

# Garrison Public Library Crisis Policy

---

All organizations, including the Garrison Public Library, at some time, will have a crisis. Management of a crisis is preferred to just letting the crisis develop and resolve as-it-will with potential undesirable consequences.

A crisis is an event that significantly disrupts normal operations, has caused or is likely to cause severe distress/damage or have severe consequences for staff/patrons of an organization. It requires out-of-ordinary measures to restore order and normality, thus demanding immediate action from leadership. Crises can come in various forms, and could include events threatening an organization's property, reputation, image, programs, assets, financial stability, or the safety and security of staff or patrons with events such as a fire, severe weather, or can develop from abuse or assault on people.

## **GENERAL PROVISIONS**

In the event of crisis, it is the primary responsibility of the library staff present to do whatever is necessary to insure the safety of the library patrons and the remainder of the staff. The secondary responsibility of the library staff is to minimize the damaging effect of the emergency to property ONLY if it poses no threat to anyone's personal safety.

Remember; people first, property second.

General guidelines for action in any emergency situation are:

1. KEEP CALM
2. BE AWARE - Quickly gather as much information as possible in a reasonably short period of time, such as the nature and location of the emergency.
3. EVACUATION
  - If the threat of personal danger is imminent, immediately evacuate the building.
  - Announce the evacuation verbally. Ask everyone in the building to remain calm and walk, don't run to the nearest exit.
  - Call 911.

(Continue on next page)

- Assist the handicapped and elderly to exit the building; and if possible, check the building for stragglers as you exit. Please be sure to check the bathrooms before you leave.
- Move the crowd away from the building and across the street from the entrance.
- Stand ready to direct the emergency assistance to the exact location of the problem.
- Prevent anyone from reentering the building until it is determined to be safe.

4. Summon the appropriate emergency agency (sheriff, fire or ambulance) by calling 911 and stand available to direct them to the source of the problem.

5. Staff should interview all patrons involved or witness to the incident and report to the emergency personnel.

6. All accidents or unusual incidents are to be reported in writing. The time, place, nature and circumstances of the accident/incident are to be included in the report. The report should also list the names of any library employees or patrons who may have witnessed the accident or incident.

#### PROHIBITED ITEMS

- Explosives or weapons, guns, or knives of any kind, except those worn by uniformed officials are prohibited anywhere on library property.
- There is no smoking, alcohol, or drugs allowed on the library property.

#### CLOSINGS

- The Director is responsible for closing the library due to unhealthy conditions, unsafe conditions or other emergencies. If the Director is unavailable, the Library Board will make the decision to close.
- When the decision to close is made, the Director will notify the public, staff members and board president.

## PROCEDURES IN SPECIFIC SITUATIONS

### FIRE

- Know where the fire extinguishers are
- Know where your exits are.
- Do not panic, but do not under-estimate the potential danger to patrons or staff from a fire.
- At the first indication of smoke or flame, investigate the situation to determine location and extent of the fire.
- If the fire can obviously be contained and extinguished quickly and safely by staff, proceed to do so.
- If the fire cannot be contained/controlled, immediately clear the building and call 911.

### WINTER WEATHER CONDITIONS

- The Library Director will use her discretion in closing the library during inclement weather.
- Safety of the staff and patrons is the most important criteria used to determine if the library will remain open.

### SEVERE STORMS

- The Library staff will alert patrons in case of storm and/or tornado warnings.
- Staff will escort patrons to a safe location when sirens sound, and remain sheltered until the threat is over.

### ACCIDENT

In the event of an accident involving a staff member or patron, determine if you can handle the problem with reasonable care or if it is serious and requires an ambulance. Provide whatever assistance you can until help arrives. If blood or other bodily fluids are present, use gloves and take other universal precautions.

- Do not attempt to move the person if the injury is serious.
- Make the person as comfortable as possible.

(Continue on next page)

- Ask them to sit or lie down.
- Let them call family or call for them.
- Ask for the name of the injured or ill person and gather information about what happened.
- Get the names of witnesses.
- If physical trauma is the result of a crime, do not attempt any cleanup.

#### DEATH OR SEVERE MEDICAL PROBLEM

- Do not presume that a death has occurred.
- Staff or patrons trained in CPR should provide assistance.
- Call 911 immediately.
- Staff members and volunteers with severe medical problems should notify their supervisors and co-workers of any problems and any standard emergency treatment related to the problem.
- No medications, including aspirin, should ever be dispensed to the public.

#### PANDEMIC

- During a public health emergency, such as an outbreak of infectious disease, Garrison Public Library Director will follow the recommended guidelines provided by the local, state, and federal authorities, regarding limiting or closing *non-essential* services. *Essential* services could remain open with limited access, at the time it is deemed safe to do so for staff and patrons. The library will be a source of pandemic information to the community, when possible.

*If indicated to do so, the Library Director will implement the above plan in order to:*

- *Limit the number of illnesses, slow progress of the outbreak, and reduce loss of life*
- *Identify and protect essential library services, facilities, equipment, materials, and records.*
- *Minimize disruption of operations and economic losses*
- *Ensure return to full library operation as quickly as possible*

## DRUG AND PSYCHIATRIC EMERGENCIES

- Don't argue with anyone who appears to be experiencing a drug or psychiatric crisis.
- Be alert to the possibility of violence.
- One staff member should engage the person in conversation and patiently listen while another calls the police.
- A lone staff member should call 911 and attempt to continue talking with the person until help arrives.

## PHYSICAL THREATS OR ATTACK

- Learn to recognize the signs of violence
  - Potential threats of violence could include the following:
    - threatening statements to do harm to self or others
    - reference to other incidents of violence
    - confrontational behavior
    - major change in personality, mood or behavior
    - substance abuse
- Notice your surroundings
- Know the nearest exit or room with a lock.
- Staff procedures for threatening behavior:
  - Do not argue with a threatening person. Identify yourself as a library staff member. Remain calm and keep your voice low and firm.
  - Do not put yourself or others in danger. Keep a distance of four feet.
  - Be friendly but firm, introduce yourself, look at the person while you talk to him/her, and let the person talk, clarify the problem and offer solutions.
  - Advise him/her that the sheriff will be called if the abuse does not stop.
  - If the behavior does not change, call the sheriff.
- Staff procedures for dealing with violence/assault
  - If you hear raised voices or sounds of a scuffle investigate.
  - If you witness violence or an assault call the sheriff and describe the situation.
  - Move patrons/others out of the way to a safer location.
  - Do not block exits to prevent a threatening/violent person from leaving the building.
  - Do not invade the personal space of the threatening person.
  - Do not get between two people fighting.

- Notice details so you can describe the situation to the sheriff.
- A report should be made as soon as possible after an action or behavior occurred
  - The report should include a brief statement of the incident, when it occurred, where it occurred, date and time it occurred, the person(s) involved and the names of any witnesses if any.

## THEFT OR ROBBERY

- Report all thefts to the sheriff as soon as discovered.
- If in person robbery takes place, cooperate with robbers and notify the sheriff as soon as it is safe.

## BOMB THREAT

- Keep the caller on the line as long as possible. Do not hang up.
- Gather as much information from the reporting caller as possible. Have them repeat the message, if necessary and try to write down every word spoken by the person.
- Attempt to learn as much from the caller as you can, such as the planned time of explosion, the type of bomb and its location in the building. If the caller does not indicate, ASK FOR THIS INFORMATION.
- Pay particular attention to peculiar background noises such as motors running, background music and any other sounds which may indicate where the location from which the call is originating.
- Listen closely to the voice (male, female) voice quality (calm, excited), accents and speech impediments.
- Evacuate the building and call 911/Benton County Sheriff's Department. The Sheriff's department will handle the actual bomb search.

## ELECTRIC SHOCK

Do not approach the victim if the hazard of shock is still present. Secure the area. Attempt to remove the source of the shock if possible with insulated material (dry, wooden broom handle, etc.) or open the electrical circuit at the main breaker. Start CPR and summon ambulance.

## POISONING (Real or suspect)

Attempt to establish the source of the poison and follow any immediate corrective action printed on the label. Additional information may be obtained by calling the Iowa Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222. Summon an ambulance and retain the suspected source of the poison for the emergency personnel.

## TOXIC FUMES (Real or suspect)

Evacuate the area and summon the fire department. Remove any affected person to a ventilated area and give resuscitation if necessary.

## SUSPICIOUS PACKAGE

A suspicious package may have no return address, excessive postage, stains, strange odor, strange sounds, unexpected delivery, be poorly handwritten, contain misspelled words, incorrect titles, foreign postage, or restrictive notes; and may be left unattended in a restroom, under a desk, in a corner or on a shelf. Do not touch or move a suspicious package. Notify the sheriff.