiglass at counter workstations
- Check further spatial structural arrangements
- Coordination of measures with the competent offices, authorities and organizations
- Informing employees about how to use protective masks, gloves, etc.

2. Contact restriction:

- Ensuring compliance with distances (1.5 to 2 m)
- A one-way system can be created and enforced using tape
- Spacers are glued to the ground 1.5m apart
- Adjustment (possibly also shortening) of opening hours in order to compensate the presence of users
- If possible, separate entrances and exits from the building
- Set the duration (in the interest of other users max. 30 min.) in which a fixed maximum number of users can stay in the premises.

- If possible, set up closed areas for low-contact handover of media
- Examination of shiftwork for employees. When it comes to shift work, it is important that there are always the same teams.
- Provision of a specified number of baskets or, where possible, shopping carts for mandatory use. Only when a shopping cart or basket has become available can the next user enter the library. In the retail trade, the guideline is 10-20 sqm per customer. Depending on local conditions, the required distance regulations may not be complied with. Therefore, set the maximum number of people. Disinfection of the handle before re-delivery, if necessary independently by the customers.
- Where a basket or shopping cart is not possible, count visitors manually at the entrance door to determine how many are there.
- Clarification of user groups/user groups that are gradually approved. The use should only be carried out by an unaccompanied individual. Checking whether the children's library is opened, orientation to the respective initial restrictions of the countries.
- Clear definition of the end of the queue. Clarify that in the event of impending overcrowding, you should not wait outside the queue in your own interest, but should try again at a later time. Clarification of the use of a security guards

3. Restriction of service offers:

- Restriction of stay to return and loan
- Restriction of the visits to the collection of pre-ordered media or their return.
- Restriction on the stay of users in library rooms
- If there is no self-service, options for setting up low-contact loans:
 - Variant 1: Low-contact editions of pre-ordered and booked media to a defined user group via a closed area to be set up
 - Variant 2: Admission of a limited number of users exclusively for the purpose of lending/return, independent selection of the media on the shelf while respecting the distance regulations, recording of the media via a closed area to be set up (either counter booking or where available via self-booking).
 - The variant to be implemented strongly depends on the structural situation.
- Rules for the output of games and other NON-Book materials
- Clarification of permitted on-site use (prohibition of activities that require a longer stay, e.g. reading newspapers, use of the library as a learning room, removal or removal of chairs and armchairs from public areas, no operation of the coffee machine)
- Clarification of permitted uses of catalogues and Internet PCs
- Forbid use of photocopiers until there is a satisfactory solution, as can be done with operation issues, paper jam, paper backing and disinfection.
- No issue of stocks from external stores
- Sending physical media to users
- Examination of the resumption of borrowing and taking interlibrary loans
- No holding of events, incl. guided tours for classes

4. Deployment of Employees

- Clarify how many staff are available, taking into account the respective municipal regulations on risk groups and the following aspects:
 - Clarification of which tasks and in which grades employees currently working from home can be allowed back to work, and who can – or must – stay at home
 - Clarification of which employees remain exempt due to closed daycare centres, schools, etc.
 - Clarification of how to deal with seconded employees

5. Special requirements:

Further regulations on contacts between users and employees, such as:

- Testing out contactless acceptance of cash/contactless card payment. If necessary, the payment transactions must be postponed until the critical phase is over. The amount of accepted credit per user could be increased in the computer.
- Contactless user registration and renewal of the user cards if necessary, online only.

Possible arrangements for the lending of media:

- Storage of the returned media on separate surfaces after date of return
- Determination of a period (24 hours for paper, 72 hours for plastic according to the recommendation of the Federal Office for Risk Assessment of 21.4.2020) until the re-sorting on the shelves
- Use of surface disinfectants for media, bookdrops, counters, computers, tables, etc.
- Determination of disinfection measures for loan and return machines

6. Communication to the public:

- Informing the public about the reopening, the amended opening hours and the adapted rules, via:
 - Press
 - Website
 - Social media
 - Online catalogue
- Posters with rules of behaviour and hygiene in many places in the library

For more information:

Ordinances of the individual federal states:

<https://www.bibliotheksverband.de/dbv/themen/coronavirus/wiedereroeffnungen.html>

Notes from the Federal Office for Risk Assessment (BfR)

https://www.bfr.bund.de/de/kann_das_neuartige_coronavirus_ueber_lebensmittel_un

Notes from the Robert Koch Institute on the cleaning and disinfection of surfaces outside health facilities in connection with the Covid-19 pandemic

https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/InfAZ/N/Neuartiges_Coronavirus/Reinigung_Desinfektion.html

SARS-CoV-2 Occupational Safety and Health Standard – see
<https://www.bmas.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/PDF-Schwerpunkte/sars-cov-2-arbeitsschutzstandard.pdf>

Posters for the library:

Federal Centre for Health Education

Important hygiene tips:

<https://www.infektionsschutz.de/coronavirus/schutz-durch-hygiene.html>

https://www.infektionsschutz.de/fileadmin/infektionsschutz.de/Downloads/200309_BZgA_Atemwegsinfektion-Hygiene_schuetzt_3x_01_DE.pdf

Rules and recommendations for protection against coronavirus in everyday life and in coexistence:

<https://www.infektionsschutz.de/coronavirus/verhaltensregeln.html>