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## Library Procedures in Facilities Protocol

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### Change Record

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>Background .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Facilities Protocol .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Library spaces .....</b>	<b>2</b>
	3.1 Reserved Carrels .....	2
	3.2 Closure .....	2
	3.3 Main Stacks .....	4
	3.4 Revised Layout .....	4
<b>4</b>	<b>Collection Usage .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Disinfecting Procedures .....</b>	<b>4</b>
	5.1 Returned Books.....	5
	5.2 Library Mail .....	5
	5.3 Support from Administrative Services .....	5
<b>6</b>	<b>Reference Assistance .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>ADDENDUM</b>	<b>.....</b>	<b>6</b>
	A.1 Resources.....	6

# **I BACKGROUND**

In response to the global Covid-19 pandemic and in accordance with state government instituted closures and stay-at-home orders, the National Radio Astronomy Observatory (NRAO) entered Infection Disease Operating Status (IDOS) on March 16, 2020. The NRAO Library ceased all on-site activities in compliance with the NRAO directive to work from home.

In April, NRAO began preparing policies and operating procedures for Staff to return to work, initially in a limited capacity in May and then a more regular manner in June. This document, effective June 1, 2020, outlines library policies and librarian procedures for maintaining social distancing and proper sanitation of library spaces and collections for the safe use of NRAO Staff through the duration of the pandemic and after IDOS ends.

## **2 FACILITIES PROTOCOL**

The NRAO Director's Office has established requirements for Staff conduct and business operations while in the Charlottesville facilities via the "Edgemont Road Facilities Protocol" document, hereafter referred to simply as 'Facilities Protocol'. This document establishes additional protocols for library operations in support of the Director's Protocols throughout the time Facilities Protocol is in effect. These library protocols will remain in effect until Facilities Protocol is ended by the NRAO Director.

## **3 LIBRARY SPACES**

NRAO Staff enjoyed the free and informal use of library spaces prior to the pandemic for all manner of activities including independent work, impromptu meetings, and personal time. Most of these activities are now prohibited.

All library spaces are considered public areas except the two private librarian offices. Librarians will wear masks when working outside of their offices and gloves when mandated by the procedures in Section 5.

### *3.1 Reserved Carrels*

The three library study carrels are available by reservation as outlined in the Facilities Protocol and numbered accordingly. Use of the carrels without a reservation is prohibited. Library staff will review reservations daily to ascertain Staff are using the carrels as intended.

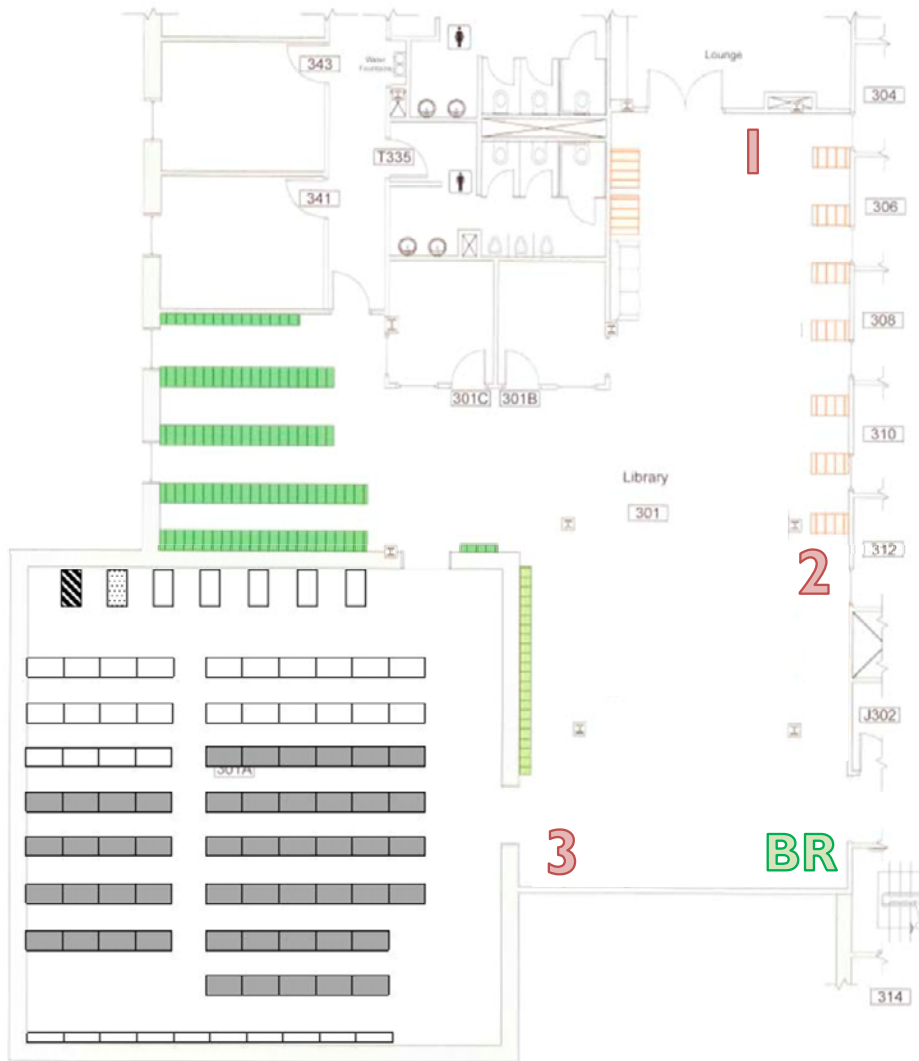
The carrels will be re-positioned within the new library space to maximize social distancing (see Section 3.4 and Figure 1). Staff who have reserved carrels must enter the library through the southern door which is closest to the Director's Office hallway. Staff using the reserved carrels are to wear masks at all times. Carrels are not a private office area. Staff should relocate to a mask free space for lunch.

### *3.2 Closure*

NRAO Library spaces are closed for any meetings, unscheduled personal use by Staff, or pass through access to other parts of the Edgemont Road headquarters. The northern door (bathroom hallway) into

the library space is for librarian use only. Access to the library through the canteen/kitchen area is not authorized.

Book stacks and cabinetry in the open library space, Room 301, are off limits to non-library staff including the reserves and NRAO Publications shelves. Use of library lounge furnishings and meeting tables is not authorized. The library closure is necessary to maintain proper sanitation of the NRAO collection and to support the use of the library as a secondary work area for Staff who share office space with other employees.



**Figure 1. Library Layout**

Main stacks are shown at the bottom left corner, 301A. The open library space is 301. Carrels are shown with red numbers. The book return is indicated by the green “BR” label.

### 3.3 Main Stacks

The main library stacks, Room 301A, are off limits to all personnel except librarians, management, housekeeping, and emergency services personnel. The main library stacks are defined as the original library space prior to the expansion of Edgemont Road excluding the old library reading room, and are distinguished from the new library space by the right angle interior wall within the library. The closure of this area will be marked by signage.

The main stacks closure is in effect to control access to library materials for sanitation purposes. The procedures for collection materials sanitization are explained in Section 5. The closure includes the two visitor desks in the southwest corner of the main stacks and the quiet reading area in the northeast corner. These two areas are off limits to all personnel.

### 3.4 Revised Layout

The layout of the open library space will be revised (see Figure 1). Library lounge furnishings, meeting tables, and chairs will be staged around the library to discourage use of the stacks and to create boundaries for study carrel users.

The library book return will be positioned in the southern corner of the library for fast access by staff returning borrowed items (see Figure 1). The library online public access catalog station, the IT provided Macintosh, and the large screen television will not be available for any use.

Study carrels will be positioned to maximize social distancing for Staff who reserve them. One carrel will remain in the original area with boundaries established by library furniture; the second carrel will be moved to the exterior window wall; the third carrel will be positioned in the canteen or kitchen end of the library (see Figure 1).

## 4 COLLECTION USAGE

There will be no direct access by Staff to the library collections. Staff at all AUI sites may request materials by email to the library staff at [library@nrao.edu](mailto:library@nrao.edu). Librarians will distribute materials to Staff mailboxes or via interoffice mailing as appropriate. Staff will continue to have access to the library catalog from their own workstation via the library home page, <https://library.nrao.edu>.

In ordinary times, the library supports the broader scientific community via interlibrary loan (ILL). ILLs are suspended through the duration of the pandemic.

## 5 DISINFECTING PROCEDURES

Research indicates the coronavirus can survive on a variety of surfaces for extended periods of time. Books are a possible vector for the virus when they have been directly exposed to it by whomever is using the book. Thankfully the risk is substantially lower than with high contact, metal surfaces like doorknobs and handles. The below prudent steps will mitigate the risks posed by contaminated books.

### *5.1 Returned Books*

Edgemont Road staff will return books to the library book return only. The book return will be positioned by the southern door of the library for quick and easy access, (see Figure 1).

A librarian will collect book returns from the depository on Monday afternoons wearing a mask and gloves. The librarian will have disinfecting wipes, hand sanitizer, and a trash can at hand and ready to use before accessing the book return.

Returned books will be deposited directly into a plastic tub with a lid for quarantine. Once the lid is closed, the external contact surfaces of the tub and book return will be disinfected. The key for the book return will also be disinfected. The librarian will then remove their gloves, hand sanitize, and thoroughly wash their hands before returning to move the tub.

The closed tub will be moved to the library work area of the main stacks. The books will be left in the untouched tub for a minimum of 72 hours allowing ample time for any possible virus contamination to die off.

On Friday mornings, after 72 hours have passed, the books in quarantine will be checked in and re-shelved. Although ample time will have passed for any virus to die, as a further precaution the interior of the tub will be disinfected.

### *5.2 Library Mail*

Library mail will only be accepted through the mailroom. Library staff will collect the mail wearing masks and gloves and deposit any books received directly to the book return. The library will accept no in person package deliveries.

### *5.3 Support from Administrative Services*

In support of this sanitation process, the library will need a supply of masks, gloves, approved disinfecting wipes, and hand sanitizer on hand. The library will rely on support from Administrative Services to procure these supplies. Library staff will request items from admin services as needed. No packages or deliveries should be brought directly to the library.

## **6 REFERENCE ASSISTANCE**

The library will only accept electronic requests for reference assistance or collection materials through the duration of Facilities Protocol. NRAO Staff will not visit the library in person to request library support.

The library will continue to provide non-ILL support for queries from the general public received via email only. While library staff will prudently maximize the number of hours worked on site, there is no guarantee a librarian will be available by phone during all business hours.

## ADDENDUM

The library gathered research and discussions from around the broader, professional librarian community regarding safe practices and disinfecting procedures in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. The full list of the items reviewed is provided below.

In summary, it has been shown Covid-19 can survive nearly a day on book type surfaces in laboratory conditions when those surfaces are exposed to a high concentration of the virus. The virus survives longer on plastic surfaces like DVD cases. Infectious disease experts attested there is minimal risk from contaminated library items except when those items are directly exposed to a user's sneezes or coughs.

The most effective disinfecting techniques are thorough cleaning with a liquid disinfecting agent or concentrated ultraviolet (UV) light exposure for at least 45 minutes. To be complete, the disinfecting process needs to reach every page. Both liquid agents and UV exposure damage the physical material of a book, therefore disinfecting is not practical.

Consensus is the optimal method to mitigate the risk of library materials transporting the virus is to quarantine items for a reasonable period greater than any of the virus survival times on applicable surfaces. All sources recommend a minimum 72 hour quarantine and disinfecting all surfaces books and patrons come into contact with during normal library use.

The following is a list of links to information from various professional resources (American Library Association, CDC, NEDCC, etc.) on how libraries are, and should, handle materials during a pandemic.

### *A.1 Resources*

"Handling Library Materials and Collections During a Pandemic," American Library Association, March 26, 2020:

<http://www.ala.org/alcts/preservationweek/resources/pandemic>

Note: The article is a continually updating post with links to new information from the National Preservation Center for Technology and Training, etc.

"Disinfecting circulating books," NEDCC (North East Document Conservation Center):

[http://www.ala.org/tools/sites/ala.org/tools/files/content/NEDCC%20recommendations%20for%20disinfecting%20books\\_Mar2020-converted.pdf](http://www.ala.org/tools/sites/ala.org/tools/files/content/NEDCC%20recommendations%20for%20disinfecting%20books_Mar2020-converted.pdf)

"Aerosol and surface stability of HCoV-19 (SARS-CoV-2) compared to SARS-CoV-1", van Doremalen et al.:

<https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.03.09.20033217v1.full.pdf>

IMLS (Institute of Museum and Library Services), statement for safe practices:

<https://www.ims.gov/news/covid-19-research-partnership-inform-safe-handling-collections-reopening-practices-libraries>

Webinar from the CDC on handling paper-based materials during pandemic:

<https://www.ims.gov/webinars/mitigating-covid-19-when-managing-paper-based-circulating-and-other-types-collections>

ALA Statement on COVID-19:

<https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/blogs/the-scoop/ala-statement-covid-19/>

"How to Sanitize Collections in a Pandemic (March 27, 2020)," which provides advice from several conservators on the proper way to disinfect circulating materials:

<https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/blogs/the-scoop/how-to-sanitize-collections-covid-19/>

The Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC) has provided recommendations on Disinfecting Books and Other Collections on their website:

<https://www.nedcc.org/free-resources/preservation-leaflets/3.-emergency-management/3.5-disinfecting-books>

The National Center for Preservation Technology and Training (NCPTT) hosted a Facebook live video on March 23 - now archived and available for asynchronous viewing on their website - entitled "Covid-19 Basics: Disinfecting Cultural Resources":

<https://www.ncptt.nps.gov/blog/covid-19-basics-disinfecting-cultural-resources/>

"Persistence of Coronaviruses on Inanimate Surfaces and Their Inactivation with Biocidal Agents," A March 2020 study from the Journal of Hospital Infection:

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0195670120300463>

A list of recommendations from the NCPTT on the disinfection of historic materials:

[http://www.ala.org/tools/sites/ala.org.tools/files/content/NCPTT\\_Surface%20disinfection%20recommendations\\_Mar2020.jpg](http://www.ala.org/tools/sites/ala.org.tools/files/content/NCPTT_Surface%20disinfection%20recommendations_Mar2020.jpg)

"IMLS, CDC: On Staff Safety, Handling Paper In COVID-19 Pandemic (April 8, 2020)," Library Journal, summarizing the March 30 webinar from the IMLS and CDC, "Mitigating COVID-19 When Managing Paper-Based, Circulating, and Other Types of Collections":

<https://www.libraryjournal.com/?detailStory=imls-cdc-on-staff-safety-handling-paper-in-covid-19-pandemic>

The CDC has a page offering Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers, which includes advice on keeping workspaces clean and how to guide employees towards practicing good respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene:

[https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fspecific-groups%2Fguidance-business-response.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fspecific-groups%2Fguidance-business-response.html)

The ALSC Blog offers Best Practices for Cleaning Play and Learn Spaces in libraries, with advice that could be applied to all frequently-touched surfaces during an outbreak of influenza or other viruses:

<https://www.alsc.ala.org/blog/2017/04/best-practices-cleaning-play-learn-spaces/>