

## **THE TOPSFIELD TOWN LIBRARY EMERGENCY RESPONSE POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

The Topsfield Town Library, like all facilities is vulnerable to unplanned issues and disasters. Since the facility management is the responsibility of the Library Director, it is important that Director, Library Staff and Trustees are aware of the appropriate response to unforeseen incidents that may endanger the well being of those in the facility. These issues can be facility conditions, behavioral or medical in nature and may occur during operating hours and after hours.

During library hours, staff may need to respond to alarm systems that would indicate a fire or an elevator entrapment. It is important that all staff know to call 911, how to exit the facility by following the How to exit the Building procedure and respond to other issues that are outlined in the Staff Handbook. An elevator entrapment can be resolved by referring to the Systems Emergency Contacts and working with the local Fire Department. After hours the Director may be contacted by the contracted alarm company that receives signals for either a fire alarm or security breach. The following procedure outlines the best actions to take to protect staff and public, and to protect or minimize the Library facility from damage.

### **Facility Issues**

The Library Director or senior-staff-in-charge must know how to act to secure the safety of others during a facility incident. In cases of facility disasters which may include fire, an explosion, flooding etc. the action required is to evacuate the facility, please follow the How to exit the Building procedure in a calm and organized manner. Once all library patrons and staff are outside and have congregated at the designated outside location, the Library Director or senior-staff must make sure that all staff and known patrons are accounted for. Staff should not leave the property until the Director (or senior-staff) gives approval.

If a facility issue is discovered either prior or after open hours, staff should not enter or stay in the facility. If the Director is not present at the time, he/she should be contacted by the senior-staff-in-charge immediately for action and or advice.

**The Director must work with the appropriate contacts to address the emergency by using the Systems Emergency Contact Information sheet (Attachment A).**

The Director must inform the Chairperson of the Board of Library Trustees, or the Trustee appointed to Facility issues, as to the situation and how it is being addressed. It is the responsibility of the designated Trustee to inform the rest of the Board of any situation.

The Director, staff and trustees must know appropriate action to take in order to assure safety at all times. In cases of flood, fire and other dangerous conditions, securing the safety of staff and others is the main priority. Making the appropriate phone call is the only action required to protect town property.

The Director, in some cases, must stay in the facility while waiting for the appropriate help to arrive. It is advised that staying alone in the facility is dangerous and should be minimized until help can arrive. It is not advisable to enter an area of flooding or other dangers, no matter the outcome to the facility or financial concerns.

### **Behavior Issues**

#### **Social Incident – with possible weapon.**

In cases of an unstable visitor that poses a threat to others with either actions or a weapon must be responded to quickly. Identifying a safe place within the Library facility is essential. If staff and patrons need to retreat, staff must guide the public calmly to a safe location within the Library. The following safe locations apply after calling 911:

- First floor Men's bathroom can be locked from the inside and does not have windows (no phone).

- Second floor Administration and Technical Service offices have key pad lock – phone service.
- Second floor bathrooms can be locked from the inside and do not have windows (no phone).

**These are all acceptable safe locations, but the Administration office has been identified as the best location with access to phone, internet and other means of visibility.**

No one is to leave the designated safe location until it is confirmed by an official police officer or the Director.

#### **Social Incident – abusive language.**

In cases of a visitor using profanity and aggressive tones must be responded to quickly. Call 911 immediately and explain the situation requesting assistance. Staff should never deal with this behavior alone. The Director or senior-staff-in-charge must be called for assistance immediately. Know where the identified safe places are located within the Library facility in case the situation escalates. If staff and patrons need to retreat, staff must guide the public calmly to a safe location within the Library.

#### **Social Incident – exterior threat.**

If the Library facility is contacted by another Town Department (Town Hall, Schools, Fire Department, Police Department) reporting that it is necessary to do a facility lock down due to a danger known on the outside, the following steps must be taken:

- If possible, lock exterior, front doors.
- Announce to all patrons to follow staff to the Second Floor Administration Office.
- Lock the door and wait for further notice from Town Officials before leaving the safe location. The Administration office has a windowless area and an area to view the outside if needed. In addition, technology and telephone service is available.

#### **Medical Issues:**

The Topsfield Town Library has a Medical and Emergency Response Procedure located in the Staff Handbook. It is important to follow the procedure outlined. Calling 911 for assistance is always the best action to take if it is obvious and when in doubt. In cases where communications can occur, it is essential to understand the procedure outlined. Staff is asked to periodically take the Fire Department's CPR class for certification. Take the time to read through the information regarding the Defibrillator located in the Meeting Room closet. The most important action to take is calling 911.

#### **After Hours:**

The Library alarm systems for fire and security may sound after Library hours to indicate a potential issue. The monitoring alarm company responds to these signals by calling the local emergency line and then the Library Director. The Library Director will communicate with the emergency dispatch department at the Topsfield Police Department. In addition, the Library facility may experience other incidents that require after hour visits to assess condition and identify problems in order to make contact with vendors that can make repairs or other appropriate action to care for the Library facility.

#### **Fire Alarm**

If the fire alarm sounds, it may be a fire. The Library Director or the designated staff member will be called by the Alarm Monitoring Company. The Library Director or the designated staff member will need to return to the Library to secure the facility after the Fire Department leaves the facility. If it is not a fire, action will be necessary to contact the alarm company to assess why the alarm was falsely tripped. There may be something wrong with the system that will need to be repaired and prevent future false alarms.

If there is a fire, the Library Director or the assigned senior staff member will need to return to the Library to assess the damages and make arrangements for securing the facility, decide what, if any, services can be

provided to patrons, and to plan the actions required. Fire Department personnel are helpful and will take charge of identifying the cause and assessment of damages in case of a fire.

### **Security Alarm**

If the security alarm is tripped, it could mean a number of things: an actual security breach has occurred, the loss of power, the system malfunctioned or human error when entering or leaving the facility. The Library Director or the assigned senior staff member will be called by the Alarm Monitoring Company. The emergency dispatch department of the Topsfield police department should be contacted immediately. Communications over the phone will help in determining why the alarm was tripped. The police will communicate what was found after visiting the property. If the facility is secure, the Alarm Monitoring Company can reset the alarm remotely. If there is any doubt about the facility condition, the Library Director or the assigned senior staff member will need to return to the library to assist police in deciding if the facility is secure and in proper order. The security alarm system will then need to be reset manually. If a break-in has occurred, police and the Director will work together to decide how best to secure the facility and what action must be taken.

If it is known that extreme weather conditions or other situations exist that may require a visit during after hours, it is important that Trustees know the Library Director or the assigned senior staff member will be entering the building. Following the guidelines described in the Facility Issues section, personnel are instructed not to enter the danger areas and to minimize time alone in the facility. Contacting the appropriate vendors to address the repairs needed is the essential reason for entering the facility.

**Approved 9/14/2010**