

EXTENDED CLOSURE BEST PRACTICES

Below are the steps that any Minerva member library should take in the event of an extended closure (defined as a minimum of **14 calendar days**), whether planned or unplanned.

The below steps are to be used **ONLY** in the event of a full closure where there are no van deliveries or circulation of materials. If the library remains staffed and is still circulating materials through curbside pickup, remote delivery, window delivery, etc., this process is not necessary.

No matter the situation, planned or unplanned, the primary steps in closing a Minerva library are:

- Suspend interlibrary loan requesting
- Suspend local requesting
- Suspend van delivery
- Announcement to both local patrons and other Minerva libraries
- Adjustment of due dates for local items currently checked out

To expand on the above points:

Suspend interlibrary loan requesting: This is done by submitting a ticket to Maine InfoNet. This will turn off the ability for patrons of a closed library to request new materials. The purpose of turning off requesting is to prevent items belonging to other libraries from being paged, set to transit, and then held in limbo at the warehouse until the local library reopens.

Suspend local requesting: This is done by submitting a ticket to Maine InfoNet. This suspends the ability to request items from the closed library's collection. When a patron searches the OPAC, they will see the tag TEMPORARY CLOSURE on the items belonging to the closed library. This prevents other libraries from requesting items from a collection that is not unavailable. This also helps prevent a bottle-neck of requests once the system is turned back on.

Suspend van delivery: This is done by directly contacting the van delivery service, which can be found at <https://www.maine.gov/msl/libs/interlib/delivery.shtml>. This stops the van delivery from making unnecessary stops when items are not available to be picked up or dropped off.

Announcement to libraries: Communications with partner libraries are highly important for several reasons. The closure should be announced to the library community through the Minerva-L and ME-LIBS listservs. The announcement will provide the opportunity for member libraries to hold or otherwise properly route items belonging to the closed library so they don't pile up at the warehouse.

Community Announcement: Telling patrons that your library will be closed is of the utmost importance in the process. In alerting the local community, there are several Minerva-related issues that need to be considered. While it is possible to change the due date of local items checked out to local patrons for the duration of your closure, it is not possible to do the same with Minerva loans. Communicating this to your patrons is important. If a closed library informs their patrons to simply hold onto all of their checked out items for the duration of the closure, that patron will start receiving overdue notices for

Minerva loans, as well as bills for replacement if any items are checked out for more than 20 days beyond the due date. This may cause confusion, frustration, and anger on the part of the patrons who were told to hold onto their items.

PLANNED CLOSURES

It is strongly recommended that you begin implementation of extended closure practices **5 to 10 business days prior to closing the doors**, especially for those items that require the assistance of Maine InfoNet.

In the event of a planned closure, please:

- Submit a ticket to Maine InfoNet (<https://maineinfonet.freshdesk.com/support/login>) informing them of the closure, the expected date the library will be closed, the planned re-opening date, and if you require adjustment of due dates on currently checked out local items (see below for due-date details).
 - Maine InfoNet will suspend requesting for the closing library's patrons until the library is reopened.
 - Maine InfoNet will update the status of the library's collection to TEMPORARY CLOSURE.
 - Maine InfoNet, if requested, will adjust the due dates of items checked out to the closing library's patrons for *items that belong to the closing library*.
 - NOTE: Due dates for Minerva loans will **not** be automatically changed.
- Inform Freedom Express / van delivery of the closure dates (<https://www.maine.gov/msl/lib/interlib/illfeedback.htm>)
- At the least, post notification of the closure on ME-LIBS and MINERVA-L

Due dates and returns

Requesting a due date change from Maine InfoNet will NOT change the due dates of materials that belong to another library and were requested through Minerva. These dates will remain the same as they were at the time of checkout.

Unless alternative plans are implemented between the closed library and the item's home library, standard Minerva Billing Procedures may proceed (<https://www.maineinfonet.org/minerva/governance/policies/billing/>).

Patrons of the closed library will still receive overdue and / or billing notices from items requested through Minerva.

It is recommended, if geographically possible, to instruct patrons to return Minerva items to other Minerva libraries to avoid overdue notices and bills. If alternate drop off locations are not possible, it is recommended that you create a list of non-local items checked out to local patrons, and contact the owning libraries for suggestions and/or leniency on the standard billing model.

Requesting

In the event of a full closure, new requests from the closed library's patrons should be suspended until the library is operational through the procedures listed above. However, existing holds placed prior to the closure will still be active.

There are several ways to deal with this situation. Here are the options and drawbacks of each option.

When an item is scanned and a request message appears that sends the item to a closed library, here are the options:

- Scan the item, fulfill the hold, and send it out on the van.
 - o Pros: Once the library re-opens, the item will be delivered in short order.
 - o Cons: The item becomes unavailable for others users (both local and system-wide) and forces the van delivery service to act as a warehouse.
- Scan the item, fulfill the hold, and set it aside until the library re-opens
 - o Pros: The item will arrive shortly after opening for the requesting patron.
 - o Cons: The item is unavailable for an extended period of time for users. This forces Minerva member libraries to act as a warehouse for requested items.
- Scan the item, select CHECKIN-IN, DO NOT FULFILL HOLD, carry on with your merry business
 - o Pros: The item is still available to patrons who have an open library and not stored in a warehouse
 - o Cons: If it is a single request with multiple copies available, the request will re-appear on the paging list for three days. At that point in time, the request will move to a different library that must make a similar decision. If the request is for a high demand item with multiple holds, this prevents the item from being sent to requesting patrons with an open library.

UNPLANNED / EMERGENCY CLOSURES

In the event of a sudden and unplanned closure that will last for more than two-weeks (examples of this may include pandemics, burst pipes, fire, theft, etc.), please:

- o Submit a ticket to Maine InfoNet (<https://maineinfonet.freshdesk.com/support/login>) informing them of the closure, the expected date the library will be closed, the planned re-opening date if applicable, and if you require adjusting of due dates on currently checked out items (see below for due-date details).
 - Maine InfoNet will suspend requesting for the closing library's patrons until the library is reopened.
 - Maine InfoNet will update the status of the library's collection to TEMPORARY CLOSURE.

- Maine InfoNet, if requested, will adjust the due dates of items checked out to the closing library's patrons for *items that belong to the closing library*.
 - NOTE: Due dates for Minerva loans will **not** be automatically changed.
- Inform Freedom Express / van delivery of the closure dates
(<https://www.maine.gov/msl/libs/interlib/illfeedback.htm>)
- At the least, post notification of the closure on ME-LIBS and MINERVA-L

Emergency Adjustment of Due Dates

Due dates may be adjusted per the policy below:

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EMERGENCY MINERVA LOAN DUE DATE EXTENSION

Minerva libraries that experience *unplanned*, emergency situations which require the temporary cessation of standard operating procedures may request an automatic due date extension of two weeks for all non-local items requested through Minerva.

This policy is intended to be used during times that require suspension of van deliveries, when there is an inability to check in materials returned by local users, or when similar situations arise that make the normal flow of operations related to interlibrary loan impossible.

This extension will NOT be applied to materials that have already been marked as BILLED.

To request an automatic due date extension, the library must submit a ticket to Maine InfoNet and make an announcement over MELIBS and/or MINERVA-L giving a brief overview of the library's status and reason for the extension.

Only one, two week extension may be granted under this policy per emergency event. If the situation requiring an automatic extension continues beyond two weeks, due dates and Minerva bills must be dealt with on a library-to-library basis.

The Executive Board reserves the right to seek further information regarding emergency due date extensions. If a library found is found to be abusing the policy, the Executive Board may either deny the request or seek further sanctions.

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Due dates and returns after Emergency Adjustment of Due Dates

Unless alternative plans are implemented between the closed library and the item's home library, standard Minerva Billing Procedures may proceed after the Emergency Due Date Extension has lapsed.
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Patrons of the closed library will still receive overdue and / or billing notices from items requested through Minerva.

It is recommended, if geographically possible, to instruct patrons to Minerva items to other Minerva libraries to avoid overdue notices and bills. If alternate drop off locations are not possible, it is recommended that you create a list of non-local items checked out to local patrons, and contact the owning libraries for suggestions and/or leniency on the standard billing model.

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Things to Keep in Mind

For local items checked out to your patrons, there is an inexhaustible amount of time that may be added to the due date. If, for whatever reason, the closure is extending beyond original predictions, you may submit a ticket to Maine InfoNet and have local due dates adjusted to reflect the updated timeline.

Remember, this due date change only affects your local items, not other Minerva items requested through the system.

Re-Opening

First off – congratulations! You survived!

Here are suggestions on creating the “easiest” path to resumption of standard library services. As with a planned closure, it is best to allow 5 to 10 business days for the process to evolve.

- 1) Contact Maine InfoNet. At your request, they can:
 1. Reactivate your patron’s accounts so they may start requesting again
 2. “Turn on” your collection so available items are listed as AVAILABLE and not TEMPORARY CLOSURE
- 2) Contact van delivery
Request the resumption of van delivery. It is recommended to have van delivery resume prior to the re-opening of your doors. This will allow your library time to receive the pent up items that have lingered in the system since the closure, and will allow you to clear out the incoming holds for items that were stuck during closure.
- 3) Re-open book drop prior to fully opening
Since there will be a pent up flood of incoming materials, it is suggested that you re-open the book drop prior to opening the doors. This will allow staff the time to work through the back log of materials without having a flood of people at the desk or in the building.
- 4) Announce re-opening
Give both your community and the Minerva Library community advanced notice about the re-opening.
- 5) Start pulling requested items.
A day or two prior to opening the doors, resume pulling requested materials. This again will help lessen the back-log of requests prior to the flood of humans in the building.
- 6) Create a list of overdue items and/or billed patrons
Start early making efforts to communicate to your patrons that items are expected back. After a prolonged closure, this can be a difficult task – especially if the items are non-local and working against the Minerva billing cycle.