



Safety and Security Policy

POLICY: It is the policy of the Norfolk Public Library (NPL) to create and maintain a safe and secure environment, and in response to events that may affect patrons and Library operations. Safety and security is a shared responsibility. Library staff and patrons are responsible to make all reasonable efforts to ensure their safety and security while on Library premises.

DEFINITIONS:

Responsible person: an adult, guardian, or caregiver of a child

PROCEDURE:

In-Charge Responsibility, Chain of Command, and Resource Utilization

1. The Library personnel chain of command is: Director, Associate Director, Information Systems Librarian, Youth Services Librarian, Technical Services Librarian, staff on duty.
2. The person in charge of the Library at the time a safety or security event occurs remains in charge until someone higher up in the chain of command arrives and relieves them, or local authorities arrive and take command.
3. When a safety or security event occurs, the Director or designee determines whether additional staff is needed to manage the situation. The Director or their designee may confer with the Town Administrator and/or Chairperson of the Board of Library Trustees. The Director or their designee may assign staff special tasks, which are carried out to the best of each individual's ability. Town personnel bylaws and collective bargaining agreements determine staff compensation for time expended above normal working hours in response to safety and security events.
4. During and after an event, the Director or designee may contact the Massachusetts Library System and/or the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners as needed to discuss recovery and restoration of damaged materials.
5. The Town of Norfolk Facilities Department is responsible for maintenance and upkeep of the building, including installation and maintenance of alarm systems, heating/ventilation/air conditioning, water supply, plumbing, and fire alarm/fire suppression equipment.
6. A list of emergency contacts for all staff and volunteers is published and maintained by the Library Director. This list is for internal and Trustee use only. Staff members are responsible to notify the Director or their designee of changes to this information. The list is modified as changes occur.

Safety and Security Procedures

1. Procedures for managing the following safety and security events are included in the Safety and Security Procedures document which is available to Library staff.
2. The Library has 16 Safety and Security Procedures. These specific procedures are:
 - 1) Fire/Explosion/Building Collapse Procedure
 - 2) Medical Emergency Procedure (EMS/911 Required)
 - 3) Minor Injury/Accident Procedure (EMS/911 Not Required)
 - 4) Active Shooter Procedure
 - 5) Lockdown Procedure
 - 6) Lockout Procedure
 - 7) Suspicious Package Procedure
 - 8) Bomb Threat Procedures
 - 9) Suspected/Actual Weapon Procedure
 - 10) Severe Storm Procedure
 - 11) Flood/Water Leak Procedure
 - 12) Failure of Heating/Cooling/Electrical/Plumbing Systems
 - 13) Unattended Child Procedure
 - 14) Normal Closing Procedure
 - 15) Emergency Closing Procedure
 - 16) Normal Opening Procedure
3. The Library is outfitted with safety and security equipment as required by regulatory and governing bodies. Library staff undergo recurrent training in use of this equipment. Library staff takes actions to report and address observed safety and security risks consistent with the scope of their employment or job duties.
4. A person found to have intentionally and maliciously filed a false report of any safety or security condition in the Library may be banned from the Library, is held responsible for all costs incurred during response, and may be subject to criminal prosecution.

Conduct of Individuals on Library Premises

1. All persons on the Library premises are expected to conduct themselves in an orderly, safe and secure manner. Library staff maintains awareness of public conduct using staff observation, security equipment, and reports from Library patrons. Inappropriate behaviors are promptly addressed with responses proportionate to the behaviors.
2. Persons with bodily hygiene found offensive to staff and patrons are informed of their condition, and may be evicted from the Library. If an individual fails to comply with an eviction order, staff contacts Norfolk Police at 508-528-3206. An incident report is completed by the in-charge Library staff member.
3. The specific rules of conduct for persons on the NPL premises are in Appendix I.

Solicitation for Signatures

1. Ballot access and nomination paper signature solicitation is permitted, providing such activities do not interfere with patron access, and do not interfere with provision of library services.
2. Library staff may not actively participate or assist in any activity related to the solicitation of signatures for a petition of any kind while on duty in the library. Solicitation of signatures shall take place only in areas of the library open to the public and shall not be permitted in staff offices and workstations.
3. The Library Director or their designee may request any person found to be in violation of Library policy to leave the premises. Failure to comply with such a request may result in law enforcement response.

Staff Response to Safety and Security Concerns

1. NPL staff members are responsible to address safety and security concerns as they arise. Any staff member has the right to request assistance from other staff members. In turn, staff are expected to aid other staff members on request consistent with their abilities and competencies.
2. Any staff member may contact public safety authorities at any time to preserve his or her own safety or security, the safety or security of Library patrons and materials, or for assistance in enforcing policy and preserving the Library environment as defined by policies adopted by the Board of Library Trustees.
3. Any staff member observing suspected or actual criminal behaviors such as assault, robbery, theft, child pornography, child endangerment/neglect, vandalism, etc. shall contact the Norfolk Police Department immediately by the fastest means possible, followed by the supervising librarian and the Library Director. Staff takes no action that would endanger themselves or others while awaiting police response, but provides reasonable assistance to victim/s.
4. Any staff member observing behaviors inconsistent with NPL policy shall contact his/her immediate supervisor and the Library Director and are authorized to confront the individual/s involved if safe to do so.
5. The Library may request identification of any person on Library premises at any time. Refusal to identify oneself may result in verbal warning, eviction, banishment, and/or law enforcement response. Library staff reserves the right to create and obtain images of anyone on the Library premises as may be needed in connection with a safety or security concern or event.

Overview of Safety/Security Incident Response Procedures

1. In responding to safety and security incidents staff should:
 - Maintain calm.
 - Call 911 or use panic button. Remain on the line with the 911 operator until told to hang up.
 - Inform another staff member.
 - Inform the Library Director.
 - Seek to isolate the problem area.
 - Seek to control or eliminate the source of the problem.
 - Seek assistance from Library staff and patrons as necessary.
 - Keep entries and exits open and clear for emergency personnel.
 - Turn off electricity and water as needed.

- Prioritize protection of collection from most important to least.
 - Evacuate/close the building as necessary.
 - Inform and cooperate with public safety personnel and service providers.
2. The Director, designee, or the person in charge at the time a safety or security event occurs is the only person authorized to release information. All information relating to an event will be regarded as confidential and is released to authorized personnel only. "Authorized personnel" includes but is not limited to: staff members and their immediate families, emergency contacts, public safety personnel, health department staff, Board of Library Trustees, and town officials.
 3. Only the Library Director or their designee is permitted to release information to the press and media outlets. Social media is not used to release information, except only as may be approved by the Library Director.

Responsibility for Safety and Security

1. Every person on the NPL premises is responsible for the safety and security of their person and belongings.
2. Staff and patrons are responsible to take all reasonable steps to protect themselves and their personal property while on the NPL premises, including notification to Library staff of any safety or security concerns. Library staff escalates reported safety and security concerns to their supervisor and/or the Library Director.

Attending to Children

1. Parents attend to and protect their children and ensure their behavior is appropriate and in compliance with NPL policy at all times. Library staff are not responsible for supervision of children left unattended by their parents. Disruptive children are required to leave after receiving two verbal warnings. If there is reason to suspect child neglect or abuse, Library staff contacts Norfolk Police.
2. Children 7 years of age or younger must at all times be attended and directly and appropriately supervised by a responsible person (adult, guardian, or caregiver). Children between ages 8 and 10 may be left unattended for up to one half-hour in the Library by a responsible person who must remain in the Library building during the entire one half-hour period during which direct supervision is not being exercised. Exceptions may be made during scheduled children's Library programs at which time a parent or guardian may elect to be absent for the duration of the program.
3. Children 10 years of age and older may use the Library unattended, subject to all Library policies, rules and regulations.
4. The Norfolk Public Library assumes no responsibility for children of any age left unattended at the Library. Parents assume all liability for damage done by their children to the Library facility and materials. If a problem arises with a child of any age and staff cannot contact a parent or guardian, Norfolk Police are contacted at 508-528-3206.

Warning, Eviction, and Banishment

1. Violation of NPL policy or Rules of Conduct in Appendix I may result in verbal warning from a staff member, Librarian, or the Library Director.
2. Violation of NPL policy or Rules of Conduct may also result, depending on the circumstances, in immediate eviction from the Library premises. The Library Director and designees are authorized to evict anyone from the Library at their discretion. Evictions apply from the time of eviction, until the published closing time of the Library on the day eviction is imposed. Evictions are documented in an incident report completed by the in-charge Library staff member.
3. Violation of NPL policy or Rules of Conduct may result in banishment from the Library premises. The Library Director or designee are authorized to impose banishment. Where banishment from the Library is imposed, the length of the ban depends on severity of the offense, the number of repeated offenses, the likelihood of possible continued offenses, and the potential risk to the safety and security of Library staff, patrons and collection.
4. Banishments are documented in an incident report completed by the Library Director or designee.
5. A person who has been banished from the NPL shall be notified in writing of the terms and conditions of this decision by the Library Director.
6. A person who has been banished from the NPL may appeal this decision within 7 days to the Board of Library Trustees. The Board shall review the appeal and decide regarding it. The decision of the Board is final.
7. In the case of juvenile patrons, Library staff communicates warnings, evictions, and banishment actions to parents or guardians.

Preventive Measures Against Fire and Hazardous/Toxic Materials

1. All areas are kept free from accumulation of trash, rags, paper, etc. at all times.
2. Paint, cleaning supplies, and other flammable materials are stored in areas protected from heat and open flame. Hazardous/toxic materials are labeled and stored in appropriate containers away from the reach of children and are handled in accordance with manufacturer instructions and container labeling.

Safety and Security Equipment and Means of Egress

1. The Library premises features automatic fire detection, audible and visual alerting to occupants, and automatic reporting to the Norfolk Fire Department. Fire alarm pull stations and fire extinguishers are located throughout the building, and their locations are clearly marked.
2. An Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) is located in the main vestibule of the Library. The location of this device is clearly marked. Removal of the device from its enclosure automatically summons Emergency Medical Technicians.
3. Exits are located throughout the building, and in each basement. Public exits are clearly marked with lighted signs. Occupants of the Library are recommended to familiarize themselves with the location of exits.

Responsibilities and Enforcement

1. The Library Director or designee ensures that all personnel, patrons, volunteers, and appropriate local authorities are informed of Safety and Security Policy. This document is publicly available on the Library website at the "Trustees/Policies" link. Changes are offered to the Board of Library Trustees for adoption. This document is reviewed annually by the Board of Library Trustees.
2. Enforcement of this policy is the responsibility of all Library staff. The Library Director and the Board of Library Trustees reserves the right to determine additional enforcement measures in their discretion.

REFERENCE: NONE

CANCELLATION: This policy cancels all previous policies, procedures, memorandums, messages, and directives on this subject.

APPLICABILITY: This policy applies to all NPL trustees, staff members, and patrons.

REVIEW DATES:

Adopted 5/21/2014

Revised and Approved 5/25/2016

Revised and Approved 4/19/2017

Revised and Approved 5/17/2018

Revised and Approved 5/15/2019

Revised and Approved 6/19/2019

Revised and Approved 5/14/2020

Revised and Approved 5/12/2021

Revised and Approved 5/26/2022

APPENDIX I

Specific Rules of Conduct on Library Premises

- Patrons may use only authorized entrances and exits of the Library.
- Shirts and shoes must be worn at all times while on Library premises.
- Smoking in the building or within 50 feet of the building is prohibited by law.
- Loitering near, or blocking of entrances or exits is prohibited.
- Bicycles must be parked in the bicycle rack adjacent to the parking lot.
- Except only for law enforcement personnel, and except only as may be expressly permitted by state law, no person may carry a weapon or replica thereof onto the Library premises. A weapon is defined as any item or device designed so as to incapacitate or cause bodily injury.
- No person may bring an illegal substance onto the Library premises.
- Possession of alcohol on Library premises is prohibited, except only as may be sanctioned by the Town of Norfolk.
- No person may bring any animal other than a bona-fide service dog into the Library without prior authorization from the Director or their designee.
- Eating and drinking is limited to the lobby, lounge, and Community Room. Eating and drinking is permitted in the teen section with permission of the Youth Services Librarian. Possession of bottled water is permitted.
- Cell phone use is limited to the lobby and lounge areas only.
- Except as provided below, canvassing, selling, solicitation or distribution of circulars or other articles is prohibited without the express written permission of the Board of Library Trustees.
- No person may threaten the safety or rights of another person while on the premises of the Library by use of oral, written or electronic threats, demonstration of violent, riotous, or disorderly behavior, nor by use of abusive, obscene, or profane language.
- Noisy, disruptive, abusive or hostile behavior by an individual or group that may interfere with operation or use of Library materials or facilities is prohibited.
- Running, pushing, shoving, fighting, or rambunctious activity is prohibited.
- Use of Library materials or facilities in a manner, that in the opinion of any member of the Library staff is likely to result in damage or harm to materials or persons is prohibited.
- Theft, destruction, defacement, or vandalism of Library building, property, or Library materials is prohibited and punishable by law under criminal statutes.
- The restroom in the preschool area is solely for the use of young children and their caregivers. All others must use the main restrooms in the lobby.