

# The Covid-19 Move from Red to Orange and How it Affects Utah Libraries

By Colleen Eggett

As you know, Governor Herbert moved the State of Utah from Red to Orange on the [scale of Covid-19](#), on Friday May 1, 2020. This means we've moved from high to moderate risk. The general public is to take [extreme precautions](#), and there are many other actions mentioned as well. Moderate risk is still very notable and we are far from being back to normal. You can see how many cases have been reported in your area at <https://coronavirus.utah.gov/case-counts/>.

It is possible that the Governor will move the State back to Red in the future, though he doesn't want to; he wants us to follow his direction and keep safe and healthy by following the guidelines he has spelled out. He is trying to find a balance between the health needs and the other needs in the State.

There are [guidelines for libraries](#) and other groups such as museums, etc. listed in the State website. Some of the highlights are:

- A 6-foot distance must be maintained between each household group at all times
- Set an established window time for high-risk groups to come in without pressure from crowds and/or separate entrances and queues
- Limit the number of people in a confined area to enable adequate distancing at all times
- Maintain signage to remind and help individuals stand at least 6 feet apart when in common areas
- Congregating at any point is not allowed
- Encourage contactless payment; disinfect between transactions

For staff: Employers exercise extreme caution, with employees working remotely, evaluating workforce concerns, and enacting strategies to minimize economic impact. Businesses that necessitate on-site work should monitor workforce for symptoms and well-being.

- Provide accommodations to high-risk employees
- Employees and volunteers operate remotely, unless not possible
- Symptom checking in business interactions
- Face coverings worn in settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain; ensure that face coverings are available
- Make every possible effort to enable working from home as a first option; where not possible, workplaces comply with distancing and hygiene guidelines
- Minimize face-to-face interactions, including with customers (e.g. utilize drive-thru, install partitions)
- Where distancing and hygiene guidelines cannot be followed in full, businesses should consider whether that activity needs to continue for the business to operate
- Eliminate unnecessary travel and cancel or postpone in-person meetings, conferences, workshops, and training sessions
- Require employees to self-quarantine when returning from high-risk areas

- Employers evaluate workforce strategy and concerns and enact strategies to minimize economic impact
- Employers must not allow any individuals under isolation or quarantine to come to work at any time unless authorized by the local health department

There are further guidelines for [high-risk people](#) which is those over age 65 or who have special health risks. Basically, they did not move to an orange phase, they are still in the red phase.

- The best protection for high-risk individuals may be to exclude them from exposure to the hazard, which is to allow them to work from home
- If working from home is not feasible, move high-risk employees to areas with lower potential COVID-19 exposures, such as non-customer facing and limit co-worker interactions
- High-risk employees should avoid handling cash
- Where possible, use portable air purification systems for small work areas
- Common employee areas (restrooms, breakroom, kitchen, etc.) should be cleaned regularly. Designate areas only to be used by high-risk employees
- Where possible, high-risk individuals should not ride in an elevator with others

There are general guidelines for all workplaces.

- All individuals should wear masks or cloth face coverings in public spaces to help control the spread of COVID-19. Wearing a cloth face covering is intended to help protect others in the event the wearer is an asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic carrier and spreader of COVID-19
- Maintain physical distancing between co-workers and customers (ideally 6+ feet)
- Wear disposable gloves when interacting with the public, taking payments, using shared work space or equipment, or any other time the employer feels it is necessary
- Where possible, use floor markings spaced six feet apart or physical barriers such as plexiglass to reduce exposure
- Use local exhaust ventilation or increase air exchanges in the HVAC system to dilute the air (including HEPA filters in the HVAC system)
- Regularly sanitize workspace, including frequent and high-contact areas
- Train all employees on COVID-19 exposure risks and prevention.

There have been many examples shared by Utah library directors, and I thank you for that. The procedures vary greatly by area. Remember, it is up to you to talk to your city manager, county administrator, and others that you work with to determine the best approach in your situation. This will not be one size fits all. After all, and I've said this before, "excellence is defined locally."