



Branch District
Library

SAFETY & SECURITY WALK- THROUGH ASSESSMENT 2018

As part of an overall attempt to gain knowledge of the BDL Library Branches, I have been doing walk-throughs of the different branch locations. The intent is to not only get familiar with the Branches and staff but also to review Safety & Security. It is my goal to conduct walk throughs with all BDL Branches by May 21st Board meeting.

NOTE: This report is informational only. The recommendations listed are for the BDL Director to be used at her discretion.

I have listed each branch on a separate page along with my observations.

SUMMARY:

I found that all staff I spoke to were knowledgeable regarding their assigned branches. I was impressed with their passion and professionalism shown, and found that they are clearly an asset to the Branch District Library system.

OBSERVATIONS:

- All branches (except Coldwater) could use additional fire extinguishers. A small CO2 type would be good for the computer areas. A water type extinguisher for small paper fires would also be nice but is not a requirement.
- Three (3) of the six (6) branches, Bronson, Sherwood and Alganssee, did not have an active Fire/Smoke alarm system. Alarm systems are designed to alert either 911 or alarm company of a fire or smoke. All the branches had LAN lines and a possibility would be to have a system that uses the phone lines, i.e., ADT or Knight watch. In the event of a fire after hours, the alarm system would alert proper authorities.
- Emergency Evacuation Maps were not observed at any location. These are essential for staff and guests. The maps show exit routes along with fire extinguishers and pull stations if applicable. The maps would also show severe weather evacuation area.
- Quincy Branch has only one main entrance/exit. This could be a problem in the event of a fire or other emergency. A second exit located in the basement with access to it via the front entrance area. There is an elevator, but it should not be used during a fire.
- All staff should be trained in the use of portable fire extinguishers and AED units.

ALGANSEE:

This branch has the most interesting setup of all the BDL libraries. It is in a home/business setting. The structure is very old and cluttered. **I have some serious concerns about fire safety at this location.** Branch Manager is Janice Clark and I visited Janice on April 19th at 11:00am.

Observations:

- ***Fire Extinguishers*** One was observed near the front desk. It is an ABC type and branch manager states that she knows how to use it. **Recommend that another extinguisher be placed in this branch due to the clutter in back area. Maybe consider a “water type” which is easily serviced but may be too heavy for Janice.**
- ***Fire Safety/Alarm Systems*** This branch has none. There is no system to detect fire, smoke or heat that alerts Fire Department, 911 or other source. There is a smoke detector but it’s a home type and only alerts staff or patrons that are present when activated. After hours, no one would know of a fire until it was observed outside and by then it could be too late. **NOTE: I did notice a LAN line phone which could be used by private security company to install Fire/Smoke system. Companies use the phone lines and install monitoring devices that alert the alarm company of a problem. The company then alerts 911.**
- ***Emergency Exits*** There are several exits from the library. The main entrance is the most accessible for the library. The secondary exit is in a kitchen area that is very cluttered with combustible materials. Once you exit to secondary exit, there is a challenge getting off the porch. There is a third exit, but it goes through the store. BDL gave this branch an emergency ladder to be used via the restroom window. Unfortunately, staff may not be able to negotiate exit via window. **Recommend that secondary exit by kitchen, be cleared of clutter and made more accessible.**
- ***Emergency Evacuation Maps*** None located. **Recommend that emergency evacuation maps be put in place showing primary, secondary exits. Map should also show fire extinguisher location and severe weather shelter.**

NOTE: Severe Weather shelter is in the basement of this structure. It has uneven stairs and could be a hazard in the event of no power or use by elderly people. No emergency lighting was observed, making it more hazardous during loss of power.

The Algansee Branch is one of the oldest branches and safety is a concern. I observed several extension cords and wiring running under a rug/mat at the service desk, which could be a fire hazard. The lack of fire/smoke alarm system is also a major concern due to the building location. The building is also owned by a private citizen who runs a store in the other section of the building.

I recommend a serious look at this location for the safety of our assets, staff, and guests.

BRONSON:

I scheduled my visit with Branch Manager Lynnell Eash at 0900, April 3, 2018.

I was met by Lynnell where we entered through the new rear entrance. The library itself is located on the second floor of the building. The lower floor is used by the Township and, according to Lynnell, they have a very good working relationship. The layout of the Library is interesting and appears to be organized. I was impressed with the ability of the manager to use her cell phone to monitor the library cameras, when away from the library. This feature was set up by our BDL IT department and is a great feature.

Lynnell is very helpful and knowledgeable and runs a good library.

Observations:

- ***Fire Extinguishers*** only one extinguisher was observed on Library floor. Three more were observed in the lower level. The extinguishers found were the ABC type which work well on most fires. The drawback to the ABC powder type is that they will dispense a dry powder that will cover everything near fire area. They can be used on electrical fires (1000 volts) but can lead to costly repairs to other electronics near the discharge. **Recommend that we consider placement of small CO2 extinguishers in the computer lab and near the main server area for IT. I would also recommend a second ABC be placed in main library area or a small water type extinguisher for small paper fires.**
- ***Fire/Smoke Alarm System*** was not found at this location. There is a smoke detector by staff area, but it does not alert local 911 or Emergency Personnel. There is no fire alarm system to alert staff and guests of a Fire Emergency. Libraries by content, contain combustible materials which burn rapidly. **Recommend that a hard-wire fire/smoke alarm be placed in this branch that alerts 911 or an alarm company of a fire. These can be expensive and maybe the Township would consider sharing or paying for this feature. System should have both AUDIO and VISUAL indicators to ensure that our audio/visual impaired guests and staff are alerted properly.**
- ***Front door area*** has a half door with a dead bolt lock that leads to the basement. The deadbolt was easily defeated by moving the post. The lower level has many blind spots and unlockable doors. Unwanted person(s) or those seeking harm, can easily gain access and hide in certain areas. **Recommend full side steel door to prevent unauthorized access to basement area as well as keeping the door locked with only authorized people have the key. This would provide staff and guests an added layer of protection.**
- ***Emergency Evacuation Maps*** were not observed. Each area should have these maps showing exits, alarms and fire extinguisher as well as the route to take. They should also show severe weather shelter location.

COLDWATER:

The Coldwater Branch is the flagship for the Branch District Library. It is the largest branch and hosts the administrative offices. Branch Manager is Kimberly Feltner, who also serves as the Director of Public Services.

I was escorted on the tour of the building by John Rucker, who is the BDL Assistant Director and the Director of IT. John has extensive knowledge of the Coldwater branch and provided a lot of useful information.

Observations:

- **Fire Extinguishers** were observed on all floors. All were ABC type except for a CO2 in the IT office which houses the server system. **Recommend that all staff be trained in the use of Fire Extinguishers and add CO2 in area where the computer lab is.**
- **Fire Safety Systems** were found to be very good. There is an audible and visual alarm system through out the building. It also alerts Branch County 911 when system is activated. Smoke detectors were noted on all floors as well as emergency lighting.
- **Emergency Exits** were accessible from many areas. They are well marked and some needed staff keys to unlock inside doors. One exit I observed off the Teen Space was very concerning to me. Inside the stairway there is a lot of clutter or combustible materials. It appeared that it was being used as a storage area. Emergency exits should not have any type of clutter or storage. **Recommend clearing out emergency exits so that they are free egress with no clutter or hazards.**
- **Emergency Evacuation Maps** were not observed on any floor. **Maps should show primary exits, secondary exits, fire extinguishers and pull stations. Maps should also show severe weather shelter location.**
- **Security Cameras** This branch, which serves as the main branch, has many cameras in good locations. Only concern was the position of the monitor. That issue was addressed immediately.

Overall, the Coldwater Branch is one of the most up-to-date branches with professional staff.

QUINCY:

My meeting was scheduled with Lisa Wood, Branch Manager, at 1100 on April 3, 2018. Lisa was knowledgeable and very helpful. She also runs a clean and organized library.

Upon arrival, I entered through the front door, which is the only entrance/exit for the library. The actual library is on the second floor. I approached Branch Manager, Lisa Wood, who was assisting a patron at the desk. Lisa showed me around the library on the second floor. We then proceeded to the lower level. The lower level, which is also used by the Township, has a handicap/barrier-free entrance/exit door. It can be opened by intercom/camera from library staff area. Patrons must push button on the outside to get staff's attention. Staff can see who is at the door and then open. There is also a handicap push button on the inside for those wishing to exit. Our handicap guests and those needing a barrier-free entrance can use the elevator to gain access to second floor library. The front door has a tone that sounds when door is opened which alerts staff of incoming/outgoing persons. Right off the front door are stairs that lead to the lower level without restriction (no door or gate).

Observations:

- **Fire Extinguishers** Only one (1) was observed on main floor and three (3) in basement. I would recommend an additional extinguisher on main floor. A small CO2 might be useful for the computers in the event of a fire. A water extinguisher might also be an option for small paper fires.
- **Fire/Smoke Alarm System** This branch has an active Fire/Smoke alarm system that will alert 911 in the event of a fire or smoke. It also had visual and audible notification. Staff are trained on how to use extinguishers and AED.
- **Front Entrance Area** This area concerns me as the main library only has one entrance/exit. In the event of a fire or emergency, there should be another exit from main library. The front entrance has stairs that lead to the basement area where restrooms are located. It also contains space that the library uses for programs and access to the Township Office area. There is no door to prevent someone from entering that area. I would recommend that a steel door be placed in this area which would limit unauthorized entrance to this area. There is also no camera coverage in this area or basement area. **Recommend security camera be placed in lower level. Only one camera observed.**
- **Emergency Evacuation Maps** None observed but maps should show exit, fire extinguisher, and pull station.

SHERWOOD:

The Sherwood Branch Library is in the old Village/Township Fire Hall. The Library is also used by the Village for their Council Meetings. Traci Counterman is the Branch Manager. My visit took place on April 19th at 2:00pm.

Observations:

- ***Fire Extinguishers*** Only one was observed and it was in the area by the restroom. It is an ABC type. **Recommend at least one additional fire extinguisher be placed in this branch. A water type extinguisher may also be a consideration. They are easily serviced and work on trash/paper type fires.**
- ***Fire Safety System*** This branch does not have an audible/visual alarm system in place. I did observe smoke detectors that were put in place by the Fire Department prior to my visit. **NOTE: This branch also has a LAN line which could be used to install fire/smoke alert system via a private alarm company (i.e., ADT or other). The alarm company would be alerted to fire/smoke and notify 911.**
- ***Emergency Exits*** This branch has two emergency exits. One in the front (main entrance) and one out the rear area. Both are free of clutter and provide easy egress.
- ***Emergency Evacuation Maps*** None were observed in this branch. **Recommend that maps show primary, secondary exits. Also, map should show location of fire extinguisher(s) and severe weather shelter area.**

Overall, the Sherwood Branch is clean and well-organized but lacks a Fire/Smoke alarm system that would alert 911 in the event of a fire. Staff at this branch were very knowledgeable and Traci is very active with the local children.

UNION TOWNSHIP:

Lucille E. Dearth Union Township Library is the newest BDL Library. It opened in 2011 and Judy Gottschalk is the branch manager. My visit took place on April 10th, 2018.

Biggest problem noted was space for programs and storage. The Township Offices occupy the lower level of the building and the library cannot use this. However, it was also noted that the Village of Union City is storing some of the Library property, which speaks to the good relationship between the Village and Library.

Observations:

- ***Fire Extinguishers*** only one was observed and it was a ABC type extinguisher. The manager and her clerk are both knowledgeable on how to use the extinguisher. **Would recommend consideration of small CO2 for the computers and possibly a water extinguisher for small paper fires.**
- ***Fire Safety/Alarm Systems*** with the building being new, it has updated and current Fire, Smoke, and Heat detection systems in place. The fire alarm has both audible and visual notification inside and outside the library. In the event of a fire, the notification goes to 911 and audible alarms sounds outside of building.
- ***Emergency Exits***, the library has two exits to the outside and one secondary exit to the lower level which is normally locked, but staff have a key. Exits are clearly marked.
- ***Emergency Evacuation Maps*** were not observed. **Recommend that emergency maps be placed in the library that show primary, secondary and severe weather area. Map should also include fire extinguisher and pull station(s).**
- ***Security Cameras*** were recently installed by BDL IT Department and are in good locations.

Overall, Union Township branch is clean, free of clutter but needs more space. It is set up well where staff can observe most areas when the library is open. Judy does a great job interacting with the community and Community Unlimited.

Respectfully submitted by:

Tom Lowande, BDL Trustee

Footnote: Emergency evacuation maps and BDL Emergency Manual are in the process of be finalized and will be implemented once approved by the BDL Board. All staff should read and sign that they have read and understand the manual.