

CHAPTER SIX

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Each of the following pages features a problem behavior. The Safe Harbor Taskforce has looked at other manuals both published and unpublished to select the topics covered in this section. The policies are arranged alphabetically. If a user has difficulty locating a policy for a particular problem behavior, we refer them to the Index as we may have filed it under a different subject than the user expected. For example, issues relating to drugs and intoxication are filed under Alcohol and Drugs.

The general format includes a policy and/or a definition, a legal citation when appropriate, a responsibility breakdown between who is responsible and what they are to do, and finally some suggested words to say to address the problem with the customer. We always cite the staff person as the one to make the contact because he/she is the one who will witness the behavior. ***Everyone is responsible for security.***

Every library staff will want to discuss these policies. There may be more subjects than they want to include. If they are lucky enough to have trained security officers on staff, they will need to discuss when to bring them into the situation. In most cases, the staff person will probably still be the first contact as transferring every issue to security may automatically send the message that every offense is a serious offense. Discussion should also cover when to pass a problem up to a supervisor or the director and how to do so. Teamwork is critical in handling serious situations. How will library staff let others know that they need help and need it now?

Each library staff should develop its own scripts to use in specific situations. The books and other library materials in the Bibliography as well as the scripts included in the manual will help the library staff determine what they are comfortable saying. None of these are, of course, written in stone. They are only suggestions to help you get started. Sometimes when faced with a difficult situation, one's tongue ties itself in knots and having some possible scripts to follow can help you get started. These scripts were carefully written (in some cases with the help of mental health professionals) to help defuse situations, not escalate them, so keep that in mind as you plan what you would say in a given situation. It is important to introduce one's self as working for the library, to assume that the customer may not be aware of a policy, to explain the policy or give them a copy of it, and to explain the consequences if they do not follow the policy in the future. As you write sample scripts, read them aloud to each other. It is important that what is said does not sound inflexible and authoritarian or patronizing. Sometimes those are fine lines. Writing and practicing the scripts will improve everyone's comfort level in addressing problem situations. When practicing, also pay attention to your stance and other body language. Crossed arms or hands on hips, scowls, and other body language may lead to escalation of the confrontation. Hands at your sides, a neutral or open expression, and a modulated voice will help de-escalate a situation. Calling a person by name may also help calm a situation because it encourages attention.

It is also important to begin documenting problem behavior on Incident Report Forms. In some cases a problem behavior log may be sufficient. The log would include the basics of who did what when (date, time) and where as well as who handled the situation. If the library uses a log they should also use the Incident Report Forms for the more serious offenses, especially any time someone is asked to leave the premises for longer than a day or when the police are called. A library cannot ban someone from the library permanently. They can ban them for a specified period of time and agree to review the situation again at that time. The library may determine that it is appropriate to continue that person's exclusion from the library for another extended period of time at which time it will again be reviewed.

Reminder: These policies are suggestions/samples only. The Safe Harbor Task Force wrote these policies at a certain point in time, and situations and times change. An attorney reviewed this manual, but neither he nor we on the taskforce know how you intend to utilize the policies and procedures within your own library. We recommend that you read some of the books in the Bibliography and pick what you need from this manual and those to address your own problem behaviors. It is important to have the manual reviewed by your library's attorney so he/she can examine the policies within the context of your library.

NOTE: The Criminal Code is under revision. Illinois Statute citations noted in this manual will likely change within two to three years.

ACCIDENTS, INJURIES, OR ILLNESS ON LIBRARY GROUNDS

PROCEDURE:

WHO

WHAT

Staff member

1. If immediate assistance is needed, call 911. Never offer to drive the patron anywhere for medical assistance.
2. Stay with the person and tell him that assistance is on the way.
3. Do not provide medical aid (CPR, etc.) unless properly trained in appropriate techniques.
4. Do not move the person but try to make him as comfortable as possible.
5. **BLOODBORNE PATHOGEN**-If body fluids are present (blood, urine, saliva), wear latex gloves when touching the person. Be careful. If a band-aid needs to be used, give it to the individual and have him place it on the injury himself. A parent may do this for a child.
6. Clear the area of bystanders. Recruit other staff members to help if needed.
7. Remove any obstacles in the path of the Emergency Response Service.
8. Contact Supervisor and Director.
9. Get the details of the accident, injury, or illness (person's name and address but do not search his pockets, purse, etc.). Also get names and addresses of any witnesses. Complete an Accident/Injury/Illness Report Form (kept in a folder marked "Accident/Injury/Report Forms" at the Circulation Desk).
10. **Information on the report form must be factual. Any liability issue will be referred to the Library Director and library's attorney.**

Comments: See APPENDIX II and APPENDIX III and FORM IV.

ADULT ABUSE/NEGLECT

DEFINITION: Abuse is a willful action or inaction that causes harm. It includes physical, mental, and sexual abuse (including non-consensual contact or consensual contact with a caregiver). Some samples of abuse (this is not an all inclusive list) are unexplained bruises; the caregiver refuses to allow visitors; the person is in restraints or locked in a room; the person is emotionally upset, agitated, withdrawn, non-communicative, depressed, or nonresponsive; the adult is deserted in a public place or in his or her own home; or they are dehydrated or malnourished, have untreated injuries, or are living in unsafe living conditions.

PROCEDURE:

WHO

WHAT

Staff member

1. In the course of homebound visits, staff may suspect abuse or neglect.
2. If neglect/abuse is suspected, report incident to supervisor.
3. If unsure if person may be in need of assistance, contact one of the agencies mentioned below.
4. Complete an Incident Report Form.

COMMENTS: The local Agency on Aging maintains a program called Gatekeeper. Through this program the agency trains people to be on the lookout for signs that older people need help. The library may arrange for library staff members to receive such training.

www.state.il.us/aging/aas.htm - to find an agency that covers your area.

Other agencies that may be of help:

Senior Helpline (a.k.a. Elder Abuse Hotline)

1-800-252-8966 or 1-800-279-0400

Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence

1-800-799-7233 <http://www.ilcadv.org>

ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

See also: **DRUGS-WITNESSING SALE OR USE**

POLICY: Individuals under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol, or who possess or consume illegal drugs or alcohol in the library or on library property will be asked to leave immediately. Progressive discipline may be used. If they are doing something illegal, the police will be called.

PROCEDURE:

WHO

WHAT

Security Officer

1. After determining that there is a reasonable suspicion that the customer is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, politely ask him to leave for the rest of the day.
2. If progressive discipline is used, check previous incident reports to see if a longer suspension is required.
3. Hand the individual a copy of the posted expectations for appropriate behavior if it appears the individual is capable of understanding, pointing out the applicable expectation.
4. Either escort the individual out. Do not touch the individual.
5. If the individual is not cooperative or appears incapable of complying or is doing something illegal, the police should be called. If an overdose is suspected, also call 911 for medical assistance.

WHAT TO SAY: Use their name (if known); it will encourage awareness.

To ensure the safety of all patrons, alcohol is not permitted in the library or on library property. I will have to ask you to leave the library today, but please feel welcome to return when you are not using.

Have you been drinking today, sir? You appear to be under the influence of either alcohol or drugs and I will have to ask you to leave the library for the rest of the day.

I'm sorry; I will have to ask you to leave the library until you are alcohol and/or drug free. I will take your bottle and dispose of it. You must leave the library for the rest of the day.

Comments: Focus on the person's behaviors. A staff person may suspect someone has been using, however the patron's behaviors do not warrant any cause for action. See **APPENDIX IV**.

ANGRY OR IRATE CUSTOMERS

See also: **THREATENING BEHAVIOR**

See also: **VERBAL ABUSE/SWEARING**

See also: **ASSAULT/VIOLENCE**

POLICY: Excessive displays of anger directed at any employee or member of the public are not tolerated. If an employee feels uncomfortable or intimidated by the level of anger directed at them by a customer, he/she has both a right to insist the customer discontinue this behavior immediately and a responsibility to defuse the situation.

PROCEDURE:

WHO

WHAT

Staff member

1. Utilize a non-threatening approach and ask, "Is there something I can help you with? You seem upset and I would like to help." This will set a tone that you are trying to help rather than reprimand.
2. Calmly request that the customer moderate his/her behavior and conduct his/her dialog in a calm and civil fashion.

Supervisor

3. If the customer refuses to calm down, the employee should continue dialog and have a co-worker call upon the Supervisor/Security/ Director or, in their absence, a co-worker, for support and assistance.
4. The supervisor should unobtrusively enter the dialogue with the customer.
5. If a staff person witnesses another staff person engaged in the altercation, they should not leave them alone.
6. If the situation cannot be defused successfully by library staff, the library may call upon the city police for assistance.
7. Fill in an Incident Report Form.

WHAT TO SAY:

1. I hear this is a frustrating situation for you. How can we resolve this problem? (If possible, let them come up with some solutions. This is not always practical.) Let's step over here where we can discuss the situation more carefully. We'll be able to reach a solution by working together on this.

2. I can see this situation is upsetting to you. I would love to talk to you about it, but first I need you to lower your voice (and/or calm down). I'm sure we can resolve this problem together. Let's step over here where we can discuss the situation more carefully.

IF INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR CONTINUES:

I hear you're angry but your behavior is inappropriate and I am feeling uncomfortable. I would like to continue working with you on this. To do so you have two choices: 1) You may lower your tone of voice so that we can continue working together on this situation **OR** 2) You may leave the library and come back another day.

IF BEHAVIOR CONTINUES:

Show them the policy regarding this type of behavior. Let them see that calling the police is an option. Tell them, "We don't want to call the police, but we may have to if you continue to choose to behave this way. Do you think we can avoid this?" If they say, "Yes." Follow with, "Tell me how we can avoid calling the police?" (This again will allow them to come up with solutions).

Staff may call the library security and/or police at this time, as appropriate.

COMMENTS: If you are thinking, "Should I call the police?" you should. See **APPENDIX V**.

ANIMALS IN THE LIBRARY

POLICY: Animals, except those to aid customers with disabilities, are not permitted in the Library. Animals may not be left unattended on Library property. Any unattended animal left in the Library or on Library property will result in a call to animal control.

PROCEDURE:

WHO

WHAT

Staff member

1. If an animal is not there in an assistive capacity, ask the customer to remove the animal from the Library.
2. Give the customer a copy of the policy.
3. If the customer refuses to remove the animal, call the police.

WHAT TO SAY:

You may not be aware but animals are not allowed in the library. Here is a copy of the library's "Rules of Conduct." Please take your dog to your car.

COMMENTS: See **Appendix VI.**

ASSAULT/VIOLENCE

See also: **ANGRY OR IRATE CUSTOMERS**

See also: **THREATENING BEHAVIOR**

See also: **VERBAL ABUSE/SWEARING**

POLICY: The safety of customers and staff is of the utmost importance. Violence of any kind will not be tolerated. Assault and battery are against the law.

PROCEDURE:

WHO

WHAT

Staff member

1. Any staff member who hears raised voices or sounds of a scuffle should investigate. Recruit other staff to quietly move other customers out of the way to a safer location. If you suspect violence is a possibility, call and alert other staff and administration. Use teamwork.
2. Remain calm. Do not become angry and do not argue. Don't block exits.
3. Do not invade their personal space. Maintain at least an arm's length away. This keeps staff out of punching or kicking range.
4. If two adults are fighting, do not get between them.
5. Call the police and describe the situation and location of the altercation. If they are not yet aware, call administration.
6. Notice details so you can describe the combatants and the situation to authorities.
7. Staff are expected to cooperate with the police and to serve as a witness in court if called upon to do so.
8. Fill out an Incident Report and file it in the Director's Office. Administration may decide to ban the combatants from the library for a period of time.

WHAT TO SAY: To onlookers: Excuse me. I work for the library. There's a problem and we need to evacuate you to a safer area.

COMMENTS: Library staff should discuss how they would work together as a team to handle various violent scenarios as well as where and how to evacuate customers when necessary.

If young children are fighting, tell them to stop. Separate them from their friends and other bystanders. Examine them for injuries and try to get to the bottom of the problem. It is probably a good general principle that parents are always called when a child is involved in a fight on library grounds. They may have an injury that goes undetected by library staff and it is important for parents to be aware of the incident.

See **APPENDIX VII, APPENDIX VIII, APPENDIX VIX,** and **APPENDIX X.**

BOMB THREAT

Bomb threats may be received in person, by mail, or by telephone call from either the person issuing the threat or from various law enforcement groups relaying threat they have received.

POLICY: Evacuate the building immediately, using the public address system to instruct the public and staff. The staff member receiving the bomb threat will make the announcement or ask a co-worker to do it while he/she immediately calls 911.

PROCEDURE

WHO

WHAT

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| 1 st staff member | 1. When receiving a bomb threat call, get as much information as possible from the caller. |
| | 2. Alert another staff person to make the evacuation announcement. |
| 2 nd staff member | 3. Call the police giving them all the information you have. |
| | 4. Calmly make an announcement on the public address system to evacuate the library. |
| Both staff members | 5. Assist with evacuation. Follow your library's normal evacuation procedures. Example: Circulation staff will lock circulation lobby doors, office staff will lock the hallway door to administration, and adult services staff will act as backups for these procedures. |
| Director's designee | 6. If the Director is not in the building, his/her designee will notify him/her. |
| | 7. When police arrive, staff will not accompany them into the building. The Director or Security Officer will escort them. |

WHAT TO SAY:

We have a situation in the building. Please evacuate the building immediately. This is NOT a drill. There will be no check out. Please take all your belongings with you. Please leave the building now and go to the far north corner of the parking lot. (or wherever the library has designated as the appropriate place for people to collect during an emergency so they are together but are not blocking emergency personnel from entering the building.)

A second announcement will be made after everyone is outside the building:

There is an emergency in the building, please leave the library immediately and go to the far north corner of the parking lot.

PROCEDURES

1. **Direct Bomb Threat by Telephone** - Individual receiving the call should refer to the following.

- A. **Do not** upset the caller – **do not** hang up.
- B. Record the time the call was received and the extension number that was called.
- C. Keep the caller talking by asking questions about the bomb, i.e.
 - What time will it go off?
 - What floor is it on?? What department?
 - What does it look like, type of package? Size?
 - Color?
 - Why did you do it?
 - What will cause it to explode?
- D. Try to identify the caller. Make note of words, phrases, voice characteristics, accent, background noise, etc.
- E. Immediately notify Security. Superior/Security will notify the police department.

Caller's Voice (circle)

Male	Calm	Slow	Crying	Slurred
Female	Stutter	Deep	Loud	Broken
Young	Giggling	Accent	Angry	Rapid
Middle Age	Stressed	Nasal	Lisp	Excited
Old	Disguised	Sincere	Squeaky	Normal

Tone of Voice _____ Background noise _____

Is voice familiar? ____ If voice is familiar, whom did it sound like? _____

Remarks: _____

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Did caller indicate knowledge of the library? _____

If yes, how? _____

What telephone extension did the call come in on? _____

Date of call: _____

Staff: _____

2. **Direct Bomb Threat Letter**

A. If you receive a letter warning of a bomb in the building, immediately notify Security and the Director. Do not handle the letter more than necessary.

B. The bomb itself may be sent as a letter or parcel. Individuals responsible for opening mail should look for the following signs that might indicate a bomb:

- No return address
- Uneven thickness or uneven balance
- Excessive weight
- Small holes in the envelope
- Grease or oil stains, or strange odor (such as almond)
- Stiffness due to metal parts
- "Personal", "Confidential", or "To be opened by" written on package.
- Misspelled names or incorrect addresses
- Envelopes addresses to Library Executive.

If enough of these signs are present or there are additional reasons to believe that a letter bomb is present, security should be contacted.

3. **Indirect Bomb Threat Through a Third Party**

A. Immediately transfer the call to Security or the Director.

B. Security or the Director will obtain the name, title, telephone number of person calling and the organization they represent.

4. **Notify Library Authorities**

A. The individual receiving a direct bomb threat should notify Security immediately and Director on any Library phone.

B. Relay as much specific information as possible to Security or the Director.

See also **FORM V**.

CD PLAYERS/EARPHONES

POLICY: Customers may use them in the library as long as they do not disturb others.

PROCEDURE:

WHO

WHAT

Staff member

1. Repeat above policy and give customer copy of written policy.

WHAT TO SAY:

You may use your CD player with earphones but I need you to turn it down because the volume level is disturbing others. Thank you for being considerate of your fellow customers.

CELL PHONES AND BEEPERS

POLICY: We ask that users please turn off cell phones and beepers or put them on silent mode while in the library so as not to disturb fellow customers. If you need to use your cell phone, we ask that you move to the outer lobby or to a quiet study room.

PROCEDURE:

WHO

WHAT

Staff member

1. Repeat above policy and give customer copy of written policy.

WHAT TO SAY:

Your cell phone ringing or your talking on the phone is disturbing other library users. We ask that you use your phone in the outer lobby or in a quiet study room. Thank you for being considerate of your fellow customers.

CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT

POLICY: The library welcomes children of all ages to use its materials and services. The responsibility for the care, safety, and behavior of children lies with their parents, both within the library building and on library grounds.

DEFINITION: Illinois Department of Children and Family Services will handle nearly 125,000 reports of child abuse and neglect this year.

705 ILCS 405/2-3 Any minor under 18 years of age may be suffering from neglect if:

- (1) not receiving proper or necessary support, education as required by law, medical or other remedial care necessary for well-being or other care necessary for well-being including adequate food, clothing and shelter;
- (2) who is abandoned by parent or other person responsible for their welfare;
- (3) whose environment is injurious to their welfare; or
- (4) under 14 years of age whose parent or responsible person leaves the minor without supervision for an unreasonable period of time without regard for the mental or physical health, safety or welfare.

Any minor under 18 years of age may be suffering from abuse if the parent, immediate family member, or person responsible for the minor's welfare or any individual residing in the same home:

- (1) inflicts or causes to be inflicted or allows to be inflicted physical injury by other than accidental means, which causes death, disfigurement, impairment of physical or emotional health or loss or impairment of any bodily function.
- (2) Creates a substantial risk of physical injury by other than accidental means which would be likely to cause death, disfigurement, impairment or emotional health or loss or impairment of any bodily function;
- (3) Commits or allows to be committed any sex offense or acts of torture against the minor; or
- (4) Inflicts excessive corporal punishment.

PROCEDURE:

WHO

Staff member

WHAT

1. While it is not required, staff are encouraged to notify the police if a patron or staff member has reasonable cause to believe a child may be an abused or neglected child. (See Comments below.)
2. The witness should be encouraged to make him/herself available to give an official report of the incident.
3. Staff person in charge will fill in an Incident Report Form detailing the incident to the Director.

COMMENTS: WHEN TO CALL THE HOTLINE (1-800-25-ABUSE):

You should call the hotline whenever you believe that a person who is caring for the child, who lives with the child, or who works with or around children has caused injury or harm or put the child at risk of physical injury as defined by the Abuse and Neglected Child Reporting Act. Some examples include:

- If you see someone hitting a child with an object.
- If you see marks on a child's body that do not appear to have been caused by an accident.
- If a child tells you that he or she has been harmed by someone.
- If a child appears to be undernourished, is dressed inappropriately for the weather, or is young and has been left alone.

Use your own judgment and call the hotline whenever you think a child has been abused or neglected. **SOURCE:** Prevent Child Abuse of Illinois <http://www.childabuse-il.org/suspect/suspect.htm>.

See **APPENDIX XI**.

COMPUTER and EQUIPMENT USE PROBLEMS

POLICY: The library reserves the right to limit, refuse, and/or ban any patron from using the library equipment and computers. Use is limited to patrons in good standing, i.e., all fines have been paid, all overdue materials have been returned, any lost materials have been paid for, and the patron has a current local library card. Anyone under the age of ____ must be accompanied by a parent or guardian while using library equipment or computers. Reservations for equipment or computer use can be made at the circulation desk, and without them usage is on a “first come, first served” basis. However, all patrons shall log in at the circulation desk prior to use to avoid conflicts with reserved times. If a user has not logged in at the circulation desk, that user will be required to give up usage if a patron who has logged in or made a reservation is waiting. In addition, these rules apply for library computer (non-Internet) use: Usage is limited to ____ hour blocks, however, the patron may continue to use the computer in 15 minute intervals until another patron wishes to use it. If a patron is more than 15 minutes late for a reserved time, the computer becomes open. Copyright laws forbid duplication of copyrighted software. The library may restrict the use of personal software on library computers. Library software shall not be copied and must be returned to the circulation desk before use of another software product. SOURCE: Campbell, Sharon and Phil Lenzini. ADMINISTRATIVE READY REFERENCE.

PROCEDURE:

WHO

WHAT

Staff member

1. If User will not leave at the end of his/her computer use time limit, ask the person politely to leave to make room for other users.
2. If user does not comply, assess a penalty of no computer use for a specific time period.
3. If user does not leave, contact the supervisor or call police. If the latter is necessary, file an Incident Report.

WHAT TO SAY:

There are people waiting to use the Internet computers. Since you have reached your time limit, please log off so that someone else may use the computer.

Continued use after request: Staying on the computer past your allotted time is a violation of our user agreement. You may not use the Internet computers for one week (one month, whatever).

Further refusal or escalation of behavior should be handled by the supervisor and police, if warranted.

COMMENTS: Sign in procedures should allow the library to collect accurate usage statistics while protecting the privacy of users.

Although the Safe Harbor Taskforce chose not to address Internet related problems in this manual, we have included **APPENDIX XXXVI** which is Phil Lenzini's suggested Acceptable Use Policy for the Internet.

COMPUTER TAMPERING PROBLEMS

POLICY: Adding software, tampering with or introducing viruses into the library's software, databases, or e-mail in any way, re-arranging the computer desktop, or harming any library computers, networks, software, or automation systems in any way is not allowed and may, depending on the severity of the problem, lead to arrest and prosecution of the offender.

Computer Tampering Statute 720 ILCS 5/16 D-3

Computer Crime Prevention Law 720 ILCS 5/16 D-1

PROCEDURE:

WHO

WHAT

Staff member

1. As soon as an employee becomes aware of a problem (virus, inappropriate software, . . .), he/she should contact the Director and the System Administrator.
2. They, in turn, will search to find the root of the problem and, if possible, determine the person who caused the problem, as well as contact the authorities, if appropriate, providing them the evidence they need to proceed.
3. File an Incident Report Form explaining the problem and the steps that were taken to address it.

COMMENTS: Note that the Criminal Code is in the process of being revised and the citations noted above will be changing.

DISRUPTIVE, NOISY OR ROWDY BEHAVIOR

POLICY: Any action or behavior that disrupts other library users or employees, or that hinders other individuals from using the library or library materials is prohibited. Loud, excessive, and boisterous behavior within the building is not permitted. This includes, but is not limited to, running; fighting; quarreling; swearing; shouting; tantrums; excessive displays of affection; making rude or inappropriate remarks; and excessive displays of anger.

Additionally, library users should not talk or introduce other sounds or noise at a volume level that is significantly above the general noise level of the library at that particular time. Lengthy conversations using a loud tone of voice, which can annoy or disturb others, are discouraged as well.

PROCEDURE:

WHO	WHAT
Staff member	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Insist firmly that the customer cease the problem behavior. Make sure in approaching a situation that age appropriate interventions are used.2. Depending on the situation, if the inappropriate behavior continues, issue a second warning at this time or ask the customer to leave the library grounds immediately.
Supervisor	<ol style="list-style-type: none">3. Call upon the Supervisor, Security Personnel or Director, or in their absence, another co-worker, for support and assistance. If the customer fails to respond to a directive to vacate the building, call the police.4. File an Incident Report Form.

WHAT TO SAY:

With any age group remember to be respectful and to talk to people as you would want to be talked to if the tables were turned. People will respond much better to staff if they are perceived as trying to work on their behalf rather than as authoritarian.

1. To teens: "I appreciate that you guys are trying to have a good time while you study. I would really be grateful if you could please lower your voices so that our other patrons aren't disturbed. Thank you for being willing to set a good example for our younger patrons."

If they continue: "I'm continuing to get a lot of complaints about the noise level over here. Please lower your voices. I would hate to have to ask you to leave."

"I had hoped you would have chosen to lower your voices, but I see that is not going to happen. I'm going to have to ask you to please leave the library for the rest of the day."

2. We would appreciate it if you could ask your child to stop running in the library (crying, throwing a tantrum, etc.). His/her behavior is beginning to disturb our operations and other customers.

3. Please lower your voice. Your conversation is beginning to disturb other customers.
4. Please stop fighting (arguing, shouting, etc.) immediately. This type of behavior is unsafe and is not tolerated in the library.

IF INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR CONTINUES:

1. You have already been warned that we will not tolerate shouting (horseplay, etc.) in the library. Your actions are in violation of library policies. You'll need to leave the library grounds for the rest of the day (or week or month depending upon the severity of the offense).
2. Excuse me, but you might wish to continue your conversation in a more appropriate section of the library. This is generally reserved for more quiet study and discrete conversations.

Comments: Try to get the customer's name for incident reports. Ask for their library card or other identification. See **APPENDIX XII**.

DRESS

POLICY: We ask that library customers wear clothing appropriate for public facilities to insure their safety and the comfort of all our customers. Proper attire includes: shirts, slacks, shorts, skirts, dresses and shoes.

PROCEDURE:

WHO

WHAT

Staff member

1. Repeat above policy and give customer copy of the written policy and explain what is inappropriate or unsafe about their attire.
2. If inappropriately dressed customer is in to do a short transaction give them a copy of your policy, assist them quickly and then ask that they leave.

WHAT TO SAY:

Excuse me, I am _____, a library staff member. For your safety and the comfort of our customers, I am requesting you leave the library until you are dressed in a manner that ensures your safety and the comfort of our other customers.

To barefoot customers: The Library is a public building visited by many people each day. There could be items on the floor that might hurt someone with bare feet.

To parents of shoeless child: Children need to have shoes on or be confined to a stroller for their safety.

If customer refuses to leave:

Please remember this the next time you come to the library.

COMMENTS: Use caution not to pass judgment on someone else's clothing based on personal preference.

DRUGS – WITNESSING SALE OR USE

Policy: The sale or use of illegal drugs in the library or on library property is strictly forbidden and is against the law. If such sale or use is witnessed, the police will be called immediately.

Procedure:

Who

What

Security Officer
Staff member

1. Call the police at 911.
2. Be prepared to give a complete description of the individual(s) involved.
3. Make sure to keep other patrons safe. People on drugs and/or being arrested can be highly volatile. Do not block the exit. Do not try to be a hero. If the person runs, let the police catch them.
4. The library expects the Security Officer or staff member who witnesses such an incident to act as a witness, if called upon to do so.
5. Security Officer or staff member will file an Incident Report Form.

EMOTIONALLY AND MENTALLY DISTURBED

See also: ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

See also: TALKATIVE CUSTOMERS

See also: ANGRY AND IRATE PATRONS

DEFINITION: Emotionally disturbed persons may be suffering from mental illness or disorders characterized by somewhat bizarre external behavior, hallucinations, and delusions. They can be extremely withdrawn, timid, and cooperative, or violently aggressive.* It is imperative that one understands the difference between hallucinations and delusions.

Hallucination: hearing voices that other people do not hear, seeing things that are not there, and at times smelling things that are not there. For example, a man suffering from schizophrenia may hear voices telling him that he's a horrible human being and everybody hates him, and at the same time he may be seeing shadowy figures move around him. It's a terrifying reality for that person to live in. This will heighten (as it would anyone) this person's anxiety. As you approach him be aware that all this internal stimulus may be occurring and he may find it difficult to understand all that is being said to him. It may be necessary to repeat yourself.

Delusions: These involve the person's belief system. A delusional person may believe that there is someone out to get him or that she is president of the United States. Do not argue with a person who is delusional. This is a part of their mental illness. Arguing with them that they are not the president will only agitate the person and make you one of "them" who are out to get them.

POLICY: All customers should receive the same consistent, good service, but if their behavior is disruptive or distracting, it must be addressed as you would with other customers. Emotionally or mentally disturbed are expected to follow rules. Some of these instances are judgment calls. Patrons may act or talk irrationally, but if the behavior is not distracting to others, ignore it.

If the behavior becomes disruptive:

PROCEDURE:

WHO

WHAT

Staff Person

1. Seek a backup staff person to go with you. He/she is not to act or speak, but to serve primarily as moral support and as witness.
2. Speak and act calmly. Be assertive and firm. Do not apologize or become defensive.

* Campus Crime Prevention Programs. COMPLETE LIBRARY SAFETY AND SECURITY MANUAL. The Aegis Protection Group Inc. 2001. p.116.

3. Do not touch the person nor invade their personal space. Never corner them; give them space to exit if they feel the need. Keep an arm's length away.
4. Treat the person with respect.
5. Connect a behavior to results. Tell a person that his behavior has consequences. Give him/her choices.
6. Do not argue with outrageous statements, delusions, or hallucinations.
7. Be direct, concise, and impersonal when communicating rules and setting limits. It might be important to repeat the rules and limits.
8. If you feel at risk, walk away. Maintain communication and request help from co-worker. Walk the patron to the door if appropriate. Call 911 if necessary.
9. File an Incident Report Form.

WHAT TO SAY:

I hear your frustration. What information are you seeking? May I help you find something?

I would like to help you. Please calm down and talk more slowly so that I will be able to help you.

Excuse me. I work for the library. I would like to help you. Everyone has a turn and I will help you as soon as I can.

IF THEIR BEHAVIOR DOES NOT IMPROVE:

Your behavior is frightening other customers. I am asking you to leave the library now. (Is there someone I can call to pick you up?).

COMMENTS: It is important to learn as much about mental illness as you can. You may want to vary your approach somewhat on the illness. Knowledge reduces fear. For more information, contact your local mental health association. In the Peoria, Illinois area, this is Mental Health Association of Illinois Valley, Inc. at <http://www.mhaiv.org> or 309-692-1766.

The following books in this manual's bibliography are especially helpful in learning more about mental illness.

- a. Willis. DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE IN THE LIBRARY.
- b. COMPLETE LIBRARY SAFETY AND SECURITY MANUAL.
- c. PATRON BEHAVIOR IN LIBRARIES.
- d. Salter. ON THE FRONTLINES.

FIRES/FIRE ALARMS

POLICY: Fires of any kind are not allowed on or in library property. People who start fires, no matter how small, will be prosecuted. The safety of all patrons is paramount.

PROCEDURE:

WHO

WHAT

Staff member

1. If smoke detectors or fire alarms sound, follow procedures for announcements in evacuating the building.
2. Each department has responsibilities for checking restrooms, offices, and other remote areas and helping everyone to leave quickly but safely. Do not assume that everyone will leave; make sure that they do so.
3. Once outside, make sure people do not block exits, try to re-enter the building, or interfere with emergency personnel.
4. If someone indicates that they saw someone set a fire or act suspiciously, get that information and connect the person with a supervisor and/or law enforcement. File an Incident Report Form.

WHAT TO SAY:

We have an emergency in the building. Please evacuate the building immediately. This is not a drill. Please take all of your belongings with you. Please leave the building now and meet in the north corner of the parking lot (or wherever the library designates the appropriating congregating location is to be).

COMMENTS: The library should already have determined how to handle the evacuation or safety of handicapped individuals in emergency situations so they can be quickly rescued when emergency personnel arrive. Fire drills are important tools in training staff to work together quickly and efficiently.

FIRE ALARMS (FALSE)

POLICY: Fire alarms are for emergency situations only. People of any age who pull fire alarms under false pretenses will be reprimanded and possibly prosecuted.

PROCEDURE:

WHO

WHAT

Staff member

1. If smoke detectors or fire alarms sound, follow procedures for announcements in evacuating the building. Always assume the alarm is legitimate.
2. Each department has responsibilities for checking restrooms, offices, and other remote areas and helping everyone to leave quickly but safely. Do not assume that everyone will leave; make sure that they do so.
3. Once outside, make sure people do not block exits, try to re-enter the building, or interfere with emergency personnel.
4. If it is determined that a fire alarm was pulled but there was no fire, ask customers and staff if they saw anyone near the pulled alarm.
5. If the person is identified, pull them aside and notify administration who with the Fire Chief will talk to the individual. They will decide at that time if the person will be prosecuted.
6. Fill out an Incident Report Form.