

PATRON CONFIDENTIALITY AND LIBRARY RECORDS

The Minuteman Library Network Circulation Module facilitates ease of access to patron records. This creates two problems:

1. Privacy issues
2. Efficiency at the Circulation Desk

The following policy and guidelines are meant to help the staff in dealing with these problems.

Policy

The Board of Trustees of the Needham Free Public Library welcomes and encourages use of library resources by all residents of Needham. It is the policy of the Board to insure the privacy of the users of its services and to consider all library user records to be confidential in nature.

Inquiries by Patrons

People who present their library card, an electronic scan of the library card's barcode, or other acceptable identification (driver's license, State ID card, passport, utility bill) may have their record checked, if doing so does not violate their right to privacy (i.e. other people are either at the desk or in the area and may hear what is being said). People may request library card record information for other people only if they either present the other person's library card or an electronic scan of the library card's barcode at the circulation desk or read the library card barcode number over the telephone.

Patrons who have problems that fall outside the guidelines of this policy should be referred to the Library Director.

On occasion this policy may cause inconvenience to patrons; however, it assures that an individual's reading preferences and use of the library will remain exclusively his or her own business. When someone presents a library card or electronic library card scan other than his or her own at the circulation desk or reads a library card barcode number over the telephone, library staff must assume that that person has the permission of the library card owner to both use the card and inquire about the card record.

Inquiries by law enforcement agencies

No patron records will be made available to any agency of state, federal, or local government, except pursuant to such process, order, or subpoena as may be authorized under the authority of, and pursuant to, federal, state, or local law relating to civil, criminal, or administrative discovery procedures or legislative investigatory power. All requests for information from law enforcement agencies must be referred to the Library Director or his/her designee.

If law enforcement personnel present a subpoena, direct the person and the paper to the library director or his/her designee (person in charge of library operations), who will direct it to legal counsel (David Tobin, ext 515 (226) or 781-237-0877) and notify the Town Manager and the chairman of the Library Board of Trustees.

If law enforcement personnel present a warrant, do not interfere with their search or seizure. Notify the library director or his/her designee, who will contact legal counsel and notify the Town Manager and the chairman of the Library Board of Trustees.

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If law enforcement personnel state that there is a clear and present danger, library personnel should cooperate in every way. Notify the library director or his/her designee, who will contact legal counsel and notify the Town manager and the chairman of the Library Board of Trustees.

Minuteman Library Network Central Site should be informed of any requests from law enforcement agencies.

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