

2.85 Incident Report

It is the policy of Richland Community Library to create a written account of all incidents such as disruptive behavior or vandalism on Library property.

Assess each situation. Be an active listener and be sure to manage your own thoughts, feelings, and actions. In all cases, it is important to assess the seriousness of the situation as quickly as possible.

Use teamwork. No one should feel alone. Call on another staff member to back you up when necessary. Support is especially important if you believe a witness will be important.

1. Stick to the facts

- a. Incident reports should not include a staff members' personal opinion on the incident. Be as objective as possible.
- b.. If you can remember what they said to you exactly, you can use quotes. If not, paraphrase.

2. Simple and Professional Language

- a. Try to be as concise while also being as detailed as possible. This may be difficult as the situation may have been stressful or even chaotic. It's important not to rush an incident report. Take notes if you need to before writing the report to get yourself clear-headed.
- b. Remember that incident reports may include law enforcement, legal counsel, insurance representatives, patron guardians.

3. Who, what, when, where, and how

- a. Who: The names of the parties involved (if possible) and a description of the individuals involved in the incident.
 1. Avoid phrases like "old guy" and instead go with "male, possibly in his 80's"
 2. Descriptions should include clothes the person was wearing; accessories like a backpack, hair color and length; eye color; glasses, etc. May not be clear in every situation, but include what is when available. Don't guess.
- b. What: Include only the relevant facts of the incident.
 1. Know the important difference between an eyewitness and an "ear witness." Some people saw things; other people heard about things from others.
- c. Where: Include where in the library and the specific location where the incident occurred.
- d. When: Staff can't always complete a report at that exact moment in real-time,

with reporting an incident after the fact, use time to the best of your ability.

- e. How: To the best of your ability, present the facts of the incident in the chronological order they occurred. Complete report to the fullest degree you can. Ask the person involved their contact information.
1. If it's a minor, contact their guardian.
 2. It's better to over report than under report. If it turns out to not be all that important, no harm done.
 3. Was the incident resolved? How? If the incident was not resolved, explain why, and provide the steps that need to be taken in order to resolve it.

A staff member who completes an incident report shall provide the completed report to the Library Director within 3 days of the incident occurring.