**COVID-19 Safety Plan**

**Approved by the Sawyer Free Library Board August 25, 2020**

**Amended by the Sawyer Free Library Board March 23, 2021**

**Amended by the Sawyer Free Library Board May 29, 2021**

**Amended by the Sawyer Free Library Board June 22, 2021**

In compliance with Massachusetts Safety Standards, this COVID-19 Safety Plan outlines the preventative measures and controls to be put in place so that the Sawyer Free Library (SFL) can offer public services in the building while operating in a safe environment. SFL is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for staff and the public. The preventative measures and controls mitigate the risk of exposure and potential spread of the COVID-19 virus. All staff must follow the guidelines and procedures to mitigate the risk of exposure to, and potential spread of, the COVID-19 virus. SFL adheres to the guidelines and mandatory workplace safety standards in the Reopening Massachusetts Plan and best practices of Gloucester’s Department of Health.

Sawyer Free Library’s COVID-19 Safety Plan is expected to be in place at least through the end of 2020 given the current predictions of the CDC and that Phase 4 of the Reopening Plan will not be scheduled without a coronavirus treatment or vaccine. The CDC is currently projecting a second wave of COVID-19 in the fall in conjunction with the regular flu season.

In March 2021, the Baker-Polito Administration announced new guidelines for the state’s reopening plan due to public health metrics continuing to trend in a positive direction, including drops in average daily COVID cases and hospitalizations and increases in vaccination rates. The Sawyer Free Library Board amended sections of the Library’s COVID-19 Safety Plan in order to allow the public free and open access to the building on March 23, 2021.

In May 2021, the Baker-Polito Administration announced new guidelines for the state’s reopening plan, lifting COVID-19 restrictions and capacity limits. The Sawyer Free Library Board amended sections of the Library’s COVID-19 Safety Plan in order to discontinue preventative measures and controls that are no longer required for mitigating the risk of exposure and potential spread of the COVID-19 virus.

On May 29, 2021, the Baker-Polito Administration made changes to requirements for face coverings and lifted all remaining COVID-19 restrictions. The Sawyer Free Library Board amended sections of the Library’s COVID-19 Safety Plan related to physical distancing, administrative controls and personal protective equipment. Further changes to the COVID-19 Safety Plan will be considered by the Board as the community health context and state guidelines change.

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**Risk Identification and Assessment**

The virus that causes COVID-19 spreads in several ways. It is spread mainly from person-to-person by people who are in close contact with another (within 6 feet) and through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks. It can also spread when people touch a contaminated surface and then touch their eyes, nose or mouth.

The risk of person-to-person transmission increases the closer people are to one another, the more time spent close together, and the more people that individuals come in contact with. The risk of surface transmission increases when many infected people contact the same surface and when those contacts happen over short periods of time.

For the purpose of this COVID-19 Safety Plan, SFL considers the following symptoms indicative of potential exposure:

Most common: Fever, chills, dry cough, tiredness

Less common: muscle aches, sore throat, diarrhea, headache, loss of taste or smell, rash on skin or discoloration of fingers or toes.

Serious symptoms: Difficulty breathing; shortness of breath; chest pain or pressure; loss of speech

***Risk Assessment***

SFL has assessed the risk of transmission from social interaction between staff and the public in our facility by considering:

• Contact intensity – the proximity and duration of contact

• Number of contacts – the number of people present in the space at the same time

Potential risks in our worksite include:

• Risk of transmission among staff due to proximity in interior spaces and length of time spent together

• Risk arising from number and proximity of public visitors using the facility

• Risk arising from extended use of the facility by the public

• Risk arising from face-to-face public service, especially prolonged one-to-one support and instruction

• Risk based on shared use of tools, equipment and library materials by staff and the public

**Risk Mitigation**

In accordance with Workplace Mandatory Safety Standards, SFL uses four levels – elimination, engineering controls, administrative controls and PPE – to reduce the risk of the virus spreading through droplets in the air, in addition to enhanced cleaning and hygiene procedures to reduce surface transmission.

Different preventative measures and controls offer different levels of protection. Where possible, SFL uses preventative measures and controls that offer the highest (first) level of protection, then considers additional levels if the first level isn’t practicable.

***Physical distancing (elimination)*** – mechanisms to minimize face-to-face contact, and keep people at a safe distance from one another.

***Engineering controls*** – physical barriers where it is not possible to maintain physical distancing.

***Administrative controls*** – rules and guidelines for staff and the public to reduce risk, including personal hygiene practices and cleaning protocols.

***Personal Protective Equipment (PPE*)** – where the first three levels of protection aren’t enough to control the risks.

These preventative measures and controls are defined in safe work procedures and are reinforced through education and training.

**Physical Distancing**

***Public Areas***

*Operating hours*

The following public operating hours allow for in depth on-going cleaning, set reasonable expectations for the duration of modified in-person public services, and allow for the continuation of virtual and contactless services, curbside delivery and online programming. The total number of public service hours is 42.

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 10 a.m.—5 p.m.

Thursday 12:00 p.m.--7:00 p.m.

Saturday 10 a.m.- 5 p.m.

(Saturday summer hours: 10 a.m.-1 p.m

June 12-August 28)

*Entrances, exits, stairwells and elevator*

The public is welcome to enter and exit the Library through either the Dale Avenue or parking lot entrance.

*Contactless service*

Curbside service will continue at hours commensurate with demand.

**Engineering Controls**

Where it is not always possible to maintain safe distance between people, SFL uses additional measures to provide physical separation.

Clear barriers will be installed at public service counters and staff desks between staff workspace and the public.

Where possible, windows will be opened to increase circulation of natural air.

**Administrative Controls**

SFL will put in place procedures and guidelines to reduce risk for the public and staff. Ensuring compliance with the procedures and guidelines is a shared responsibility between employers, employees and the public.

***Rules and Guidelines for the Public***

*Signage*

Signage will be in place to advise those who are recently ill, , or recently in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 that they should not enter. Signage will be posted at the entrances to the building about MA and Gloucester Board of Health COVID-19 guidelines and advisories.

The rules and guidelines for the public will also be available on the Library’s website.

*Hygiene*

Hand sanitizers will be available throughout the building and visitors will be encouraged to use dispensers before and after transactions at service points with staff contact.

*Cleaning*

Cleaning procedures and schedules for custodial staff have been established to ensure:

* Thorough daily cleaning of the facility
* Routine disinfecting of hard, frequently-touched surfaces like door handles, elevator buttons, counters, tabletops, light switches and bathroom fixtures

Cleaning procedures and schedules will be enhanced based on changing circumstances, as recommended by the CDC.

Public washrooms will be checked by custodial staff daily to ensure they are well-stocked with soap, toilet paper and paper towels. Hand sanitizing stations in public and staff areas will be monitored daily to ensure sufficient supply.

**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

The Library will follow guidelines for face coverings issued by the Commonwealth of MA and the Gloucester Board of Health unless circumstances call for the Library to have alternate restrictions, in which case the Library Director will bring those forward to the Board President for approval. The Library Board will be notified of any changes to the requirements for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for the public and staff.

**COVID-19 Exposure Response**

In the event of a COVID-19 workplace exposure, SFL will perform the following actions:

* Instruct the exposed staff member to self-isolate and get tested
* Inform the Gloucester Health Department and the City of Gloucester Human Resources Department
* Follow the Public Health Nurse’s advice regarding potential exposure to other staff
* Request DPW to perform appropriate deep cleaning measures

**Ongoing Risk Monitoring and Safety Plan Updates**

All staff are responsible for supporting a safe workplace. Staff who identify a safety concern should notify the Assistant Director immediately so that policies and procedures can be adjusted or updated.

**Resources:**

Safety Standards and Checklist: Libraries (Mass.gov)

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/phase-iii-step-1-libraries-checklist/download>

Reopening Massachusetts Libraries: Guidelines and Recommendations for Resuming Full Services

<https://guides.masslibsystem.org/ld.php?content_id=55814326>

Safety Standards and Checklist: Theaters and Performance Venues (Mass.gov)

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/phase-iii-step-1-theaters-and-performance-venues-checklist/download>

Reopening Massachusetts Libraries Roadmap

<https://guides.masslibsystem.org/ld.php?content_id=55812126>

Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting

Public Spaces, Workplaces, businesses, Schools and Homes

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/cleaning-disinfecting-decision-tool.html>

ABCPLD Bests Practices for Restoration of Public Library Services During Covid-19

<https://abcpld.ca/abc-bestpractices-covid>