

Disaster Plan

Date Approved: April 15, 2026

Last Reviewed: April 15, 2026

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### **Emergency, Urgent, and Difficult Situations, and Evacuation Procedures Policy**

All staff and board members should be familiar with the Disaster Plan and know essential contact information and procedures.

All staff should know the locations of all exits, fire alarm pulls, and fire extinguishers and be familiar with the evacuation routes for the building.

#### **Emergency Situations Requiring Evacuation**

Emergency situations are instances in which life or property is in immediate danger and help is required from an emergency agency, such as police, fire, or ambulance.

Fires or the presence of bombs or other bio-hazardous/harmful materials—as well as threats regarding any of these dangers—require immediate evacuation.

#### **An Important Note Regarding Calling 911**

When calling 911, it is essential to let the dispatcher know that you are in Essex, **New York**, not Vermont, as this will affect the sending of emergency personnel.

#### **Evacuation Procedures**

The primary objective of the staff must be to clear the building as quickly as possible in a safe and orderly manner.

1. **Call 911 and/or pull fire alarm**—If you observe a fire or other building emergency.
2. **Inform and evacuate patrons**—Whenever a fire alarm sounds, staff should search the area, telling all patrons to evacuate the building by the nearest exit in a calm and orderly fashion.
3. **Non-cooperative patrons**—If a patron refuses to leave the building, notify rescue personnel of their location once you have safely exited the building.
4. **Close Doors**—The last staff member to exit from an area should make sure all doors are securely closed. Staff should monitor the front door to insure that no patron re-enters the building until responders give the “all clear.
5. **Direct evacuees to safe area outside**—As visitors and staff exit the building direct them to the parking lot.

6. **Follow directions of emergency responders**—Do not re-enter the building until the onsite fire or police department provides the “all clear.” Once library staff has returned to their stations, patrons can be allowed back into the building.

If you are in danger, you are to exit immediately; no employee is expected to risk his/her own life and health to facilitate an evacuation.

### **When to call 911**

1. If there is an emergency or you think there might be an emergency developing.
2. If you or others are threatened.
3. If library property is threatened.
4. If there is immediate danger of violence.
5. If you observe criminal behavior, or if a patron reports criminal behavior to you.
6. If a supervisor or person in charge is not available and a problem is serious.
7. If every reasonable effort to obtain a person’s compliance with the rules has failed and the person has refused to leave the library or has become confrontational.

### **When to pull a panic button**

The panic buttons should only be used when there is an immediate threat of violence or harm and there is no opportunity for staff to call 911. (The police are better equipped to help in an emergency if the 911 dispatcher can assess the situation.)

### **Shelter-In-Place/Lockdown Procedures**

The atmospheric release of bio-hazardous or other harmful materials, external violent situations, and other outdoor threats including tornados may require immediate Shelter-In-Place. This is a precaution aimed to keep staff and patrons safe while remaining indoors. Generally, Shelter-In-Place and Lockdown notifications come from local authorities.

1. Ask patrons to stay in the building and NOT leave for their safety.
2. Bring all staff members and patrons to the basement.
3. Lock all exterior doors.
4. In Lockdown do not allow anyone to enter the building.
5. Monitor the radio, TV, and Internet for the official all-clear announcement.
6. All staff members and patrons are to remain in the Shelter-In-Place area until the all-clear announcement.

### **Medical Emergencies**

In the event of an injury or other medical emergency, Staff members should immediately call 911.

### **Urgent Situations**

Urgent situations, for purposes of this document, are instances that require immediate attention of a person in charge or a library board trustee. Urgent situations include, but are not limited to, plumbing problems, power outages, emergency closings, and building or grounds problems that need immediate attention. Urgent situations also include health or safety issues that are not emergencies as defined above.

In an urgent situation, call in this order:

1. Library Director
2. Library Board of Trustees President
3. Town Supervisor

### **Difficult Situations**

Difficult situations are instances that are challenging or uncomfortable, may involve confrontation, and may escalate into an emergency situation. Difficult situations include, but are not limited to, instances involving confrontational, disruptive or suspicious individuals, unattended children, and people who challenge or violate the Patron Code of Behavior Policy or any other library policies. In general, unless this manual states otherwise, employees should refer the issue to the person in charge of the library.

#### **Procedures**

1. In a difficult situation, contact the person in charge of the library as defined above.
2. Be familiar with the rules and with the actions open to you as an employee.
3. If you are unsure about a situation or are uncomfortable approaching a patron about a behavior problem, report the situation to your supervisor or the person in charge of the library and let him/her take responsibility for the situation.
4. If a supervisor or the person in charge is not available, consult a fellow employee. Ask him/her for support.
5. Be polite but firm. Do not make serious accusations without proof.
6. If a patron fails to respond to a warning, tell that person what the consequences will be and follow through.
7. Inform the Director, Assistant Director or the person in charge about serious problems that arise. Routinely file an incident report when it is necessary to speak to patrons about problem behavior.

8. When a difficult situation becomes an emergency, immediately pull one of the panic buttons to summon the Police Department.