

QUARANTINE OF LIBRARY MATERIALS AND LIBRARY SERVICES DURING COVID-19 PERIOD

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Abstract: The purpose of writing this article is to create that awareness among the library professionals during the period of covid-19 spread across the world. The need of information is very essential and this information played major role in identifying the vaccine for Corona virus also. Similarly providing information for needy people in the society is also necessary to avoid the transmission of corona virus during the transaction of library physical information resources/materials, library services to their users. What are the precautionary measures to be taken and how to quarantine the library materials which may be infected by reader or user. The process and procedure of quarantine of library materials and services, these issues have been discussed in this article.

Key Words: Quarantine of library materials, Lifetime of corona virus on different materials, quarantine of Digital Library or Computer Centre

1. Introduction:

Library and information centers are playing a major role in providing the required information to all kinds of people that exist in society. Library professionals are playing important role in managing, organizing and disseminating information to the needy one. The spread of corona virus across the world has changed the day to day activity and lifestyle of humans being. Its effect spread in many areas of the society. The information industry, as well as the information centers such as libraries, museums, archive centers, and publishing industries are facing new kinds of challenges, which are not been neglected by professional as well as the end-user. It has become necessary to the library and information centers, archives and other information industries to manage, operate and deliver their services by avoiding spread of corona virus in their day to day workplace. The Quarantine of library materials and changes in library services has become necessary in this situation. According to the situation the professional has to take care of their library materials and library staff. They need to upgrade or modify the mode of services to tackle this situation.

2. What is Quarantine?

Before seeing the meaning of quarantine here we can see what is need to be quarantined. Yes here we are talking about Covid-19 or Corona Virus.

Corona virus is a respiratory illness and is typically spread via airborne droplets from an infected persons coughs or sneezes.

The live corona virus particles can survive for a time on the surface it lives longest on polypropylene plastic.

Recently some of the researchers came out with result that corona virus' life span is anywhere between 3 hours to 7 days on the surface depending on a different kind of materials and weather conditions.

2.1 According to Wikipedia:

“Quarantine is a restriction on the movement of people and goods which is intended to prevent the spread of disease or pests. It is often used in connection to disease and illness, preventing the movement of those who may have been exposed to a communicable disease, but do not have a confirmed medical diagnosis”

2.2 According to Reference article: Definition and history of quarantines by Kimberly Hickok - Reference Editor March 13, 2020.

“Quarantine is a state or place of isolation for a person or animal who may have come in contact with contagious diseases. The period of isolation lowers the chance that person or animal could transfer illnesses to others”.

3. Quarantine of library materials:

Based on the above definitions the quarantine of library materials may be explained as below.

Restricting the movement of infected library materials & services to avoid the spread of disease or illness in the library by creating separate space for keeping touch infected materials for quarantine purpose as per standard period of time to quarantine the specific item set by export. This helps to avoid the spread of infection through library materials.

3.1 Following are some of the library materials need to be Quarantined during the reopening of library activities after completing of lockdown period.

1. Issued library books after return to the library.
2. Daily supplied newspapers.
3. Subscribed print journals, magazines, books etc.
4. Newly purchased furniture and fixture.
5. Used tables, chairs in the library after the departure of users.
6. Library collection areas such as library racks,
7. The OPAC search area where computers kept for users to search library book availability status.

8. The digital library or the computer library where numbers of computers meant for accessing online resources.
9. The property counters area where all the personal belongings of users are kept.
10. All the library sections where the library staff are performing their duties such places need to be Quarantine frequently.

4. Need of Quarantine of library materials:

After seeing the tragedy and seriousness of the corona virus and its effect on human health it is our duty to stop the spread of corona virus through library material in the library.

The following are some of the needs of the Quarantine of library materials.

1. To stop the spread of corona virus through library material.
2. To keep a healthy environment in the library for users.
3. Avoiding the spread of the virus between one user to another user through library material.
4. To Keep library services active for needful users.

5. Areas of quarantine required in the library:

During the day to day activities of the library and when the academic activities of the institution, college or university resumes their activities the following area of the library needs to be quarantined frequently to avoid the spread of corona virus in the library.

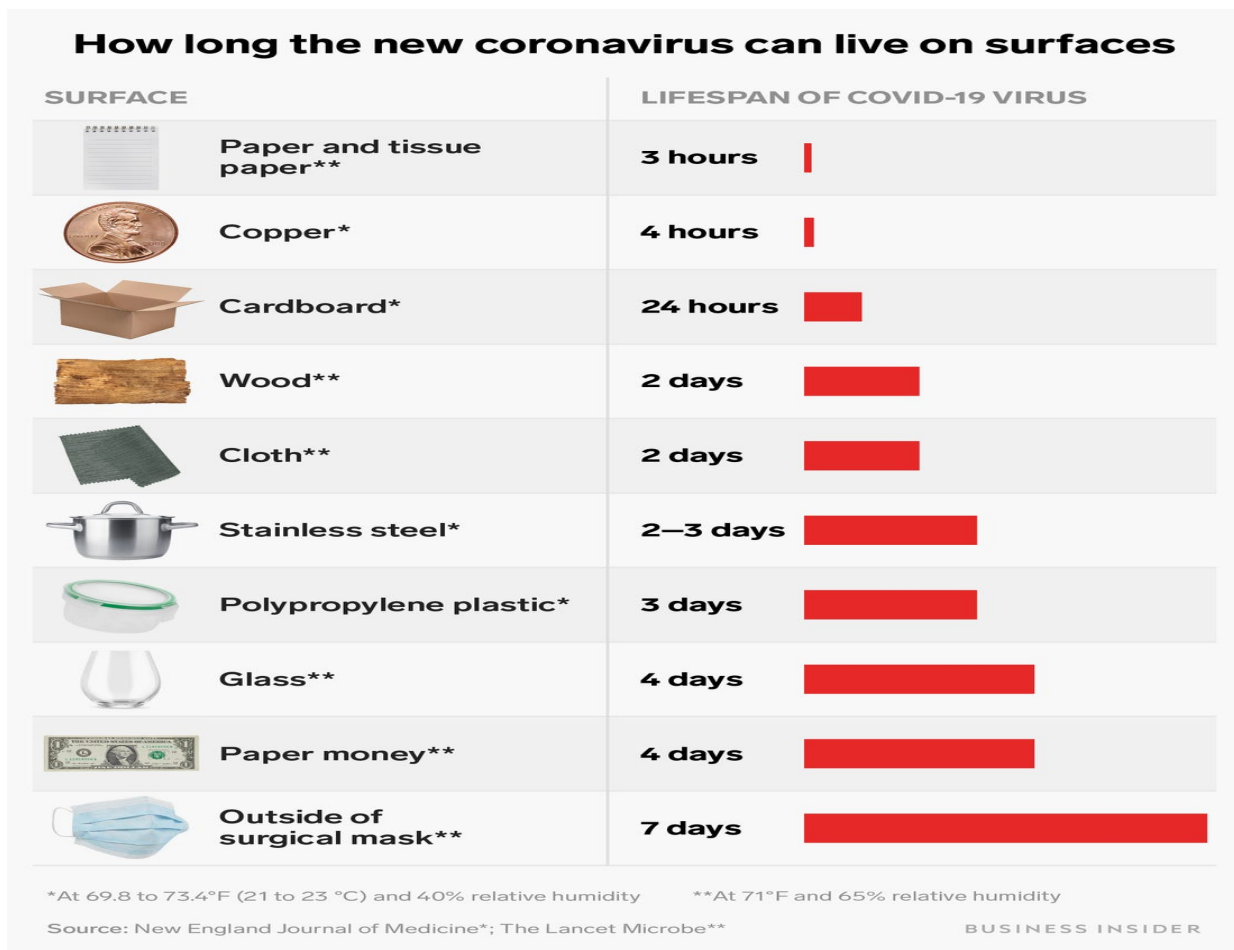
- a) Reading area of the library including reading table chair floor area.
- b) Circulation counters area.
- c) The OPAC search area.
- d) The property counters area.
- e) The staff working area or library different sections.
- f) The digital Library area.
- g) The library stock area, where the books Journals, Magazines, and back volumes are kept in the library.
- h) Acquisition section.

- i) Periodical subscription section.
- j) Near bio-metric centre or where attendance of staff is taken such place need to be quarantined.

5. The lifetime of corona virus on different materials:

The lifetime or leaving time of Corona virus on different materials as said by the experts are as below:

A research article published in New England Journal of Medicine says that how long COVID-19 can live on common surface metals as below



(Source of this image is New England journals of Medicine)

6. Procedure to carry out the Quarantine process in the library:

6.1 Initially, all the library surrounding the need to be cleaned, and once all the library doors, Windows, furniture fixtures need to be cleaned using any anti germ liquid.

6.2 Quarantine of circulation area and returned library books by users. If the issued book is in demand and other users need the same book that time the book maybe get back to the library and

once the book is returned to the library such books can be collected and kept in the specified area inside the library (before that the librarian need to identify the separate location to collect and keep such books for the purpose of quarantine) the return book need to be kept in an isolated area for the period of 24 hours because corona virus survives on cardboard, paper jacket materials for 24 hours.

The staff who manage, such books need to write down the return time of book duration, labeling, and quarantining period by wearing hand gloves. After completing of quarantine period of 24 hours such books may be taken to stock area by using an air dryer to dry and blow the head air on the book jacket.

After that the library staff follows the SOP (Standard operating Procedure) in the library to prevent the spread of virus.

7. Some other suggestion to prevent the spread of corona virus in the library:

1. The duration of the overdue period may be extended for some more time with the approval of administration.
2. Similarly the charges may be waived off for such books that are overdue.
3. The eBook of high demand title may be purchased in library to prevent the spread of corona virus in the library.
3. The user can make use of OPAC facility to search the book instead of searching the book in the library or in the racks. It also helps in avoiding the spread of virus.
4. If the required book is available in the library after searching in OPAC the same title may be requested through the mail to the library staff for issue purpose library staff should make arrangement for the same. It also helps in avoiding virus spread.
5. To avoid the spread of corona virus in the library, access of library for users may be restricted by converting open access system to close access system for some period or until this problem of corona complete.
6. The library cards need to be handled by library staff only, users need not touch the library card and book cards.
7. During the issue of library books users need to maintain social distancing between them otherwise they can come and collect the book on allotted time by library staff.
8. The library may provide the table of content services for newly arrived books along with high demeaned books through OPAC.
9. Till the complete of corona virus issue library can plan for subscribe of e-news papers, e-journals, e-magazine instead of print sources.
10. For return of books RFID self check in stations can be installed. The books returned through self check in station quarantine need to be followed thoroughly.

8. Quarantine of reading area:

Once the user started coming to library and started using the reading area or reading room the quarantine of such places is essential to avoid the spread of virus after use of reader. Practically it is very difficult to quarantine the reading table, chair every use of different reader, following are some of the suggestions to avoid spread of virus in reading area of the library.

- 1) Before entering the reading area users need to wash their hands properly and should use the sanitizer.
- 2) If possible allot reading area per person from morning to till closing time of library for regular users of the library.
- 3) Provide the electronic content to users and motivate them to read in the rooms instead of library until unless very essential to read in library.
- 4) Frequently the reading area need to be sanitized to avoid the spread of virus.
- 5) All the windows, doors of reading area need to be opened so that users can come and use and walkout without touching the library furniture's and fixtures much.

9. Quarantine of Digital Library or Computer Centre:

The trend and the usage of computers by current generation students which are kept in the library for the accessing of the digital library resources or electronic content have become the much needed devices as equal to print books of library. So the quarantine of such computers dedicated for students is also important. Following are some of the methods which may be followed for quarantine of computers and procedures to avoid the spread of corona virus.

9.1 All the students are requested to use the personal computers more until unless it is very essential to use the computers kept in the library.

9.2 The students who don't have personal computers can try to use the available library computers by following this procedure:

- a) Before entering in to digital library students need to wash the hands properly,
- b) Clean the hands using hand sanitizer,
- c) Wear the mask compulsory till the time use of digital library.
- d) Maintain distance between users.
- e) Use only mouse and keyboard other parts of computer should not be touched by users.
- f) During this period avoid the use of pen drive, Key chain, wallet in the digital library.
- g) Try to use the online storage devices to store your data.
- h) If any user feel uneasy don't allow such user in to digital library advise them to use the personal device.

3. After use of digital library by students or by users before closing it properly clean all the key board, mouse, computer table, chair and other used places need to be sanitized properly once in a day that to evening time is ideal.
4. Library need to make the provision to access all the subscribed electronic content by user from their home during this lockdown period using remote access facility, once they started to coming to library motivate them to use more and more electronic content for academic purpose.
5. Try to made available copyright free print content into digital content by converting them in proper manner for academic use.
6. Institute need to take care of internet availability in the campus for students use for accessing the online resources otherwise all will start rush towards use of print resources of library which may cause spread of virus.

Conclusion: The need of taking these preventative measures in the library are very essential for both library staff and for library users. Because once the infection spreads in the library, quarantine of library is very difficult because each and every item in the library need to be quarantined which causes the loss of library service for such period and it is time consuming and it involves more financial expenditure which costs more. It is better that taking proper preventive measures we can save the time of the user as well as we can save the life of the users.

Reference:

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