

Library Service Hours Policy

Policy Level:	Library Board
Author:	CEO and Chief Librarian
Review Period:	2 years
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POLICY PURPOSE

This policy provides the framework for the service hours at HPL locations.

KEY POINTS SUMMARY

- The Library Board establishes the standard service hours
- To ensure we maintain our facilities properly and safely, the Chief Librarian/CEO or designate is authorized to temporarily close locations or adjust opening and closing times
- Disruption in service hours requires prompt notification and the priority is to restore service promptly and safely
- Several core principles inform decision-making about Library service hours

DEFINITIONS

Central Library – the main location where Members can visit to get access to materials not available at other locations and is distinguished by its large size.

Branch - a physical library location situated in a Hamilton neighbourhood. There are 23 locations distributed throughout the City from Stoney Creek to Freelon to Lynden to Binbrook.

Regional Branch – a physical library with additional services and resources available beyond physical collections, such as Makerspaces, ample study spaces and more public computers. It is staffed for full public service hours, with study halls covered by security staff. It is a larger branch location in square footage.

Community Branch – a physical library with services and resources available such as study spaces, public computers and physical library collections. The Library is staffed for full public service hours and is a mid-sized location in square footage.

Rural Branch – a physical library with services and resources available in a smaller footprint compared to Community branches. Staffed for public service hours with some locations also using Extended Access technology to increase service hours to Members who opt-in for the service. Supported video reference is available during Extended Access times.

AskHPL – a library service Members can access by phone (905.546.3200), email (askhpl@hpl.ca) or chat during open hours.) or chat during open hours.

Virtual Branch- a virtual library Members can access 24/7 at <https://www.hpl.ca/> to read, watch, listen or learn.

POLICY DETAILS

- The Library Board determines the standard service hours of the Hamilton Public Library.
- With disruptions to standard service hours, the priority is to provide prompt notification and restore service as soon as it is safe.
- To protect the safety of Staff and Library Members during exceptional circumstances (facility emergencies, inclement weather, declared emergencies) the CEO/Chief Librarian is authorized to temporarily suspend standard library service. The Chief Librarian/CEO will ensure the Library Board is properly informed of service changes.
- Planned closures that are discretionary in nature (i.e: Staff Learning and Development Day) require prior Board approval.
- The Board will be informed of mandatory planned closures to ensure facility maintenance or to complete Board-approved capital projects. With potential longer-term disruptions, such as major renovations of existing spaces, Staff will work with the Library Board to determine appropriate alternatives.

Core Principles Governing HPL Service Hours

When determining Library service hours, HPL will balance factors to ensure service hours are appropriately assigned to support long-term positive impacts on individuals and the communities we serve. The following core principles will be used to inform decision making:

- **Financial Sustainability** – Library service hours require operating funds to adequately staff our Libraries. The overall allocation of service hours will be sustainable, to adhere to the annually approved operating budget.
- **Community Needs and Impact** – HPL provides a strong base level of service everywhere, while we use our largest/busiest facilities to offer the most hours of service.
- **Geographical Distribution** – HPL ensures the mix of hours creates a fair distribution of services in all regions of the City.
- **Simplicity and Consistency** – We focus on establishing service hours that are easily understood and simple to communicate.
- **Serving Priority Neighbourhoods** – We will monitor demographics and reports like Code Redⁱⁱⁱ and Vital Signsⁱⁱⁱ to ensure we place an emphasis on providing extra supports in parts of the City where more people have less resources and access.
- **Evaluation and Responding to Changes** – Changes to Library service hours often take time to show impacts on usage and can easily create confusion for Members. HPL aims to offer relative stability with service hours but will do periodic reviews to ensure the balance of service is appropriately allocated.

Other Services

HPL has a long history of providing innovative services that enable us to extend our reach. Library programs, outreach and attending community events are covered in other policies. Specific areas of service that impact our overall service delivery include:

Bookmobiles – Bookmobiles offer an alternative to Library service that enables HPL to reach areas where we lack an adequate physical presence. Staff will report annually on the Bookmobile schedule and provide updates when schedule changes are required.

Extended Access – a service available at some rural locations that allows Members who opt-in access to the physical location when Staff are not on site, before or after hours. Remote Staff support is available to Members and hours are set within standard service hours.

After Hours Study Halls – a service available in select locations where the Library remains open beyond regular hours without Staff present. Unlike Extended Access, only security guards are present during After Hours Study Halls. Registration is not required.

Study halls are located regionally to support learning and are self-service.

- Study Halls are supervised by a security guard.
- Members accessing Study Hall locations need to show their Library card.
- Parents/Guardians and/or caregivers must be present with children 14 years and younger during Study Halls.

Standard Service Hours								
	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	Open Hrs/ Week
Central	8-8	8-8	8-8	8-8	8-6	8-5	12-5	72
Regional Branches								
Dundas	9-8	9-8	9-8	9-8	9-6	9-5	1-5	65
Red Hill	9-8	9-8	9-8	9-8	9-6	9-5	1-5	65
Terryberry	9-8	9-8	9-8	9-8	9-6	9-5	1-5	65
Turner Park	9-8	9-8	9-8	9-8	9-6	9-5	1-5	65
Waterdown	9-8	9-8	9-8	9-8	9-6	9-5	1-5	65
Valley Park	9-8	9-8	9-8	9-8	9-6	9-5	1-5	65
Community Branches								
Ancaster	9-7	9-7	9-7	9-7	9-6	9-5	---	57
Barton	9-7	9-7	9-7	9-7	9-6	9-5	---	57
Kenilworth	9-7	9-7	9-7	9-7	9-6	9-5	---	57
Binbrook	9-7	9-7	9-7	9-7	9-6	9-5	---	57

Concession	9-7	9-7	9-7	9-7	9-6	9-5	---	57
Sherwood	9-7	9-7	9-7	9-7	9-6	9-5	---	57
Locke	9-7	9-7	9-7	9-7	9-6	9-5	---	57
Westdale	9-7	9-7	9-7	9-7	9-6	9-5	---	57
Parkdale	9-7	9-7	9-7	9-7	9-6	9-5	---	57
Saltfleet	9-7	9-7	9-7	9-7	9-6	9-5	---	57
Stoney Creek	9-7	9-7	9-7	9-7	9-6	9-5	---	57
Rural (Extended Access)								
Carlisle	9-8	9-8	9-8	9-8	9-6	9-5	-	61
Freelton	9-8	9-8	9-8	9-8	9-6	9-5	---	61
Greenville	9-8	9-8	9-8	9-8	9-6	9-5	---	61
Lynden	9-8	9-8	9-8	9-8	9-6	9-5	---	61
Rural (Without Extended Access)*								
Mount Hope	1-6	10-3	1-6	10-3	1-6	12-5	---	30
Total Hours	1349	1064						1363

*Extended Access is planned for Mount Hope upon renovation.

APPROVAL HISTORY

December 2014; December 2017; December 2018; December 2021; June 2024

<https://www.thespec.com/news/hamilton-region/2019/02/28/code-red-10-years-later.html>

<https://hamiltoncommunityfoundation.ca/vital-signs/>