

NORMAN PUBLIC LIBRARY CENTRAL REMEDIATION CLOSURE 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 at normanok.gov.
- **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.

 - **To date, how much money has been spent in tending to the types of concerns listed above?**

Staff is pulling prior invoices to determine this amount. Charges to some work that took place may not have occurred as work was covered by warranty. Funds not covered were paid through a Capital roofing account allocated to Facility Maintenance.
- **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>. See a map of affected areas of the library, made available 11/28/23, [here](#).

- **What contractor is carrying out remediation services?**

Cavins 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. An initial, digestible summary of findings and recommendations from the contractor was made available to the public on 11/25/23 and can be found [here](#).
- **What is next in remedying this issue?**

Services from Cavins Group will continue. A contract proposal from a building envelope consultant is expected to be received by the City of Norman by December 1. Hiring of this consultant will allow for further inspection of any envelope issues that may be causing water intrusion to building cavities. Water intrusion must be addressed before further remediation can occur. 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.
- **Are books or other items within the library affected by mold exposure?**

At this time, contractors do not believe it likely that the vast majority of books or other items in common spaces were affected as humidity levels tested well and healthy air flow took place in these areas. Cavities of the building were the most affected by mold but random testing will occur to ensure object safety as this process continues.
- **Are mold issues believed to be the fault of either the architect or the builder?**

The architect of the facility was Meyer, Scherer & Rockcastle (MSR Design) and the builder of the facility was Flintco Construction. It is unknown at this time if mold issues were brought on by builder or design error but the City is engaging contractors that specialize in determining the cause of this issue. The City of Norman will work with any responsible parties to promptly resolve and remedy the issues with the building.
- **How much money has been spent on remediation processes currently taking place?**

At this time, the City of Norman is contracting with Cavins Group for emergency remediation services per hour. The City of Norman has not yet received an invoice for these services but expect to receive them on a bi-weekly basis. As the scope of this remediation work is extensive and determined by many factors, there is no estimate to relay. A copy of the contract between Cavins Group and the City of Norman can be found [here](#).
- **To the City's knowledge, have there been any reports of individuals becoming ill from mold exposure?**

At this time, the City is unaware of any reports of this nature. Those that may have concerns have the option to take necessary steps through a tort claim process with the City of Norman.