

NORMAN CENTRAL LIBRARY REMEDIATION CLOSURE – NOVEMBER 2023 FREQUENTLY-ASKED-QUESTIONS

- **What has occurred at Norman Central Public Library?**

Norman Public Library Central, 103 W. Acres, is currently closed due to mold remediation. Officials were made aware of mold detection on November 15, 2023, and took steps to remediate as quickly as possible. The facility is owned by the City of Norman and operated through Pioneer Library System. Patron and staff safety remains the topmost priority of both entities.
- **How long will the library be closed?**

At this time the remediation contractor expects the central library location to be able to reopen in 5 months, pending remediation progress. The community will be kept apprised of significant updates to this situation.
- **How will Norman Central Public Library services be affected?**

The Norman Public Library Central, book return, and MovieBox will be closed during remediation. No fines will be charged for overdue materials. Patrons may manage library accounts through the [PLS Connect app](#). Pioneer Library System's [other 11 locations](#), two of which are located in Norman within five miles of the Central branch, remain open regular hours. As always, items can be browsed, picked up, and returned to any PLS location. Patrons can still engage with the library 24/7! Stay connected with PLS digitally through [instant downloads](#), [on-demand content](#), [streaming services](#), or in your community by visiting [24 Hour Library locations](#), [book lockers](#), [Story Walks](#), [solar benches](#), and more. Updates to library services will continue to be shared on <https://pioneerlibrarysystem.org> and PLS social media accounts (@pioneerlibrarysystem).
- **How/who was made aware of the mold detection?**

City staff hired a contractor to examine water intrusion issues in recent weeks and during that examination, indications of possible mold were visible and a mold test was requested by city staff immediately. Under the direction of Parks & Recreation of the City of Norman, who is responsible for building maintenance of City-owned facilities through one of its divisions, a test was scheduled at the first available date: November 14, 2023. Contractors returned results to our Parks & Recreation team on November 15, 2023, and collaborative communication to let the public and applicable parties know of the discovery ensued.
- **Has mold been a problem in the central branch previously?**

No, but roof leaks have been observed over the past several years and the City of Norman has worked with contractors to remedy issues of which we were made aware. Remedies have included the replacement of the lower roof in 2020, as well as sealing windows and annual roof repairs. Mold has now been discovered within cavities of the facility and initial survey work shows that due to normal range humidity levels maintained, visible mold was slow to appear.
- **Where was the mold found?**

Initially, six areas of concern included: A staff office on level one, SW Corner of level one, study rooms on level two, Pioneer Room of level three, SE Bay Windows, and the fire escape stairwell.

As the investigation continued following November 16, more areas of concern on each level of the library were discovered by the contractor. See general information on mold at <https://www.epa.gov/mold/mold-frequently-asked-questions>.

- **What contractor is carrying out remediation services?**
Cavins Disaster Response Group is carrying out the remediation work, which is multifaceted but will include fogging, hepa vacuuming, air scrubbing, isolation and ongoing air testing.
- **In a facility only 4 years old, why has this issue occurred?**
Additional investigation by expert parties is needed to fully evaluate the cause and this will take place. However, at this time, water intrusion stemming from roof and envelope issues are believed to have contributed to mold growth. As remediation continues, applicable contractors will determine the extent of damage and its cause. During this process, City staff intends to be in communication with entities that helped design and construct the building in 2019.
- **What about the mold discovered at the library?**
Molds are a natural part of the environment and can be found almost anywhere that moisture and oxygen are present. There are many types of mold and mold growth can occur on wood, paper, carpet, and insulation, among other things. The hazard of molds is relative and may be dependent on the type, degree, level of disturbance and other factors. The molds of concern identified in this instance include stachybotrys and fusarium. A digestible summary of findings and recommendations from the contractor should be made available in days to come and will be linked for the public to review.
- **What is next in remedying this issue?**
Services from Cavins Disaster Response Group will continue and the City of Norman has begun the process to hire a building envelope consultant. Fencing to prepare for necessary removal processes will soon occur outside of the facility. The community will be kept apprised of significant updates regarding this matter at Normanok.gov.