

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

Suspension Policy

Statement of Policy

The Contra Costa County Public Library has adopted a Patron Conduct Policy to help ensure the safety and security of library patrons and staff and a comfortable and enjoyable library experience for all. Persons who violate the Patron Conduct Policy are subject to removal from the premises and/or suspension of their library privileges, or, when appropriate, arrest.

Need for the Policy

This Suspension Policy gives the Contra Costa Public Library a mechanism to protect the public and staff from disruptive, offensive or unsafe behavior. The Suspension Policy also gives the library a mechanism to protect library property, equipment and facilities.

Staff Response to Violations

Violation of any of the conduct requirements set forth in the Patron Conduct Policy constitutes conduct that can result in expulsion from the library and forfeiture of library privileges. The library reserves the right at all times to immediately eject a patron that is engaged in any conduct that threatens the life or safety of any person or that is damaging to library property, equipment or facilities.

Minor violations of the Patron Conduct Policy will first result in library staff attempting to educate or warn individuals about policies and enforcement. Repeat misconduct or severe offenses (even a single isolated event) may result in an individual's library privileges being suspended for a minimum of one day to a maximum of one year. Below are examples of inappropriate patron behaviors and suspension time periods.

One-Day Suspension:

- Ignoring repeated staff warnings about disruptive behavior
- Violating the Patron Conduct Policy
- Using harassing, threatening or insulting language, including profanity
- Being intoxicated
- Causing strong pervasive odors that constitute a nuisance to others

One-Week up to One-Month Suspension:

- An escalation of any of the above behaviors, or the repetition of these behaviors despite previous warnings or the previous imposition of a one-day suspension
- Using library facilities or equipment inappropriately

One-Month up to Six-Month Suspension:

- An escalation of any of the above behaviors that previously resulted in a one-week, or longer, suspension
- Behavior that a reasonable person would find harassing threatening, harmful or disruptive
- Vandalizing library facilities, equipment or materials

One-Year Suspension:

- Any illegal behavior
- Bringing a weapon of any kind into the library or onto library property
- Sexual misconduct of any kind
- Physical violence of any kind
- Repeated offensive or dangerous behavior over a period of time
- Repeated or escalating behavior that prior suspensions did not correct

Suspension Procedures

If staff determines that a person has engaged in severe or repeat misconduct and staff has determined that the individual's library privileges should be suspended, staff will issue a written suspension notice (see form attached) to the individual involved notifying him/her that he/she is banned from all Contra Costa County Public Libraries. The notice will indicate the reason(s) for the ban and the time period of the ban. If possible, the notice will be hand-delivered to the individual when the determination to suspend library privileges is made. If it is not possible to hand-deliver the notice and the individual's name and address are known, the notice will be mailed to the individual. If the person whose privileges are being suspended is a minor, a copy of the suspension notice will be mailed to the parent or guardian of the individual.

Appeal Process

Anyone whose library privileges have been suspended for more than one week may appeal the decision to the County Librarian. The County Librarian, or in her absence, her designee, may affirm, modify, or revoke any suspension. Appeals must be made in writing and must be received within seven days of the suspension. Appeals should be addressed to the County Librarian, 1750 Oak Park Boulevard, Pleasant Hill, California 94523.

Enforcement

If any person named in a suspension notice enters a Contra Costa County Public Library before the return date listed on the suspension notice, he or she will be asked to leave. If the individual does not leave when asked, staff will contact local law enforcement.

Individuals who enter a Contra Costa County library before the return date listed on the suspension notice are subject to arrest for trespass under California Penal Code Section 602.