




# Subdirección Traducciones

Tel: (011) 4378-5533

Alsina 1835, 3.º piso. CABA  
traducciones@bcn.gob.ar

[www.bcn.gob.ar](http://www.bcn.gob.ar)





# **Prevention Guidelines for the Upcoming Reopening of the BCN in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic**

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Año del **General Manuel Belgrano**



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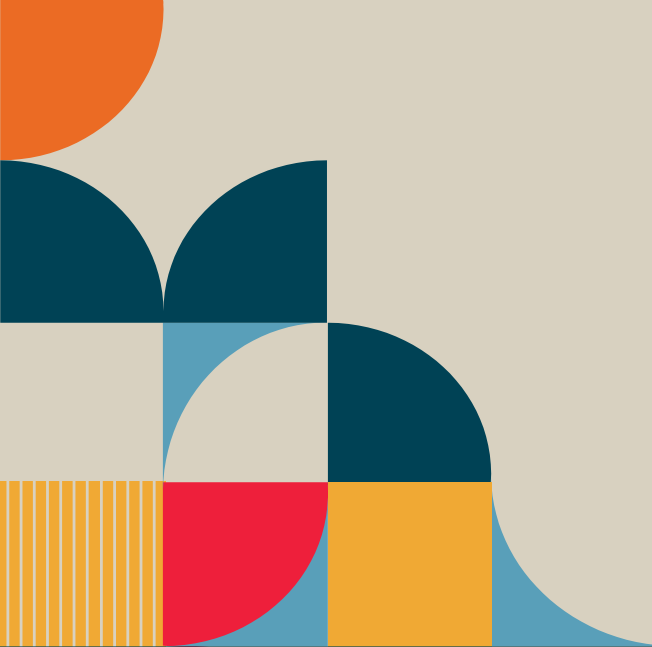
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01.

**Introduction**

## 01. Introduction

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic that the world is facing, libraries and other institutions have interrupted their on-site activities and strengthened their online services

In this context, the Library of the National Congress (BCN, by its Spanish acronym) has made available new virtual resources, such as workshops, courses and activities for all ages, and a wide range of digital publications that can be downloaded from the Library's website.

The BCN has always been a key community hub and has maintained active contact with its users through the incorporation of new digital services and interaction in social media.

We now need to think about guidelines for its reopening, as soon as it is possible to do so, and as safely as possible for both users and staff. This transition to a "new normal" will be done in phases, which will gradually incorporate the institution's library services, in full compliance with public health protection measures.

The BCN will continue to reinvent itself in order to go on providing access to information and culture to all. At this particular time, we feel compelled to find new ways to achieve our goal of assisting the community safely and with quality services.

# 02.

## **Preventive Measures in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic**

Remote Work  
Minimum Shifts for Essential Services  
Staff Access and Movement  
User Service Restrictions  
Access Control

## 02. Preventive Measures in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

The Library is currently closed to the public, with minimum shifts for essential tasks, following a protocol based on the recommendations of the National Health Ministry and the World Health Organization (WHO).

Through different administrative documents (Provisions 15/20 and 16/20), the BCN has established regulations for its staff. However, until the transition to the “new normal” is completed, it will be important to encourage access to digital documents and online services.

### Remote Work

Connected Remote Work (TCR, by its Spanish acronym) was established for all staff not engaged in essential tasks.

### Minimum Shifts for Essential Services

Only minimum shifts have been maintained in essential areas which, due to their nature, cannot completely suspend their activities, such as payment of suppliers, services and salaries; security, cleaning and maintenance of buildings; provision of basic IT services; processing of administrative records; legal analysis and drafting of Provisions.



## **02. Preventive Measures in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic**

### **Staff Access and Movement**

It is very important to avoid staff movement in areas other than those assigned for carrying out their tasks.

If possible, the use of stairs to move within the BCN's buildings should be prioritized. If there is no option but to use an elevator, it should be used by only one person at a time.

### **User Services**

The BCN closed all its user service premises: reading rooms and the cultural center. It migrated its services and activities to an online model, through its website and social media.

# 03.

## **Care, Safety and Hygiene Measures**

Personal Care and Hygiene  
Personal Protection Items

Disinfection of Buildings, Offices and Workplaces

Hygiene Items

Disinfection of Workplaces (See Appendix 2)

## 03. Care, Safety and Hygiene Measures

The staff must strictly comply with the basic hygiene and safety measures established by Health Authorities and recommended by the World Health Organization.

See details in the “Protocol of Actions to Prevent COVID-19”, Provision 16/20.

### Personal Care and Hygiene

Proper hand washing is essential: this means doing it frequently and for at least 40-60 seconds.

Hand washing is recommended after coughing or sneezing; after touching eyes, nose or mouth; before, during and after handling food; before eating; and after using the toilet.

If washing hands with soap and water is difficult or not possible (while moving from one place to another, for example), it is recommended to use alcoholic gel frequently and for at least 20-30 seconds.

When coughing or sneezing, both nose and mouth should be covered with the flexed elbow or a tissue, which should be disposed of immediately without keeping it in a pocket or handbag.

Other recommendations include:

Maintaining prescribed social distancing, bearing in mind that there can be asymptomatic cases. Avoiding handshakes, hugs or kisses.

Avoiding meetings where social distancing is difficult to maintain.

Sitting at your desk with proper social distancing.

## **03. Care, Safety and Hygiene Measures**

Using kitchens, toilets and common areas one person at a time.  
Avoiding sharing mate, cutlery, plates or glasses, hygiene and protection items, or personal objects.  
Maximizing safety measures when interacting with other persons or exchanging objects (money, credit cards, paper documents, etc.).  
Keeping office doors open to minimize the use of door handles.  
Opening doors and windows regularly to ensure airflow, even in winter.  
Keeping air conditioning systems clean in each office.

### **Personal Protection Items**

The use of facemasks covering nose, mouth and chin is mandatory for all the staff of the BCN during working hours and meetings (should these meetings be strictly necessary), and for any person entering any of BCN's buildings.

### **Disinfection and cleaning of buildings, offices and workplaces**

Buildings, offices and workplaces will be regularly disinfected to minimize the risk of transmission through contact with surfaces and objects: desks, handrails, handles, doors, elevator buttons, floors, toilets, etc.

## 03. Care, Safety and Hygiene Measures

This disinfection must be done on a daily basis and supported by the ventilation of spaces. Also, before applying disinfectants, surfaces must be cleaned with water and detergent in order to remove dirt physically.

**See Appendix 2.**

### Hygiene Items

Alcoholic gel and liquid soap dispensers will be made available (and refilled 3 times a day) in common areas, reception and security desks, entrances, user service desks and toilets.

# 04.

## **Intervention Protocol in Response to Potential COVID-19 Symptoms in the Workplace**

Communication and Detection of Symptoms  
Compatible with COVID-19

Safe Room for Isolation

Symptoms Compatible with COVID-19

(See Appendix 1)

## 04. **Intervention Protocol in Response to Potential COVID-19 Symptoms in the Workplace**

Staff members must give notice to the Medical Service Department if they experience any COVID-19-related symptoms while performing duties in their workplace.

### **Communication and Detection of Symptoms Compatible with COVID-19**

If a staff member is identified by their workmates or superiors as having any of the symptoms of COVID-19 listed in Appendix I, the following measures will be taken:

- Notice will be immediately given to the Medical Service Department of the Under-Directorate of Human Resources and Health and Safety at Work.
- Medical practitioners will assess the symptoms and, if appropriate, notice will be given to 107 (Emergency Medical Attention System, SAME, by its Spanish acronym), in compliance with the applicable protocol of the National Health Ministry.
- If medical practitioners confirm the symptoms in the staff member's workplace, they must inform the Security Directorate and immediately isolate the person in the assigned place ("Safe Room").
- The names of the staff members working in the affected area will be registered and all workmates with whom the person might have been in contact will be told to remain isolated at home for 14 running days, for which a relevant leave will be granted.

## 04. Intervention Protocol in Response to Potential COVID-19 Symptoms in the Workplace

- The affected office will be closed and thoroughly disinfected. It will be reopened 24 hours after completing the disinfection process, provided the health authority has approved said reopening.
- The Medical Service Department will carry out a personalized follow-up of the staff member with symptoms and their workmates.

### Safe Room for Isolation

The Library has a Safe Room for Isolation and direct accessways to provide health care safely in the presence of a potential case of COVID-19. The relevant medical protocol established by the National Health Ministry will be followed.



# 05.

## **Reorganization of on-site activities**

Planning of On-Site Activities

Preparation of Workplaces

Hygiene and Care of Rooms Open to the Public

Access and Movement Protocol in  
the Library's Buildings

Reorganization of User Services

Adaptation and Control of Entrances

Availability of Collections

Assigning of a Quarantine Area for Books and  
Documents

## **05. Reorganization of on-site activities**

The BCN is considering taking additional measures in different areas, following the recommendations of IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions) and the experience of foreign institutions that have reached other phases of operation. It should be highlighted that, as advised by IFLA, buildings should not be reopened hastily but in a gradual, phased manner, while also assessing risks and developing specific plans and protocols for each type of service, and then proceeding to implement them on a step-by-step basis.

### **Planning of On-Site Activities**

For most of the staff members to return to their workplaces two fundamental criteria should be met: progressiveness and adjustment of working hours. Staff members who cannot perform their duties on-site because they are included in risk groups will continue to work remotely.

All measures will be taken with a phased approach, such as the one applied by the National Government for different activities, in order to assess their development gradually and keep the focus on people's safety.

### **Preparation of Workplaces**

Protective shields or panels will be installed in user service desks. Existing furniture will be relocated to respect preventive social distancing.

## **05. Reorganization of on-site activities**

### **Hygiene and Care of Rooms Open to the Public**

All hard surfaces and objects in rooms, computers and lockers will be cleaned permanently. See Appendix 2.

All persons entering the BCN will have easy access to hygiene and disinfection materials: alcoholic gel dispensers will be available in entrances and on desks, as well as liquid soap, paper towels and toilet paper, which will be refilled or replaced on a regular basis.

The use of toys or virtual reality headsets will be avoided.

### **Access and Movement Protocol in the Library's Buildings**

All persons entering the Library of the National Congress must use protective equipment to cover their nose, mouth and chin.

People entering any of the BCN rooms will have their temperature taken at the forehead with an infrared thermometer placed at 5 cm, in order to check that they do not have symptoms of COVID-19.

If a person has a temperature of 37.5°C or higher, the temperature check will be repeated after two minutes, if possible in the forehead and forearm.

## **05. Reorganization of on-site activities**

If the measured temperature is 37.5°C or higher again, the person will be taken to the room assigned for isolation until medical practitioners arrive.

People isolated in this room should maintain a distance of at least 1.5 m among each other. After isolating people with high temperature, notice will be given to 107 (Emergency Medical Attention System, SAME, by its Spanish acronym).

### **Reorganization of User Services**

An assessment will be made to determine the opening hours of the Library's rooms.

Taking into consideration the experiences of other libraries around the world, different access systems will be analyzed: queues, tickets, booking through apps or telephone, booking visits for specific activities, etc.

In order to respect social distancing, the number of users allowed in each room will be reduced and some public areas will be restricted so as to better control the movement of users.

Consideration will be given to the establishment of restrictions on the time users can spend in the Library's rooms, and on the direction of their movements within these rooms.

Special opening hours will be established for vulnerable groups.

### **Adaptation and Control of Entrances**

User access will be adapted so that, while users are waiting to enter the building, they can stand at a 2-meter distance from each other. Before users enter the building, the security staff will check if they have symptoms of COVID-19.

**See Appendix I**

## **05. Reorganization of on-site activities**

### **Availability of Collections**

Free access collections located in the Library's rooms will not be available.

Interlibrary loans will be suspended.

### **Assigning of a Quarantine Area for Books and Documents**

Books, documents and other materials consulted by users will be sent to a quarantine area for a 14-day period. The entry and exit date of each item will be carefully recorded, in order to avoid mistakes that may cause accidents and force the institution to suspend a service again.

# 06.

## **Posters and Signs**

See Appendix 3: Leaflet with preventive  
measures

## 06. Posters and Signs

Promotion of safe habits through information for users and staff displayed in posters or through other means. See Appendix 3.

Communication with users through social media, offering verified information and recommendations of the National Health Ministry:

<https://www.argentina.gob.ar/coronavirus>

# 07.

## **Appendixes**

**Appendix 1: Symptoms Compatible with COVID-19**

**Appendix 2: Disinfection of Workplaces**

**Appendix 3: Leaflet with Preventive Measures**

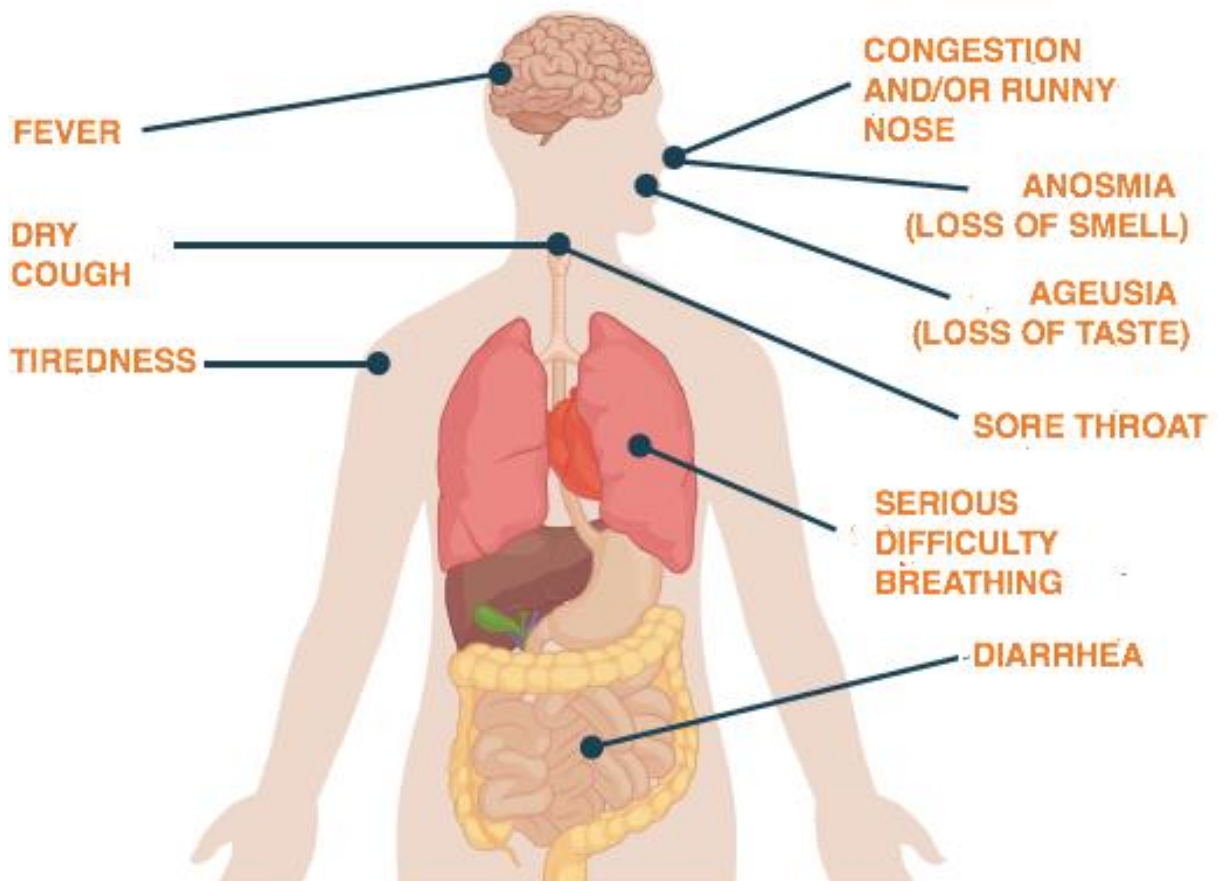


## 07. Appendixes

### Appendix 1: Symptoms compatible with COVID-19

#### COMMON SYMPTOMS

#### OTHER SYMPTOMS



## 07. Appendixes

### Appendix 2: Disinfection of Workplaces

Respiratory infections are often transmitted via contaminated surfaces and objects. Therefore, besides the regular cleaning, disinfection and fumigation of the Library's premises, staff members are strongly recommended to frequently disinfect their personal objects and all the surfaces with which they have contact.

#### Bleach Solution

A bleach solution rapidly inactivates viruses and microorganisms:  
Dilute 10 ml (2 tablespoons) of household bleach (55 gr/liter) in 1 liter of water.

If using commercial bleach with a concentration of 25 g/l, double the amount of bleach.

The disinfection power of this bleach solution lasts for only 24 hours.

**Important: always check the bleach expiration date.**

The use of gloves is recommended in order to avoid skin irritation.

#### 70% Alcohol Solution

For mobile phones, keyboards and other items or surfaces which cannot be cleaned with water and detergent or bleach, use wipes or tissues and a 70% alcohol solution.

## 07. Appendixes

### Appendix 3: Leaflet with Preventive Measures

# CORONAVIRUS COVID-19



#### STAFF ACCESS

Body temperature check  
Suspension of biometric fingerprint authentication requirement  
Mandatory use of facemasks



#### AT THE WORKPLACE

Minimize the number of people  
Rotate shifts  
Reinforce hygiene measures  
Do not share pens



#### ALL STAFF MEMBERS

Avoid elevators, or use them one person at a time  
Wash hands frequently

PEOPLE WITH SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19 MUST STAY AT HOME AND FOLLOW RELEVANT MEASURES. PEOPLE LIVING IN THE CITY OF BUENOS AIRES MUST CALL 107 AND THOSE LIVING IN THE PROVINCE OF BUENOS AIRES, 148.

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Año del **General Manuel Belgrano**

