

POLICY

Purpose

Richmond Public Library (RPL) is committed to providing inclusive and welcoming spaces. The Customer Suspension of Privileges Policy supports RPL's Code of Conduct. The policy also complies with the Criminal Code of Canada (R.S.C., 1985, c.C-46) and the Human Rights Code [RSBC 1996] Chapter 210.

This policy applies to all visitors to RPL; when in library facilities and when using any library services (eg. outreach or virtual programming) and/or library communication tools (eg. phone, email, social media).

Policy Statement

Richmond Public Library is authorized to set rules regulating the use of library facilities by the BC Library Act [RSBC 1996] Chapter 264, section 9(a). This encompasses the suspension of library privileges for breaches of library rules and exclusion from the library.

When a customer's behavior violates the library's Code of Conduct and threatens the safety of library staff and/or customers and/or damages library property, their access to and use of library services and/or facilities may be suspended.

Where a suspension is imposed, for longer than one day, the library will advise the individual in writing that there is a reconsideration process that can be exercised.

Responsibilities

All staff are responsible for upholding the Code of Conduct and reporting unacceptable customer behavior to the Person In Charge (PIC) and/or Leadership staff.

Coordinators are responsible for reviewing all incident reports and identifying patterns. Patterns will be communicated to Library Managers.

Library Managers are responsible for reviewing all relevant data and information. Decisions to suspend privileges are based on sound reasoning and not influenced by subjective opinions or biases.

The Chief Librarian will be informed of the suspension of privileges decision and will be responsible for hearing any reconsiderations brought forward. Suspensions that are of a duration longer than 6 months, will be shared with the Library Board by the Chief Librarian.

Library Management will review this Policy every 2 years. The Library Board is responsible for ensuring this policy and the related procedures are in place.

Related Policies, Statements and Guidelines

- Code of Conduct
- Diversity and Inclusion Statement
- Public Internet and Technology Policy
- Richmond Community Protocol: Responding to Racism and Hate
- BC Human Rights Code
- Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
- Criminal Code of Canada

PROCEDURES

Suspension Procedures

Customers will be asked to leave the library for an assigned period of time when their behavior:

- Threatens public health and safety; and/or
- Disrupts customers or the delivery of library services; and/or
- Risks damage to library facilities, equipment, or materials.

The library will assign consequences or suspensions based on the severity of the offence, while considering circumstances surrounding the incident. The Suspension Chart (Appendix A) outlines unacceptable behaviours and potential suspension timelines. The Suspension Chart cannot cover all foreseeable circumstances.

Suspended individuals will not have access to library buildings, property, services and resources for the duration of the suspension. Suspended individuals may request directly to the Chief Librarian that their suspension be reconsidered. Any consequence or suspension length may be adjusted based on the discretion of the Chief Librarian in consultation with the Manager.

Suspension Process

Level 1 - One-day Suspensions (Authorized by PIC or Library Leadership)

1. Library staff will follow the Asking a Customer to Leave procedure.

Level 2 & 3 – Suspensions Longer Than One-Day (Authorized by Manager)

1. Library staff will follow the Asking a Customer to Leave procedure.
2. All relevant incident reports will be reviewed by Management. Guided by the Suspension Chart (Appendix A), a Manager who deems a suspension of privileges is necessary, will do the following:
 - Inform the Chief Librarian of the decision to suspend privileges.
 - Prepare a Letter of Suspended Privileges:
 - If address of customer known (email or home), a copy of letter will be forwarded to customer.
 - If customer's contact information is not available, a sealed copy of letter will be held in the Administration Office at Brighthouse library. A Manager will hand deliver letter to customer if they return to any library location. Back up support will be provided by Coordinator and/or Department Head and PIC. RCMP may be requested to attend.
 - Ensure a print and digital copy of letter is held on file.
 - Communicate Suspension of Privileges to all staff.

Suspension of Privileges Letter

Suspension of Privileges Letter includes:

- The reason for the suspension.
- The term of the suspension.
- Information regarding trespassing during the suspension period.
- The procedure that is needed to be followed for reinstatement to the library.
- A notification that the suspended customer can request a reconsideration and the process for doing so.

Violations

- If it is suspected a suspended customer has returned to the library, their identity must be verified. Staff can confirm identity by speaking with Library Leadership.
- Once a suspended customer's identity is verified, library staff will contact 911 and request RCMP escort the customer out of the library as their privileges to library have been suspended. The customer is now trespassing and PIC will indicate if situation is unsafe.
- If a customer who has been suspended from library enters any library location, they can be charged with trespassing under the [Trespass Act - BC Laws](#).
- Any witnesses, which include library staff, may be asked to testify in court against a customer who disregards their suspension of privileges if the customer is charged under the [Trespass Act - BC Laws](#).

Reconsideration

- A customer whose library privileges have been suspended can appeal the decision by contacting the Chief Librarian.
- The Chief Librarian and Manager will meet with the suspended customer to resolve an issue or identify next steps.
- The suspended customer can bring an Outreach Worker or other support person (ie. family member) with them to attend this meeting.

Shared Facility Suspensions

Richmond Public Library has libraries that are in shared City of Richmond facilities. If a Partner in the facility (eg. Steveston Community Centre, Richmond Cultural Centre) initiates a suspension of a customer, the customer may be suspended from the whole complex, including the library.

The Partner will determine length of suspension, not the library. The library will investigate and take appropriate action as deemed necessary.

Court Ordered Restrictions/Suspensions

Restrictions are sometimes imposed on individuals by the courts. RPL is committed to upholding the law and to following legal directives. When RPL is made aware of people with court-ordered restrictions, by RCMP or others such as parole officers, RPL will investigate and take appropriate action as deemed necessary.

Appendix A: Suspension Chart

All staff and members of the public have the right to be in library spaces that are welcoming, inclusive and safe. The library values diversity, engagement and responsiveness. Unacceptable behaviour may include the following conduct outlined in the Suspension Chart.

The Suspension Chart cannot cover all foreseeable circumstances. Suspension of Privileges for more than one day (Level 2 and up) are determined by Managers on a case by case basis.

Behavior	Level of Suspension	Authority
Excessive Noise & Disruption of Others Disrupting others in the library by yelling or making unnecessary excessive noise is prohibited.	Level 1 – One-day suspension	PIC and any member of Library Leadership
Verbal Harassment & Vulgar Language Abusive language of any kind including verbal assault. This includes defamation, taunts, threats, racial slurs and language that demeans, discriminates and/or name calling towards staff or customers.		
Smoking & Vaping Smoking and/or vaping is prohibited inside the library. The City of Richmond's Public Health Regulation Bylaw No. 6989 restricts smoking and vaping in various public spaces and within a certain radius of certain areas. This includes public parks, school grounds, beaches, trails, and playgrounds, as well as within 9 meters of transit shelters, transit signs, patios, doors, windows, and air intakes of public buildings. The bylaw also applies to cannabis use.		
Alcohol & Drugs Carrying open alcohol and/or use of narcotics is prohibited in the library.		
Soliciting & Advertising Except with permission, customers must not beg or solicit, sell, offer for sale or distribute any newspaper, magazine pamphlet, leaflet, printed material of any kind on library property without permission from Chief Librarian. This includes posting a bill, poster or notice.		
Technology Use Customers must not use library devices, equipment, or networks to access inappropriate content. This includes, but is not limited to, content that is sexually explicit or that depicts violence toward a group of people.		
Health Regulations Behavior Customers must comply with applicable public health regulations, orders and other health and safety measures set by the library or a government body.		
Animals Service animals are permitted in library buildings. All other animals who are behaving inappropriately will be asked to leave.		

Behavior	Level of Suspension	Authority
Physical Harassment Physical Harassment is prohibited. This includes forms of aggressive touching.	Level 2 – One to Three Month Suspension	Manager
Online Harassment Customers cannot threaten, defame, abuse or otherwise harass those working at the library through online commentary or correspondence.		
Sexual Harassment & Misconduct Sexual harassment is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, sexual suggestions or comments, deliberately brushing up against someone, and inappropriate gestures.		
Other Dangerous & Unlawful Activity Customers cannot engage in dangerous or unlawful behavior or activity in the library such as knowingly uttering threats or aggressive outbursts.		
Repeated Single-Day Suspensions Determined on a case by case basis, customers who repeatedly break the Code of Conduct.		

Behavior	Level of Suspension	Authority
Weapons Carrying weapons is prohibited on library premises.	Level 3 – Six Month to Indefinite Suspension	Manager
Physical Assault Fighting is prohibited on library premises.		
Theft of Library and Personal Property Customers may not steal, vandalize, mutilate or destroy library property including, but not limited to, buildings, collections, furniture, equipment and technology. Theft of personal property of others is prohibited.		
Indecency and Sexual Assault Intentional public nudity, indecent exposure and criminal conduct of a sexual nature is prohibited.		