

# VALENTINE PUBLIC LIBRARY DISASTER POLICY

The library's Disaster Policy will focus primarily on incidents that could result in damage to library resources such as electronic data and collections as well as interruptions in vital library services to patrons. A disaster can either be natural or manmade. Some events such as a bomb threat, fire, explosion, or hazardous chemical issues will result in the need for immediate evacuation. Other events such as severe thunderstorm warnings or tornado warnings will possibly necessitate an immediate move to designated safe areas within the library.

Employee and library user safety in an emergency is a priority for the Valentine Public Library. This document outlines emergency procedures that insure safety for all. Fill out an incident report (attached) as soon as possible.

## **SPECIFIC EMERGENCIES**

Different emergencies call for different responses. The following potential emergencies are outlined in this document.

- Weather
- Fire
- Power Outage
- Robbery
- Toxic Incident
- Weapons
- Explosion
- Civil Disturbance
- Medical
- Bomb Threat
- Suspicious Behavior & Personal Safety

## **WEATHER**

Depending on the seriousness of the weather incident, measures will be taken in accordance with the specific threats.

- The library will close at the discretion of the Director and/or the Board of Trustees in the event of a blizzard.
- **TORNADO** A tornado watch means that weather conditions will support the formation of a tornado and a tornado may occur in the area.
- A tornado warning means that a tornado has actually been sighted or has been indicated by radar and may strike in the area.
- **When a tornado warning has been issued:**  
Staff will tell patrons to please gather in the interior hallway. Staff will not take time to insist that a patron

come to the hallway. If a patron will not come after being asked, the staff should proceed with getting other patrons to safety. If time allows, gather flashlights, a first aid kit and a supply of water. Normal operations may resume as soon as an all clear signal is given.

## **FIRE**

### **When a staff member sees or is informed of fire:**

- ***If it is safe to do so***, use a fire extinguisher on the fire however, make sure that everyone is being evacuated while using the extinguisher.
- ***If it is an electrical fire***, turn off equipment and circuit breakers.
- ***If there is doubt about whether the fire can be controlled***, call 911.

## **POWER OUTAGE**

### **When power fails:**

- Check restrooms and any windowless areas.
- Call City Electric Department to report outage.
- Determine if evacuation is necessary. If power failure is at night, evacuate the building until power returns.
- If the building is evacuated, try to turn off computers, breakers, lights etc.
- Learn the location of flashlights and check batteries monthly.

## **ROBBERY**

### **If a robbery occurs:**

- Stay calm.
- Follow the directions that may be given by the robber.
- Do not hesitate to give all contents of the cash drawer to the robber
- Observe the robber as closely as possible.
- Call 911 as soon as possible after the incident.
- Write down all the details of the incident as soon as possible.

## **TOXIC INCIDENT/ CHEMICAL AGENT**

Chemical agents are poisonous gases, liquids or solids that have toxic effects on people, animals or plants. Severity of injuries depends on the type and amount of the chemical agent and the duration of exposure.

- Contact 911 and if necessary cut off utilities.
- Clear the area of staff and patrons and completely evacuate the building if necessary.
- If there is a general chemical attack, evacuate immediately.
- Do not reenter the building until all clear is given.

## **WEAPONS**

**Weapons are not allowed in the library** (except those carried by law enforcement personnel).

**If a library user comes in the library with a weapon and uses it in a threatening manner:**

- Leave the area. (Can enter the office and lock the door-can then exit out the back door.)
- Call 911.

**If a library user comes in the library wearing a weapon:**

- Call 911 immediately.

## **EXPLOSIONS**

**During an explosion in or near the building:**

- If items are falling off bookshelves or from the ceiling, get under a sturdy table or desk.
- Exit the building as quickly as possible.
- If there is a fire, stay low to the floor and cover nose and mouth.
- Do not open any door that feels hot. Find an alternate route.
- Heavy smoke and poisonous gases collect first along the ceiling. Stay below smoke at all times.

**After an explosion – if you are in debris:**

- Try not to kick up dust and cover your mouth and nose with a handkerchief or clothing.
- Tap on a pipe or wall so that rescuers can hear where you are. Shout only as a last resort – shouting can cause a person to inhale dangerous amounts of dust.
- Untrained persons should not try to attempt to rescue people who are inside a collapsed building. Wait for emergency personnel.

## **CIVIL DISTURBANCE**

**If a civil disturbance occurs outside the building:**

- Call 911.
- All building entrances should be secured for the safety of patrons and staff.
- Staff should remain in the building until the disturbance is under control.
- Urge the public to remain in the building.

**If civil disturbance occurs inside of building:**

- Contact 911.
- Evacuate patrons and staff if possible.

## **MEDICAL**

Staff members should exercise caution when administering first aid of even a minor nature because of the safety of the injured individual and the potential liability of the staff

member. There are also real dangers, which can arise to the one attempting to administer aid. Without specialized training, it is not advisable for staff to undertake more than keeping the sick or injured patron comfortable and protected from needless disturbance until medical help can be obtained. Since each case is unique, staff members should use their own judgment to do what is prudent and reasonable.

- Rescue Squad/police (911) should be called immediately in the event of any serious problem.
- No medication, including aspirin, should ever be dispensed to the public.
- Be aware that allergic reactions require immediate medical attention. If someone does present symptoms of an allergic reaction, immediately call 911 because their condition could deteriorate very rapidly.

## **BOMB THREAT**

**The building may be evacuated in the event of a bomb threat.** Call authorities (911) when conditions allow and follow their instructions. Depending on the type of threat, follow instructions below.

### **If received by telephone, fax or other medium:**

- Listen carefully; keep the caller on the line as long as possible, fill out Bomb Threat Checklist (Attachment B) ASAP.
- Get the attention of a co-worker to initiate building evacuation.
- Call 911 using cell phone.

### **If received by note or in person:**

- Follow directions, if person is there. Remain calm.
- If the person does not leave and other staff is available, try to signal them to call 911.

### **If you find a suspicious object:**

- Call 911.
- Do not touch the object.
- Move people away from the object.
- Do not use portable radio or cell phone equipment within 100 ft. of the object.
- Follow police instructions precisely.

## Bomb Threat Checklist

Be calm. Be courteous. Listen. Do not interrupt caller.

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Time** \_\_\_\_\_

**Caller's exact words:**

### Voice

- Loud
- High Pitched
- Raspy
- Intoxicated
- Soft
- Deep
- Pleasant
- Familiar
- Other

### Language

- Excellent
- Fair
- Foul
- Good
- Poor
- Other

### Accent

- Local
- Foreign
- Race
- Not Local
- Region

### Speech

- Fast
- Distinct
- Stutter
- Slurred
- Slow
- Distorted
- Nasal
- Lisp
- Other

### Manner

- Calm
- Rational
- Coherent
- Deliberate
- Righteous
- Angry
- Irrational
- Incoherent
- Emotional
- Laughing

### Knowledge of Facility

- Much
- Some
- None

### Background

- Traffic
- Wind
- Office Machines
- Animals
- Quiet
- Music
- Party Noises
- Dining Noises

**Questions to ask the caller:**

- 1. When is the bomb going to explode?** \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Where is the bomb?** \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. What does the bomb look like?** \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. What kind of bomb is it?** \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. What will cause it to explode?** \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. Did you place the bomb?** \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. Why did you place the bomb?** \_\_\_\_\_

