

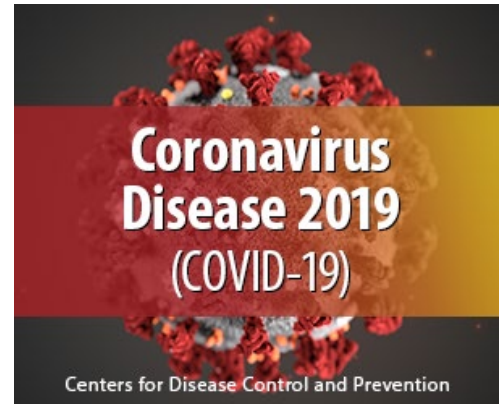
Covid-19 and the Move from Yellow to Green or the New Normal

By Colleen Eggett

By now, many [Counties in Utah](#) have moved to the Green or New Normal phase and others will follow. It is time to act on the present and prepare for the future. Utah's Covid-19 instructions accommodate both the illness and people getting back to work. The State of Utah updates the [current guidelines](#) regularly.

If you are in Green, [follow Utah's guidelines in your libraries](#):

- Maintain physical distancing of 6 feet; face coverings recommended when physical distancing is not feasible.
- Maintain enhanced hygiene and sanitization practices. Clean high touch areas frequently.
- Encourage digital rather than paper formats.
- Educate the public about what your library is doing to protect them and their families.
- Work with higher-risk employees to make reasonable accommodations that enable the higher risk individual to maintain employment in a safe manner.
- Provide signage at each public entrance to inform all customers and staff that they should:
 - Avoid entering if they have any of the [symptoms of Covid-19](#).
 - Encourage 6-foot physical distancing and face coverings when physical distancing is not feasible.
 - Sneeze/cough into cloth, tissue, elbow or sleeve (not hands).
 - Avoid hand shaking or unnecessary physical contact.
 - Wash hands often, and for at least 20 seconds.



What about the books?

Both coronavirus.utah.gov and the [CDC](#) say that materials are not the primary source of exposure, however one may be able to contract it if they touch the item then their nose, eyes, or mouth.

[The REALM Project](#), sponsored by [OCLC](#), the [Institute of Museum and Library Services](#), and [Battelle](#), is conducting research on how long the virus lasts on a variety of materials. Their goal is to synthesize their research into toolkit resources that support reopening and operational considerations. Currently they are in the discovery and research phases. Expect more from them later as they move to the synthesize phase. This REALM chart shows their current timelines for many common items that a library circulates.

REALM Reopening Archives, Libraries, and Museums COVID-19 Survival on Materials Held by Archives, Libraries, and Museums		
Material	Survival time (days)	Testing Rounds with links

September 16, 2020

Book cover, hardback (buckram cloth)	1	<u>Test 1, 6/22/2020</u>
Book cover, softback	1	<u>Test 1, 6/22/2020</u>
DVD case	1	<u>Test 1, 6/22/2020</u>
Archival folders (stacked)	2	<u>Test 2, 7/20/2020</u>
Book covering, plastic (biaxially oriented polyester film)	3	<u>Test 1, 6/22/2020</u>
Pages, plain paper inside a closed book	3	<u>Test 1, 6/22/2020</u>
Children's board book (stacked)	4	<u>Test 2, 7/20/2020</u>
Pages, Braille paper (stacked)	4	<u>Test 2, 7/20/2020</u>
Pages, glossy paper from a coffee table book (stacked)	4	<u>Test 2, 7/20/2020</u>
DVD	5	<u>Test 3, 8/18/2020</u>
Storage bag (flexible plastic)	5	<u>Test 3, 8/18/2020</u>
Pages, magazine	4+	<u>Test 2, 7/20/2020</u>
Plexiglas	5+	<u>Test 3, 8/18/2020</u>
Storage container (rigid plastic)	5+	<u>Test 3, 8/18/2020</u>
Talking book, USB cassette	5+	<u>Test 3, 8/18/2020</u>
Book cover, hardcover (stacked)	6+	<u>Test 4, 9/3/2020</u>
Book cover, softback (stacked)	6+	<u>Test 4, 9/3/2020</u>
DVD case (stacked)	6+	<u>Test 4, 9/3/2020</u>
Expanded polyethylene foam (stacked)	6+	<u>Test 4, 9/3/2020</u>
Plastic protective cover (stacked)	6+	<u>Test 4, 9/3/2020</u>

Courtesy of the Library Development unit at Alaska State Library



Here are some recognized "known unknowns."

- We don't know how many virus cells an infected person might leave on an object.
- We don't know how many of those could be picked up by another person.
- We don't know how much would be needed to infect a person.
- We don't know of any documented cases of known transmission from books and the other objects studied.

What do we know?

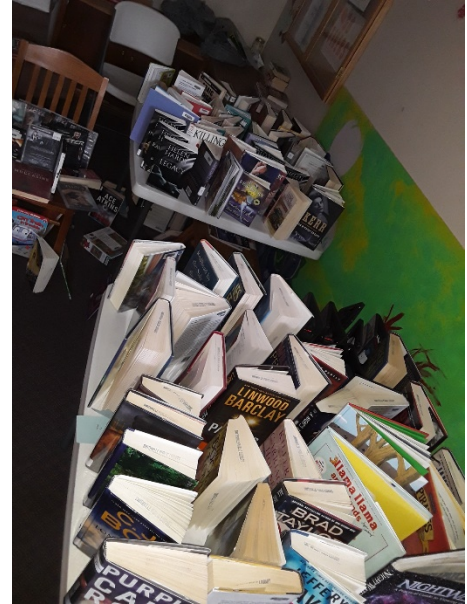
- We know that three days in a fanned configuration leaves the materials free of the virus.
- We know that the virus lasts six plus days in a stacked configuration for our most common items.
- We know that there are machines we can buy that decontaminate, that are expensive but when you look at the time lost may be worth it especially if you have the funding.

So what to do? This issue illustrates that librarianship is both an art and a science. Libraries and the demographics and characteristics of the communities they serve differ widely. At the end of the day, we make our best decisions based on the information, in agreement with other library stakeholders, and “make decisions that benefit the customers.”

Media Toolkit:

[The CDC offers toolkits](#) designated for copying and using by organizations, including videos, social media, PSAs, print resources, checklists, FAQs, and web resources that we can customize for our own purposes.

In summary, we know that it’s been quite the experience, and that it’s not over yet. If you have best practices you wish to share we’d love to hear from you.



1 Fanned books