

26 October 2020

**TO: RAILS**

**FROM: Deirdre Brennan**

**SUBJECT: Reduction of Quarantine for items in RAILS delivery**

RAILS staff have continued to monitor the updated information coming from the REALM study. The most recent results ([Test 5 and the Literature Review](#)) were released on October 14<sup>th</sup>. RAILS also continues to monitor the developing infection rates throughout our Illinois service area and guidance released by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and other public health agencies.

The response of the literature review, as well as [a recent review of the REALM data by qualified staff from the Oregon Department of Health via the Oregon State Library](#) has led RAILS to determine that a shorter quarantine time for delivery materials is an appropriate response. After a careful review of this information, as well as our ongoing understanding of the most likely ways that the current iteration of the COVID-19 virus is transmitted, **RAILS is reducing the quarantine requirement for materials moving through delivery to 3 days (72 hours) effective Tuesday, October 27.**

The REALM literature review, which compared the results of the REALM study data with more than 500 scholarly articles that also study the COVID-19 virus, noted some important considerations for the information included in their study. As has been noted in other studies, the most likely way of transmitting COVID is through direct contact through people and through droplets passed between people. While there is a possibility of transmission through fomites, or infected objects, the risk is understood as considerably lower than person to person transmission. Other environmental conditions like air flow and quality, humidity, and temperature can also be a significant factor when it comes to how long the virus can survive on objects.

The most important tools for prevention and decontamination remain social distancing, hand washing and proper hygiene, mask and PPE usage, and when possible, fresh air and open spaces.

The Illinois State Library and State Archives have reached out to the Illinois Department of Public Health in hopes that they could help to issue guidance around the quarantine of library materials. They have not yet issued a response, but we are hopeful that some additional guidance could be offered in the future.

All of these factors played a part in RAILS' decision to move to a three day (72 hour) quarantine. This interpretation of the REALM results may differ from libraries' current practices, which are informed by local decisions about how best to protect their communities. Our recommendation when determining your own practice around handling and circulating materials safely is to continue to do so in consultation with local public health professionals and updated information as it becomes available.

Thank you for your continued attention and dedication to your library staff and communities during these times of uncertainty. We will continue to provide you with the best information and recommendations that we can.