

Seneca Falls Library Disaster Policy

Purpose:

The Seneca Falls Library has adopted this Disaster Policy to ensure precautionary, response, and recovery measures to an emergency or disaster threatening to impact or immediately impacting the library's facilities, grounds, materials, staff, or community members. The primary goals of the Library's Emergency & Disaster Plan are to establish:

- The roles and responsibilities during all phases of an emergency or disaster.
- Preparedness activities and response measures.
- Coordination and decision making processes.

The Disaster Policy is designed to ensure the safety of employees and visitors at the site, secure vital records and to preserve the continuity of core library resources and services as practicable as possible, minimize economic loss, and achieve recovery.

Administration:

The disaster recovery team, led by the Director, administers the Disaster Policy & Plan. This includes activating the plan, establishing an internal communications network, and coordinating all recovery activities. If, for any reason, the Director is unable or unavailable to lead the team, administrative authority shall be passed to the Library Board of Trustees President and Administrative Assistant.

The disaster recovery team will include the Director, Board of Trustees President, Buildings and Grounds Committee leader, Administrative Assistant, Youth Services Coordinator, Adult and Teen Services Coordinator and Circulation Team Lead.

Risk Assessment:

Risk Assessment is the determination of potential events, emergencies, and disasters that could cause service interruptions. The Director and disaster recovery team will periodically evaluate the library and its facilities to minimize the threat of emergency or disaster and to formulate response plans to emergencies or disasters.

Activities include:

- Recommending Updates to the Library's Disaster Plan.
- Identify possible hazards.
- Analyze strengths, weaknesses, and vulnerabilities of the library's ability to handle emergencies and disasters and correct or mitigate weaknesses.
- Engage in preventive building maintenance.
- Inventory collection, equipment, furniture, electronics, and supplies.
- Implement thorough cleaning and disinfecting procedures.
- Implement consistent opening and closing procedures.
- Provide regular staff training on items listed below.

Parts of the Risk Assessment activities may include consultation with Seneca County, the Library's insurance providers, Finger Lakes Library System staff, and other local experts and stakeholders.

Staff Training:

Regular staff training may help reduce the risk of an emergency or disaster. Training prepares the staff to safely and appropriately respond to an emergency or disaster to minimize damage or injury should an emergency or disaster occur.

Staff training will include an annual review of this Disaster Policy and the Seneca Falls Library Disaster Plan. Staff training may also include, but is not limited to, the following topics:

- CPR Training
- First Aid Training
- Drills
 - Fire
 - Lockdown
 - Tornado
- Formal response and recovery workshops
- Handling wet and damaged collections
- Workplace health and safety
- Proper use of protective clothing and equipment
- Exposure to hazardous materials/mold
- Active shooter workshops
- Mental Health

All staff will have the opportunity to be included in any disaster training activities.

Response and Reconstruction:

In general, the Director and disaster recovery team will respond to an emergency or disaster according to the following outline. Some circumstances will require deviation from this sequence in order to best serve the safety and health of the library staff and community.

- Address emergency or imminent danger to the library's facility, materials, staff, or community.
- Notify appropriate personnel.
- Assess the extent of the damage.
- Document in detail:
 - Complete the incident report with as much witness detail as possible.
 - Take inventory of materials, items, supplies, or equipment.
 - Take pictures of materials, items, equipment, or facilities.
 - Record the sequence or timeline of events before, during, and after the event.

Prepare for recovery:

- Determine which steps need to be taken.
- Delegate to disaster recovery team, library staff, library Board of Trustees and/or volunteers.
- Determine a command post or temporary work site if library facility is not accessible.
- If there is physical damage, decide what can be salvaged and what will be discarded.

- Gather supplies and arrange for services.
- Draft a press release or statement to the public.

The Director or the Director's designee will be the spokesperson for the Library.

- Keep messaging transparent and consistent.
- Communicate across all channels.
- Traditional news press (print and TV).
- Social Media.
- Library website.
- Library's outgoing phone message.
- eNewsletter.

Recovery:

Plan for:

- Limited services or service points.
- Limited hours of operation.
- Virtual programming and services.
- Reduced staff.
 - Plan for reopening/full resumption of services.
 - Draft/amend related procedures.
 - Amend/adopt related policies.

Types of Emergencies or Disasters:

This Disaster Policy was made with the health and safety of the library staff and community as the top priority.

If the Director is not in the building when an emergency or disaster occurs, the staff should contact the local emergency responders (police, fire department, ambulance, 911) followed by the Director immediately. The Director is empowered by the Board of Trustees to address imminent dangers or threats to the library's facility, materials, staff, or community and will convene the disaster recovery team as soon as it is safe and reasonable to do so.

The assumption should never be made that a situation is a drill or a false alarm.

Disaster Plan:

The Library maintains a publicly available Disaster Plan, which serves as a guideline for all staff to follow in the event of an emergency. The manual serves to ensure that consistent procedures are followed to best provide safety and security for all Library patrons and staff. The manual cannot cover all situations and circumstances but should be used as a guide whenever possible.

Questions or concerns regarding the Seneca Falls Library Disaster Policy should be brought to the Director.

Approved by the Board of Trustees on May 17, 2021

Re-approved by the Board of Trustees on May 18, 2026