



Checklist for Library Curbside Pickup Services

by Liz Bowie

Disclaimer: This article is for educational purposes only. It does not supersede the rules and recommendations of local authorities and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

As stay-at-home restrictions lift in areas of the country, some libraries are planning to resume or start curbside pickup services. For those libraries offering this service, we've created a checklist to help you manage your services while keeping staff and patrons as safe as possible.

Which Library Curbside Pickup Services Will You Offer?

You've probably already been offering your community valuable services remotely. As you move to this next stage, consider the number of staff members you'll have available to manage curbside pickup services, along with what services you feel most comfortable with.

You can open curbside pickup to books only, or you can include other types of media. If your library offers STEM kits, early literacy kits, or similar items for checkout, think about the resources you have available to clean and manage these materials. You'll also want to consider their replacement value if you plan to extend due dates and they have the potential to not make it back to your library. Consider offering book bundles with consumable [take-home activities](#) instead of circulating your standard kits.

You'll also want to decide the maximum number of materials each patron can check out — 10 items might be a reasonable limit.

How Long Will Patrons Be Able to Keep Materials?

How long you let patrons keep materials could depend on the trajectory for reopening in your state. If your state is looking at reopening closer to summer, you may want to extend due dates until then to discourage unnecessary patron travel and interaction.

You'll also want to think about whether to renew items that are already checked out or if fines will accrue on items that don't make it back by your extended due date.



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How Will You Manage and Track Requests?

[contact-form-7 404 "Not Found"]

There are several ways you could have patrons request materials.

- Have patrons put items on hold by logging into their library accounts and then calling or using your library's calendar system to arrange a time for pickup.
- Have a staff member answer or track message requests on your phone line or a specific email account.
- Create a Google Form or online signup where patrons can request items and pickup times.
- Decide whether you will require patrons to show IDs, will rely on them giving you their name, or will allow them to pick up items on their own for contactless delivery. You'll also want to decide whether you will allow patrons to pick up materials for others who may not have transportation or are housebound.

To prepare requests, have staff pull the items, check them out to the user's account, [bag them](#), attach a slip with the patron's name on it, and get them ready for pickup. Request a minimum of 24 hours advance notice to pull items. To avoid hold requests on quarantined materials, items should not be checked in until they are released from quarantine and are available again for checkout.

Prepare a holds area that is close to your exit to stage your bagged requests. Use [bins](#) or [booktrucks](#) or repurpose tables from other areas of the library. Use [tape](#) to designate stations and ensure social distancing.

Document your process and make sure all staff members know and understand the process. Continue to consult with team members and make process improvements.

Will You Have Minimal Contact or No Contact?

Whether you're limiting contact or planning for contactless pickup of materials, you'll have safety issues to take into consideration. Start with procuring personal protective equipment for staff, including masks, gloves, and hand sanitizer. Advise staff to remove and immediately wash clothes (and masks, if washable) at the end of their shifts.

Depending on the number of staff and the size of your library, you may want to consider using [two-way radios](#) to ensure staff members are able to communicate while safely distancing themselves. You may need a tent or covering to keep materials safe from the elements if they are staged outside.

Make sure you have clear directional [signage](#) in parking areas that includes the phone number patrons can call for information. You'll also want clear signs in your pickup area, including signage on your booktrucks or bins stating the protocol for pickup.

Include directional signage and barriers, such as [traffic-control ropes](#) or cones to direct the flow of traffic. Be prepared for multiple cars parking or lining up to pick up materials.

No Contact: Arrange items in bags on tables, [booktrucks, or carts](#) or in [bins](#) with patrons' names on them. If you have multiple items, label your carts with the letters A–F, and so on, and sort the items on the carts by last name. Pickup times should be in at least 15-minute intervals to try to eliminate any interaction between patrons.

You can also have patrons call when they arrive at your library and then wait in their cars for a staff member to place the items on a table. Ask patrons to stay in their cars until the staff member has gone back inside. Then, patrons can exit their cars and pick up their items.

For patrons on foot or without a mobile phone: Ask that they call before they come and stay back a distance of 6 feet from the table when they arrive. A staff member should then bring materials out to the table. The patron should wait until the staff member is inside before collecting their belongings. To ensure protocol is followed, consider repurposing [colored book tape](#) to mark a safe distance for patrons to stand.

If you are asking to see IDs, ask patrons to place their ID on the table and move back 6 feet. The staff member can check the ID and return with the materials. The patron should wait until the staff member is back inside before collecting their belongings. The table should be disinfected after each ID is removed.

Minimal Contact: If you have numbered spaces in your parking lot, assign a time and parking spot when you gather patron requests for items. If users will be driving up, have them show you their ID through the car window, open their trunks, and place their bagged materials in their trunks.

For walk-up patrons, use bags with handles on both sides and try to only touch one side while the patron touches the other.

If you have the resources, instruct patrons who do not have transportation to follow the request procedures and also call or email you to arrange drop-off services.



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How Will You Advertise Your Services?

Make sure staff is trained on all the finer points of how you will manage this service so they can answer questions, and update staff accordingly if you have to make adjustments to your system.

Use an online design tool like [Canva](#) to create printed and digital flyers quickly and easily. Then, you can leverage all your traditional channels, such as your library's website and social media pages to promote your curbside pickup services. Also contact your local Chamber of Commerce, radio stations, and newspaper, as well local healthcare facilities to help you get the word out. Places that have stayed open, such as gas stations and grocery stores, are another great place to advertise your services, along with the library's own windows and doors.

In your communication about your services, ask patrons to be specific about the items they are requesting. Also include the following:

- What services are and are not available (books, DVDs, printing, faxing, interlibrary loan, etc.)
- The hours that library curbside pickup will be available
- How far in advance they need to request items and schedule pickup
- How to arrange a time for pickup (remind patrons that they must be on time to ensure interaction with others is limited)
- The location where they will find their items for pickup or the protocol for staffed pickup
- How to arrange for drop-off of items for patrons without transportation
- The extended due dates for items and whether you're accepting returns in your drop box or would prefer that patrons keep materials at home until the due date
- Whether or not fines will accrue for items already checked out or after your extended due date
- Whether you are accepting returns and how you will disinfect returned items
- A statement that you are not accepting donations at this time
- That you reserve the right to refuse service to anyone who jeopardizes the safety of your staff and/or patrons

Curbside pickup also offers you the opportunity to advertise your other services. Are you delivering virtual programming? Offering ask-a-librarian services? Place flyers advertising these services in patrons' bags.

How Will You Handle Returned Items?

Be clear with patrons about whether or not you are accepting returns at this time or if you'd prefer they keep materials until the extended due date. If you are accepting returns, provide the protocol (i.e., accepting them in the [drop box](#) and/or allowing patrons to return items during your curbside service hours).

The American Library Association recommends a 24- to 48-hour quarantine of books. [The Institute of Museum and Library Services](#) suggests following the Centers for Disease Control's recommendation of a 24-hour quarantine. Designate specific [booktrucks](#) or [bins](#) for returns, and learn more about the recommendations for quarantining books in ["How to Quarantine Public Library Materials."](#)

You may wish to extend this quarantine time to 72 hours, as [preliminary research indicates that COVID-19 can survive](#)

[on surfaces for up to three days](#). You may also wish to disinfect materials that can be wiped down when taken out of quarantine. If your library sends out a press release about your services, include this information to reassure your patrons that you are following CDC guidelines for safety in handling materials.

As always, keep the safety of your staff and patrons at the forefront as you continue to provide valuable services to your community. For further information, watch pediatrician and children's librarian Dr. Dipesh Navsaria's presentation "[COVID-19: Safety Tips for Reopening Your Library](#)."

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dorothy

May 13, 2020 @ 7:05 pm [Reply](#)

You guys are great. Much more than my favorite book tape people.



Liz Bowie

May 26, 2020 @ 9:12 am [Reply](#)

Thank you for the kind words, Dorothy! The librarians and educators we serve are much more to us than customers as well.

Stay safe, Liz

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