

## **Public Safety Policy**

The Pittsylvania County Public Library strives to provide a safe and secure environment for the public and staff to work and enjoy library services. In the event of sudden weather emergencies such as a hail storm or tornados, library staff and patrons are urged to shelter in place until the danger has passed. In the event of a public safety emergency such as a school shooting, violent or potentially violent forms of public unrest, library staff and patrons are urged to follow the guidance of public safety officials.

All Pittsylvania County Public Library branches participate in the Pittsylvania County Emergency Community Notification System to receive alerts about weather and public safety emergencies.

In the event of a dangerous severe weather, public safety, or other emergency, the library director or branch manager may, if necessary:

- Secure building(s) and refuse entry to anyone for the duration of the emergency. This could include closing blinds, locking doors, turning off lights, and/or placing barriers in front of windows or doors.
- Require all patrons and staff to immediately vacate building(s) and flee the area, if advised to do so by public safety personnel.
- Require patrons to exit through an alternate door, such as a fire exit or staff exit, if the front door opens onto a dangerous situation such as downed power lines.
- Secure staff and patrons in windowless or interior spaces, including bathrooms or staff-only offices, for protection against tornado or other wind events.

Patrons may always elect to leave the library building, even if it is against the recommendations of public safety or weather personnel, but may not be allowed to re-enter for the duration of the emergency. They may also be asked to leave via an alternate door.

Library staff should inform the Director as soon as possible, in whatever means is most convenient (text, call, email) in the event of an emergency situation, and should update the Director as soon as possible when the danger has passed.

## **Post-emergency Shelter**

In the aftermath of a severe weather or public safety event such as a large fire or power disruption that displaces multiple families, the library director will work with public safety personnel to offer the assistance of the library as an emergency headquarters, public shelter, warming or cooling center, or recharging station, if library buildings are operational and available. Staff may be asked to volunteer to work additional hours in these circumstances.

## **Tornados**

Tornado *Warning*: means a tornado is possible. Move toward a safe space.

Tornado *Watch*: Means a tornado is already happening or will soon. Move to a safe place immediately.

Tornado safe places include a basement, storm cellar or an interior room on the lowest floor with no windows. In a high-rise building, pick a hallway in the center of the building. You may not have enough time to go to the lowest floor. Vehicles and mobile homes are not safe places.

Library safe spaces include: bathrooms and any windowless interior space (offices, storage closets). Shut the door and, if possible, cover yourself with coats or blankets.

### **Pittsylvania County Public Safety Contacts**

Director of Public Safety: (434) 432-7920

Pittsylvania County Sheriff: Chatham / Danville Area: 434-432-7800  
Gretna Area: 434-656-6211

In an emergency, call 911

*Approved January 2021.*