

STAFF GUIDELINES FOR PATRON INTERACTIONS

The Las Vegas-Clark County Library District provides important public services for the local communities we serve. On a daily basis, many of our staff members interact with a broad cross-section of the public whom we serve. Dealing with the public can be both rewarding and challenging, and it is important that we work to provide the highest level of customer service to our patrons. At the same time, we want to ensure that staff feel comfortable in their work environment.

Our Library District receives public funding from taxpayers. For that reason, the Library District is considered a local governmental public entity. As such, both patrons and employees enjoy certain constitutional protections, such as under the First Amendment. These rights are not without boundaries, but it is important to understand them. For example, anyone entering a public building such a library branch has the right to film/videotape and audio record in open public areas. Individuals who are present in public spaces have no expectation of privacy, including staff, which makes such filming/recording legally permissible.

Nevertheless, there are some individuals who like to provoke others and create controversy in the name of exercising their constitutional rights. In these situations, it is important to keep calm and not allow yourself to become angered or provoked. For that reason, the Library District believes that certain guidelines should be provided to staff so that conflicts and uncomfortable situations can be avoided or minimized:

1. All employees should be aware that their names, positions, and compensation are considered public records and are accessible to members of the public through a routine Internet search or a public records request. That does not mean, however, that personal identifying information on our employees, such as addresses, telephone numbers, social security numbers, etc., are available or accessible to the public.
2. Employees who work in open, public areas of the Library District, such as in a particular library branch, can be filmed and recorded even if you have not consented to such recording.
3. Patrons or other individuals who choose to film/record in a Library District facility may do so only in open areas that are generally accessible to the public. There is no legal basis to treat children or the children's area differently than other parts of the library. No such access is required to private areas such as offices, break rooms, or other staff only/restricted access areas. Filming/recording in restrooms or dressing rooms is prohibited.
4. If an individual approaches you with either an audio or video recording device, you should continue to perform your job duties as if such recording was not occurring. Individuals who approach you to ask questions should not be ignored merely because they are recording the public space. You should treat them as courteously as you would any other patron.

5. If any individual asks for your name and position, whether in the context of recording or another type of patron interaction, you should give the individual your name and position. If you use a nickname (i.e., Mike instead of Michael), that information is fine to provide. Remember that your name and employment position is not considered private information. However, if there is an extreme security or safety threat, you do not need to give your information.
6. If someone asks you for more personal information beyond your name and position, you can politely decline to give that information. The key to any successful patron interaction is to always maintain a positive attitude and keep a cool head. Do not allow any patron to provoke or rattle you.
7. If an encounter with a patron is upsetting or particularly difficult, find a supervisor to assist the person.
8. All visitors must comply with our Library Rules of Conduct. If filming is disruptive to library patrons or causes a conflict with other patrons, staff should call security and a PIC.
9. Keep in mind that with the prevalence of camera phones and social media, individuals who visit our facilities may be recording you and looking to bait you into an unpleasant interaction. Do not take the bait.
10. Always remember that as a Library District staff member, you serve an important role as our customer service ambassadors to the public. Any encounter with a patron should be handled courteously, professionally and with respect. That may be challenging at times, but should always be your goal.