

Topic: Curbside Pick-Up, OR Other Delivery Situations; Virus or Not, What to Consider, Edition # 1

Date: April 11, 2020

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Please Note: There might be future editions of this document as we learn more. If you have suggestions, let me know (WilliamDegenhard@gmail.com) and I will update this document and repost it for everyone. The wisdom is in the collective. The assumption is that these delivery situations will take place after your “stay at home” order has expired, but when you still want to practice “social distancing” and quarantining of returned library materials. This document is about logistics, and not about the ethical debates. It is possible that delivery situations could be done safely even during a “stay at home” order, and countless restaurants and businesses are doing this right now. So, again, I will avoid the ethical debate and focus on logistics. Your local government, health department, etc., would be resources to consult.

Intended Audience and Physical Situations: (1.) Curbside Pick-Up, (2.) Drive-Up Windows, (3.) Bookmobile, or (4.) Allowing Library Customers To Enter A Contained Area of the Library. This document is a ‘catch all’ for ideas that might apply to various situations of delivery of items to library customers. The goal is to list as many good ideas as possible, and you would then use the ones that fit your physical situation.

Many of these suggestions will still be helpful even after the “social distancing” period is over, and you are considering routine curbside pick-up.

A special thanks to Amanda Monson, MLS.

Senior Librarian at Springville Public Library, Springville, Utah.

Amanda generously sent me an excellently detailed email of how her library is currently doing curbside pick-up while the building is closed to the public. At this time, there is not a “stay at home” order in Utah. I commend Amanda on her generous spirit of collegial cooperation.

Software and Floor Plans – Philosophy of Service and Also Logistics:

We can dream that the ideal situation is coming in the future, when library ILS software will have an integrated module that will work with curbside pick-up. That dream includes our library apps for smartphones, our desktop customer logins to “My Account”. We can dream that the integration will have a calendar date/time appointment for when library customers should arrive to pick-up their holds,

and which holds are already available for curbside pick-up. This app integration should interface with email, text messages, and “My Account” displays for library customers.

We are not there yet, but I contacted two software companies today that design software for libraries, to share my hope with them. In the meantime, do we need to use a non-integrated 3rd party app for scheduling dates and times for pick-up? See below, under scheduling ideas.

What you can do now: Contact the software companies and ILS vendors that your library has contracted with, and ask them to brainstorm with you, with the collected wisdom of your department. Tell them that you would like to share your experience with them after you have more experience, and when they would like to hear ideas for future software development.

Drive-Up Windows: I was the supervisor of circulation at another public library that had a drive-up window. There is a good amount to be learned from that, and it is my opinion that the drive-up window is a better service model than curbside pick-up. It is better customer service to library customers(?), and better working conditions for staff, all seasons of the year (rain or shine, winter or summer). In the future, I’ll bet that businesses of all types, and libraries too, will reconsider the paradigm shift of COVID-19 and the benefits of drive-up windows in building design and how this impacts the interior floor plan design based on work-flow logistics. It is also best to keep the return slots separate from the drive-up window lane; there are customers who only want to return items through the return slots, and they will get stuck in the ‘slow lane’ of customers waiting for the longer transactions at the drive-up window. Is your library planning a renovation in the future? A new building? What will we learn from this? If your library has a drive-up window, much of this might not pertain to you. However, you might be able to offer suggestions to us.

A Paradigm Shift, or a Temporary Change: Will COVID-19 cause a permanent change, impact the philosophy of the Library as “Community Center”, browsable physical collections, art displays, in-person programming, design of spaces? Do drive-up windows or curbside pick-up reduce the benefits of the library as “community center” and reduce customers’ interactions with all that is inside the building? Will our thinking/feeling change because of COVID-19, with a new and permanent emphasis on eResources, eProgramming, and eCommunity. The interior of the building will remain important, but we might be going through a paradigm shift that will last longer than COVID-19.

Logistics and Suggestions to Consider with Delivery Situations and “Social Distancing”:

Equipment To Consider, Lines of Sight, Audio Communication Between Staff and with Library Customers:

1. This might be the time to invest in hand-held two-way radios (AKA, “walkie talkies”).
 - a. Can you expand the two-way radio network by having multiple radios?
 - b. How many units will the base unit support? Plan for expansion in the future?
 - c. You might need a booster or antenna to be installed.

- d. If your library did not already have two-way radios, consider these as essential tools for year-round communications of who is in the building, security issues, meeting deliveries, calling for the PIC (Person In Charge). If your library is very small, you might not need these two-way radios.
2. Your phone system might have an overhead voice paging system.
3. You might need to re-aim some security cameras, especially on the outside of the building. You might need to re-aim the cameras to the interior area where you will offer a contained area for the pick-up of materials.
4. You might invest in a motion sensor audio alarm, like a driveway doorbell.
5. You could consider mounting a convex mirror.
6. You might invest in orange cones that will allow you to direct traffic.
7. Will your staff be “socially distanced” but still have ‘lines of sight’ or audio/voice range communication with other staff and with library customers?

Days and Times, Scheduling Ideas:

1. If your building is open or closed, you might want to consider the days and times that you will offer curbside pick-up.
2. Amanda Monson wished that they had set-up an appointment schedule because they were overwhelmed at times. She recommends 30 or 60 minute windows (like at the grocery store), but offer these times many or most days of the week. Her library was offering it two days a week and those were very intensely busy times for customers and for library staff.
3. If you offer it many or most days of the week, this might enable customers to pick-up more of their holds because less of them would still be in quarantine. If you only offered it two days a week, the customers will have to return half a week later for something that will be out of quarantine the next day?
4. Amanda Monson recommends that you check-out the holds to the customer ahead of time, so when they arrive, you are able to immediately give them the items. This will minimize compromising “social distancing” and will enable you to help more customers in less time.
5. How could you schedule the days and times that customers could come to pick-up items?
 - a. Divide-up the days you will offer this and match it to the last names of customers?
 - b. Divide-up by the last 4 digits of their barcodes?
 - c. Use a 3rd party software. One suggestion was to use the online software “Calendly”. I have not looked into this. It might not be worth the time. (We need ILS integration!)

What Exactly Will You Offer and Be PR Ready:

1. Be sure that you do not accept donations at this time, because you want to minimize contact with potential virus and keep “social distancing”.
2. Be sure that you do not ask staff to physically accept returns from customers. Be ready to ask that all returns are placed into return slots, bins.
 - a. Will you offer check-in, and immediate check-out again, as this requires handling materials that are not quarantined?
3. Will you only offer holds that are ‘triggered’?

4. What if someone walks-up, drives-up, and they are asking for a “shelf check” for an item that they have not placed a hold on?
5. Someone might complain to the mayor if you do not have a well-planned PR plan that is distributed to all the staff who need to know the “talking points”.
6. Have paper handouts with statements and procedures ready for library customers, explaining how they can request materials, get phone help, online chat, email addresses, and all the online resources that the library has to offer. Include how to find the library on social media, YouTube channel, for online programs, etc.
7. Purchase signs for the parking lot, with moveable letters, list the phone numbers to call for people who are in the parking lot and would like to know the procedures, etc.
8. Be ready for multiple cars to be lined-up in the parking lot, and you would want those customers to easily see the signs with the phone numbers and directional guides.
9. If you needed to, you could consider setting-up some Google voice phone numbers, with voicemail to email options.
10. Amanda’s library played music at the pick-up location.

How Much Interior Staging Space Will You Need:

1. Expect that you will might need four times the linear shelving space for the increase in the number of holds.
 - a. Amanda Monson states that they normally have 400 items on the hold shelves and they now have 1600 items on the hold shelves on peak days.
2. Do you have carts for overflow of holds?
 - a. If the building is closed, you could temporarily use folding tables from your program rooms, or the normal tables in the reading rooms.
 - b. If your library is open, you might be reducing the number of chairs and tables in a public area, and you could use these in the delivery pick-up area for logistics and also as a barrier to keep customers confined to the pick-up delivery area.
 - c. Do you have enough space for organizing the great increase in the pre-shelving of holds?
 - d. Consider making a flow chart on a giant easel or white board. Ask one staff person who is graphical to document and update this flow chart as you make adjustments to the workflow.
3. Be ready with extra section markers ready to use?
 - a. You might organize your section markers by last name or be more privacy conscious and use the last 4 numbers of the customer’s barcode.
 - b. Do you have supplies for your laminator, if you want to laminate signs? Assign a staff person to be a sign maker and updater.
4. How will you insure “social distancing” of staff in the holds area?
 - a. Assign some staff to stay in one part of the holds sections? Place tape markers on the floor to insure “social distancing”? Ask them to pass-along items/bags/carts in a ‘hand-off’ supply chain management logic. Be prepared to taser staff who cross over their taped locations. (Just kidding!)

Staffing Levels Needed:

1. If the library is closed, you might have staff from other departments who will be helping your circulation department.
2. Designate teams, a team lead, and locations for each team to be stationed.
3. If multiple departments are involved, designate the leads or supervisors to keep a good collegial spirit and make it clear that normal reporting lines might be suspended. Staff might be reporting to another supervisor/lead from outside of their department.
4. Plan for heavy demand from what is a normal number of requests/holds.
5. "Social distancing" and the size of rooms/spaces is something to plan.
 - a. Use tape on the floor to designate "social distancing" intervals.
 - b. If you have fans blowing, consider this as canceling-out "social distancing".
 - c. Can you open windows and have the fans blow inside air outside?
 - d. Consult with your facilities staff about the way the HVAC system is operating and remember that some guidelines in the news have been to increase the normal rate of air handling.
6. You will find that there are busier times and slower times.
 - a. Keep some statistics so that you can plan staffing levels for future days/times, or if there are "stay at home" orders in the autumn, winter, etc.
 - b. During the slower times and at the end of shifts, ask all staff members who are involved to think about what works well and would could be improved. Make adjustments as needed, have de-briefings, and remember "wisdom is in the collective".

How Much Exterior Staging Space Will You Need? Stations, Locations, Where Staff Will Be Located:

1. Meeting and delivering in the parking lot?
 - a. Signs marking designated drive-up lanes
 - b. Orange cones?
 - c. Parking spaces?
 - d. Staff to direct traffic if there is a line of autos?
 - e. Orange cones: weigh them down to counter-act the winds.
2. Do you need a tent to shelter staff and library materials from the elements?
3. You will want to keep your drive-up pick-up parking spaces, or drive-up pick-up lane, far enough away from your return bins, return slots, so that customers who wish to return items, but not pick-up items, will not get stuck in the 'traffic jam'.
 - a. At my previous library, there were times when there were 8+ autos waiting to get to the drive-up window, and it could block a nearby intersection. Some of those customers only wanted to return items in the return slots, but the slots were next to the customer service window. (Poor building design!) Some customers would get frustrated with the wait and would honk their auto horns.
 - b. Amanda said that they sometimes have 15 cars waiting in line. Some people would bypass the line of cars, park, and try to walk-up... only to be told that they had to re enter the line, the 'traffic jam'. Staff had to ask them not to walk up to them in order to keep "social distancing".

4. Plastic bags for transporting items in the rain? Use of book carts on a rotation from one part of the building to the point of pick-up.
 - a. Perhaps you have circulating canvas bags? Is it a good idea to use these during the time of the virus?
 - b. Labels with customer's names, barcodes, attached to the bag?
 - c. Stapled rings of paper around the handle of the bag?
 - d. PR marketing handouts placed into the bag?
5. Checking-out items to customers ahead of time will help insure "social distancing". However, some bags will be taken by the incorrect person and that will cause a PR problem, and the loss of library materials.
6. Meet customers between inner doors and outer doors of the library?
 - a. Consider the air currents and the HVAC system's airflow.
7. Meet customers in a lobby that has barriers set-up to prevent people from entering other parts of the library?
 - a. What you can use as barriers is mentioned above.
 - b. Tables that are widely spread-out, well labeled, to guide library customers to their materials/bags.
8. Staff at the closest point of contact with customers.
 - a. What equipment will you need? Lap-top, scanner, receipt printer, phone, 2-way radio, table, chair, bags for items to be placed, signs, PPE.
 - i. Two-way radio: "Breaker, breaker, Customer Jane Smith is here to pick-up."
(The staff inside then run, grab, and deliver to the auto.)
 - b. Will you accept payments or ask them to pay online?
 - c. If you have already checked-out the items, you should be able to avoid most payment situations.
 - d. If you are accepting payments, will your credit card machine have an internet signal at this new pick-up location?
 - e. If you are practicing "social distancing", surely you will not be accepting payments. If you have checked-out items ahead of time, you will not have this issue.
9. When you are interacting with customers, what will you ask them?
 - a. Their name?
 - b. Library card, last 4 digits?
 - c. Will you expect them to show their library card through their car window?
 - d. Are you willing to risk giving the incorrect bag to the incorrect customer?
 - e. Are you willing to 'take their word for it' if they only give you their name, don't show and ID, don't show a library card?
 - f. You know they are going to roll-down their window. Will you scan their library card or check their ID through a closed window?
 - g. How will you maintain "social distancing" if you expect to be close enough to see their ID or see their library card?
 - h. Do you have signs asking them not to open their car windows?
 - i. Signs asking them to open their automobile trunk so you can place the bags inside?
10. Will you allow customers to pick-up items on behalf of another customer: family member, neighbor?

- a. There will be many details to consider if you do.
- 11. If you already check-out items to the customer ahead of time, this will reduce the contact and verbal interactions with the customers and simplify everything in this section, but how will you communicate with the customers before they come to the library?
 - a. See the section below for how to communicate with customers.
- 12. How much and how close of contact will staff have with the customer?
 - a. Plastic barriers?
 - b. Theatre ropes?
 - c. Seating for customers if there is a line and there are special needs customers?
 - d. Will you need to establish airflow barriers?
 - e. Will you offer them access to the restrooms if the building is closed? (There might be a child doing the 'restroom dance'. What will you do?)
 - i. Does your interior pick-up station need to be near the restrooms?
 - ii. Will you allow children to come-in with an adult and that impacts access to restrooms?
- 13. In general, in preparation for the times that you are offering pick-up to customers:
 - a. You might need to consider having staff in the building at night, or other times that the building is not normally staffed.
 - b. Closed to the public some mornings, open some evenings, etc.,.
 - i. This gives customers a variety of times to come to pick-up.
 - c. This will spread-out the number of staff in the building at one time, and it will allow for better "social distancing" if not all staff are in the building during a limited number of hours.
 - d. Will your insurance, alarm system, electronic locks, permit staff to be in the building at nights, or the early hours of the morning?
 - e. You will need a supervisor to be present during these unusual hours of logistical preparation?

Quarantining of Library Materials:

1. Keep your book returns unlocked? There might be holds on those items.
2. Isn't it better to allow returns, with unlocked return slots, to come-in on a 'trickle' basis rather than a huge deluge coming a few weeks later?
 - a. Allowing the return slots to be open also allows you to prepare holds for later, get some shelving done, and route materials on the delivery vans.
 - b. You will have to learn quarantining sooner or later, and why not learn it on a 'trickle' basis?
3. Handle materials with gloves. Wear face masks? If you wear eyeglasses, the facemasks are very difficult, causing fog-condensation to cloud-up your eyeglasses.
4. When handling returned items, do not 'fan' the pages or do other movements that will cause air to blow into your face, into your inhalation zone.
 - a. You will have to open media and other items that have multiple parts, but don't do this until after the 3 days quarantine has expired.

5. Quarantine returns for 3 days. Back-date check-in to the last day the library was open, weeks ago.
 - a. You will need a series of carts/locations to store items for the 3 days.
 - b. You will need a rotation system, signs to guide staff over different shifts and different days making it clear what materials are done with quarantine and ready to be check-in.
 - c. If you quarantine the items for 3 days, you can skip the whole disinfecting of materials. We are skipping the disinfecting of materials because of our quarantining for 3 days.
 - i. It is impossible to disinfect more than the covers of book.
 - ii. It would take too long to disinfect media and items with multiple parts.
 - iii. Let the 3 days of quarantine replace the inadequate disinfecting plan.

Software-Systems Topics to Consider; Configuring Your ILS System:

1. Amanda Monson recommended that you place a limit of 10 holds per card. It is possible that one family, with multiple cards, can be a very disproportionate amount of staff time.
 - a. "The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few."
 - b. Will Degenhard's library drive-up window experience included that some customers place 20%-30% of all holds at the drive-up window. Are these COVID-19 times different enough that we need to place a limit on the number of holds per library card, at least initially?
 - c. Remember that Amanda Monson's hold shelves normally have 400 items and now have 1600 items. This is a 400% increase.
 - d. This is not the time for dogmatic insistence on unlimited access to holds and unlimited access to all materials. We are in a serious but temporary situation and "The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few."
 - e. The long-term survival of the library might be long-term impacted if you can't serve a large percentage of customers because you are permitting a small percentage to monopolize the logistical workflow.
 - f. You can slowly open-up more options, more holds, as you see how the logistics progress.
2. If you have an automated materials handling system, that is a significant variable.
 - a. We look forward to your advice and experience being added to a new addition to this document.
 - b. Are you able to alter the automated notifications being sent to customers?
 - c. If the automated check-in is automatically sending an email, informing the next customer that their hold is ready, but that item has to be quarantined for 3 days, you have a PR situation that you will have to fix.
 - i. If you can't change the automated notifications timetable, will a staff person have to call/email, the customer letting them know that the hold will be quarantined for 3 days?
 - ii. Consider the extensive amount of staff time this extra emailing/calling will take and plan staffing levels accordingly.
 - d. Assume that the customer will not read the emails, letting them know the item is quarantined for 3 days, and not to come to the library for 3 days. (This is Amanda

- Monson's experience, that customers did not read the emails. Thus, it would be better to delay the notice being sent or not 'triggering' the hold for 3 days?)
- e. You might not be able to change the notice timetable if you have multiple check-in situations. (Paging list vs. automated materials check-in.)
3. If your library is not open yet or not offering holds pick-up yet, check-in the materials but do not 'trigger' the holds.
 - d. Some ILS options include "check-in but don't trigger the hold" item by item.
 - e. Your ILS might allow for a setting/session/daily change to do the same, not needing to do it item by item.
 - f. Set aside items with holds to be triggered later. Label them well.
 - g. Multiple Buildings: Are you able to route items to another building without the hold confirmed, linked to a customer? How will this impact your pulling/paging list or the list at the other locations?
 - h. Does keeping the hold 'in suspension' cause another copy to appear on a paging list or trigger at another library/branch if they are still triggering holds, still paging items?
 - i. Does keeping the hold 'in suspension' cause it to become a 'dud' when it is scanned at the next location, if a paging list fulfills that request with another item in the meantime.
 1. Bib level holds vs. item level holds.
 - ii. It might be better to trigger the hold with notices to customers turned off? Send as a batch a few days later?
 - iii. Some customers will still log-in to "My Account" and see that the hold is triggered, and they will arrive at the library before the notice is sent.
 4. If you are triggering the holds, but want a delay in the notices being sent to the customer, can your ILS insert a delay of time?
 - a. A delay in the outgoing notice for checked-in holds would be good if they need to be quarantined for 3 days, but it would be a problem if the hold results from being paged from the shelves, and does not need to be quarantined.
 - b. Do you need to turn-off all notices of available holds being ready if you want to 'trigger' all holds a few days before you plan to open to the customers?

How Will You Communicate With Customers For Curbside Pick-Up:

1. Notice how grocery stores have an app that lets customers know when their order will be available, or customers let them know when they are arriving. Since you do not have this app option...
2. Will staff call the customer to let the customer know the date and time to arrive?
3. You will need staff to answer the phone, to also place calls.