

Incident Report Policy

An incident report is a confidential legal document that may be utilized by police as evidence to investigate an incident and / or the court system to prosecute a case.

The library utilizes an online incident report form. Once submitted, the content of the form is automatically emailed to the Branch Manager, Library Director, and Assistant Director. for review.

Incident reports should be submitted for, but are not limited to, the following reasons:

- A patron is abusive (verbally or physically), harasses, or threatens a library employee or another patron in any manner;
- An accident, injury, or other medical incident involving a library employee or a patron;
- Theft or property damage involving the library, a library employee, or a patron;
- If the police, fire department, or ambulance services are called to the library for any reason

If a library employee is unsure as to whether a report should be completed for an incident, they should contact their immediate supervisor, the Assistant Director, or Library Director immediately for guidance on the matter.

A report should be submitted for an incident occurring anywhere on library property, including the parking lot and outdoor spaces.

Timeliness

An incident report must be completed within 24 hours. It is critical to write the report as soon as possible. The more time that lapses, the more difficult it can be to accurately document the details of the incident.

Narrative Section of the Incident Report

The narrative should provide:

- the specific area within the building or on library property in which the incident occurred;
- a detailed and clear description of what exactly happened. The narrative may include relevant details about events leading up to the incident;
- a detailed description of any injuries and / or property damage related to the incident.

Avoid vague or easily misinterpreted language and phrases that may cause confusion. For example, avoid using a pronoun in the narrative if it may not be clear to whom you are referring.

It is critical that an employee never lie about something in an incident report, even if it may put the employee or the library in a negative light. False information in an incident report will only cause more damage later if it is proven to be untrue.

Avoid using emotional words and statements that describe feelings, opinions, and personal biases; only include facts.

Avoid sarcasm, condescending statements, and judgmental remarks.

Avoid language that could be considered biased or discriminatory.

An incident report narrative should always be proofread to avoid typographical, grammatical, and spelling errors.

An incident report narrative should be reread multiple times to assure that there are no gaps, factual errors, or the need for further clarification.

Witness Contact Information

The incident report should include the names and contact information of the people involved in the incident, if available. The names and contact information may be ascertained from the library's patron database, if available, or collected from people after the incident, if possible. If only the first name of a person involved in the incident is available, it should be included in the report.

Contact information for library employees involved in the incident does not need to include address, phone number, or email address.

The incident report should include the names and contact information of any witnesses. The names and contact information may be ascertained from the library's patron database, if available, or collected from people after the incident, if possible. If only the first name of a witness to the incident is available, it should be included in the report.

Witnesses may include other library employees. Contact information for library employees who witnessed the incident does not need to include address, phone number, or email address.

Any employee who witnessed any portion of an incident must submit a separate report.

Photographic or Video Evidence

If applicable to the incident, the Branch Manager will review the branch's video surveillance footage (if applicable) as soon as possible to determine whether the incident was recorded. If video surveillance footage of the incident exists, the Branch Manager should immediately notify the Library Director or Assistant Director.

Video or photographic evidence must never be shown to a patron, even if they or a relative was involved in the incident. If they believe that a crime has been committed, they should be advised to file a police report.

The branch manager may show video or photographic evidence to the police with permission from the Library Director or Assistant Director. However, video or photographic evidence cannot be given to the police without a subpoena.

If a police officer presents a subpoena for video or photographic evidence, the employee should immediately contact the Library Director or Assistant Director for guidance on the matter.

If there is property damage related to the incident, attach photographs documenting the damage to the incident report form.

Follow-up

If new information becomes available about an incident after a report has been submitted, the employee should notify the Library Director or Assistant Director as soon as possible. The employee may be asked to submit an updated incident report.

Open Records Requests for Incident Reports

The library will comply with Missouri Sunshine Law, in consultation with its legal counsel, for all open records requests involving incident reports.

Approved April 16, 2024.