



EMERGENCY CLOSING POLICY

PURPOSE

The Gates Public Library has adopted this Emergency Closing Policy to ensure a cautionary response to an emergency threatening to impact or immediately impacting the library's facilities, materials, staff, or community members.

The primary goals of Gates Public Library's Emergency Closing Policy are to establish:

- The types of emergencies which may cause the Library to close or suspend services
- The power of the Library Director to close the Library due to an imminent or immediate emergency
- If the Library's Emergency & Disaster Plan needs to be implemented

The Library will make every effort to maintain regular library operating hours in accordance with Minimum Standards for New York's Public and Association Libraries. However, at times, the library may have to close, shorten hours, or cancel programs due to emergency conditions.

ADMINISTRATION

The Library Director is empowered by the Library Board of Trustees to address emergency conditions and may close the Gates Public Library for up to 24 hours. For closures lasting beyond 24 hours, the Library Director will consult with the Library Board President or Vice President and Town Supervisor to determine the Library's course of action including the implementation of the Library's Emergency & Disaster Plan.

If the Director is not in the building when an emergency or disaster occurs, the staff should immediately contact the appropriate emergency agencies and then contact the Director. If, for any reason, the Director is unable or unavailable, administrative authority shall be passed to the Assistant Director; if the Assistant Director is unavailable, administrative authority shall be passed on to the Librarian in charge. A step-by-step procedure is attached.

TYPES OF EMERGENCIES

The decision to close the Library will be made with the health and safety of the Library staff and community as the top priority. The following emergency situations may call for closure of the Library:

- Severe weather events
- Local or regional declaration of a State of Emergency
- Pests, bugs, or infestation
- Loss of critical utilities

- Gas leak or suspected gas leak
- Water Damage or Flood
- Fire
- Hazardous spill
- Bomb threat
- Active shooter
- Lockdown/Shelter in Place
- Pandemic, serious illness, or public health crisis

Other emergencies may occur that cannot be planned for. The Director will handle such situations in accordance with this policy and the Library's Emergency & Disaster Plan and will coordinate response efforts with the Town and In-House Emergency Team in the best interests of the Library facility, staff, and community.

COMMUNICATION

All Library closures will be communicated to the public via local news stations and on the Library's website, social media accounts, and outgoing voicemail message. The staff will be notified of Library closures by the Director or designee of the Director.

PERSONNEL

If the Library is closed due to emergency conditions, staff will be paid for shifts/hours scheduled to work the first closed day. Staff who were scheduled to be absent that day due to vacation, illness, or other leave will not receive pay for the time the Library is closed.

For an extended closing, an interim work or telecommuting schedule may be developed and job descriptions or duties may be temporarily altered or reassigned based on the needs of the Library. A reasonable effort will be made to maintain a useful work schedule and provide continuous employment opportunities. In the event the Town of Gates declares a furlough for part-time employees, the Town agrees to provide 30 days advance notice and agrees to negotiate the terms thereof with the Library's part-time union (per section 4.3 of the part-time union contract).

ONGOING USE EVALUATION

The Emergency Closing Policy will be evaluated by the Library Board of Trustees at least every five years and updated as needed.

ADOPTED by the Gates Public Library Board of Trustees: February 19, 2025