



Libraries, like many other public spaces, have made keeping things sanitary a priority for a long time, especially during cold and flu season. BDL is no exception, and we have made sure that our usual ample stock of cleaning supplies is padded out even further. We are ready for the increased level of cleaning and will be monitoring supply levels to make sure they last.

Library staff and our contracted janitorial staff are all using disinfectants certified by the EPA to reliably render coronavirus inert. Throughout the day we are disinfecting all surfaces that patrons and staff come into contact with, and we have temporarily removed things that are difficult to fully disinfect, like certain children's toys and touchscreen devices.

We are disinfecting all DVDs as they are returned to the library, along with new items, anything that is circulating heavily, and any other materials library staff mark as a good candidate to sanitize. The best information available at this point indicates that coronavirus lives from a few hours to a few days on typical surfaces, so the lesser used parts of the collection should naturally disinfect soon, even if not directly sanitized by staff.

Hand sanitizer is available throughout the library, and reminders of proper hand washing technique are posted at all sinks. Staff are reminded of good "sick etiquette", like staying home when sick, coughing into one's elbow, avoiding close personal contact, staying at least 6 feet from someone who is sick, frequent hand washing, etc. We are following guidelines from CDC and OSHA, among other authoritative resources.

But cleaning everything and instructing staff in good habits is only part of what we can do. Access to library services is a guaranteed right under the Michigan Constitution, so we will attempt to keep operations going as long as possible under the circumstances. There are actions we can take to help limit the risk.

We have all hopefully heard of the concept of social distancing at this point, a vitally important strategy to slow the transmission of the coronavirus and take as much strain off our medical system as possible. We might all get sick eventually, but if we all get sick at the same time it would be a much worse situation. This means canceling non-essential events that would lead to groups of people being around each other in close spaces.

Governor Whitmer has requested that gatherings of over 100 people be canceled, and canceled school statewide. Several other states have done the same, and major organizations like the NBA and NCAA are taking preventative closing measures. This is a rapidly changing situation, and doubtless many more closures will have occurred by the time you read this, and more still by the time of our Monday meeting. The United States has enacted travel bans from certain affected countries. All of this is in support this social distancing, attempting to slow the progression of COVID-19 through our population.

To that end BDL is halting all programming through the end of April. At that time we will re-evaluate the situation and decide what to do regarding programming in May and beyond. This is unfortunate, since it means canceling our One Book, One County special event with Irene Butter at the Tibbits Opera House, along with all our other great programs and story times, but it is the right thing to do.

Within the library, we will be temporarily removing some chairs and computers to help enforce social distancing inside, too. BDL's efforts are similar to those of other libraries across the state, like Milan Public Library and Pere White Public Library in Marquette. Other libraries, like Ann Arbor District Library, Toledo Public Library, and Seattle Public Library, in the heart of the Washington State COVID-19 outbreak are closing completely. [The library community is sharing a list of closed libraries around the country.](#)

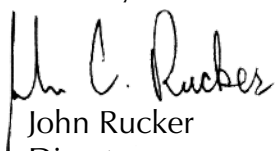
BDL will stop sending staff to training events for the time being. It is possible that library staff may become ill. We will attempt to keep all branches open as best we can, as long as staffing permits. It may be that some branches have to have reduced hours or close for a time if there is insufficient staffing. Thankfully, as a county-wide library system, patrons may go to any BDL branch to receive library services. We will make sure to underline this in our promotions over the coming weeks.

And in the event that the entire library must be shut down for a length of time, we are very lucky to have access to the amazing Hoopla and OverDrive digital services, along with the high-quality MeL databases to seek authoritative answers to questions. With the approval of the BDL Board, we might need to add funding to our digital services to support increased usage. And through our website and social media, library staff will continue to reply to patrons questions even if we must close.

To get the word out about COVID-19 to our patrons, we have spent a lot of time collecting the best, most authoritative online resources so patrons don't have to worry about seeking quality information themselves. We distilled this down further to a one-page handout that is available at all branches. See <https://www.BranchDistrictLibrary.org/coronavirus> for details.

Moving forward, I ask for guidance from the BDL Board on the topic of closures. Do we treat mandatory quarantines like snow days, and pay staff for their absence? Such events are not the fault of staff and I feel they should not be penalized for the missed work. Are there specific criteria the Board would prefer to meet before calling for a full closure? Would we need to place a limit on how long BDL could absorb the cost of a closure without requiring the use of sick days or PTO time on the part of the staff? With the schools closed, do we need to take any steps to mitigate BDL becoming a daycare center for the next month?

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John C. Rucker". The signature is written in a cursive style with a vertical line to the left of the name.

John Rucker  
Director