

Photography and Video Recording Policy

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Purpose

The Library recognizes that photography and videography may be a valuable way to document personal experiences, library architecture, and events. At the same time, The Library has a legal and ethical obligation to protect the privacy, safety, and uninterrupted use of its facilities and resources by all patrons and staff. This policy sets forth clear, content-neutral, time-place-and-manner rules that balance these interests and reflect The Library's mission and values.

Definitions

- Photography/ Filming/Videography: The act of capturing still images or moving images (with or without sound) using cameras, smartphones, tablets, drones, or any recording device.

- Non- Filming/Videography: The act of capturing still images or moving images (with or without sound) using cameras, smartphones, tablets, drones, or any recording device.
- Commercial: Use of images/video for promotion, advertising, publication, or other activities for profit.
- Library Sponsored Programs: Events, classes, or activities organized by The Library itself, on or off Library premises.

Applicability

This policy applies to all individuals on Library property, including patrons, visitors, media, vendors, and staff, and to all spaces within The Library building and grounds. Exceptions may be made only by the Library Director or designee.

Rights and Responsibilities Under Rhode Island Law

Rhode Island law generally allows photography and videography in public places. However, individuals have a reasonable expectation of privacy in settings such as restrooms, locker areas, changing rooms, and certain staff-only spaces, and recording in such places is prohibited. Secretly recording individuals in contexts where privacy is expected can be unlawful (e.g., video voyeurism under R.I. Gen. Laws § 11-64-2).

Photography/Recording by the Public

Permitted Without Prior Library Approval

- Casual photography or videography by visitors or patrons in public areas of The Library for personal, non-commercial use, provided that:
 - It does not disrupt library operations or other users' ability to access resources.
 - It does not block aisles, exits, or obstruct accessibility.
 - It does not capture audio/visuals of individuals in private or restricted areas (restrooms, staff areas).

Restrictions Related to Other Individuals

- Individuals must respect others' privacy and wishes: if a patron or staff member does not want to be photographed or recorded, the photographer must promptly comply with that request.

- Permission of a parent or legal guardian is required before photographing or recording any minor child, except in large group settings where it is incidental and not identifiable.

Equipment and Safety

- Use of tripods, professional lighting, audio recorders, drones, or other specialized gear that could create a safety hazard, impede movement, or disrupt staff and patrons requires advance written approval by the Library Director.
- Unapproved use of such equipment may result in being asked to cease recording or to leave the premises.

Commercial or Professional Filming

All requests for commercial, professional, media, or promotional filming/photography must be submitted in writing at least five (5) business days in advance. Approval is at the discretion of the Library Director or designee and may include conditions related to location, scheduling, fees, insurance, and staff supervision to protect Library operations and users' rights.

Library-Sponsored Photography/Recording

- All requests for commercial, professional, media, or promotional filming/photography must be submitted in writing at least five (5) business days in advance. Approval is at the discretion of the Library Director or designee and may include conditions related to location, scheduling, fees, insurance, and staff supervision to protect Library operations and users' rights.
- Patrons' attendance at such events constitutes implied consent on behalf of themselves and/or any minor child(ren) to be photographed or recorded unless otherwise communicated to staff before the event.
- The Library will make reasonable efforts to notify attendees when photography or recording is occurring (e.g., signage or announcements).
- The Library will endeavor to respect requests of patrons who do not wish to be photographed or recorded.

Privacy and Use of Library Surveillance

- The Library may utilize fixed surveillance cameras for safety and security. Any use of recordings must be consistent with applicable law and privacy protections.

- Video surveillance footage is not generally available for public dissemination and will be retained and shared only in compliance with applicable law and confidentiality principles.

Library as a Limited Public Forum

The Library is a limited public forum under federal constitutional doctrine. While individuals have certain First Amendment protections, The Library may impose reasonable, content-neutral restrictions on the time, place, and manner of photography and recording that are consistent with The Library's mission and operational needs.

Enforcement

Library staff may ask any individual to stop photography or filming that:

- Interferes with library operations;
- Causes a safety hazard;
- Violates this policy or applicable law; or
- Infringes on the privacy or comfort of other patrons or staff.

Failure to comply with this policy may result in denial of recording privileges, suspension of library privileges, or removal from Library property.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed periodically and updated as necessary to reflect changes in law, technology, or professional standards.

Acknowledgement of Legal and Ethical Principles

This policy is informed by Rhode Island statutory requirements regarding privacy and recording, as well as professional values articulated by the American Library Association, including the protection of privacy, confidentiality, intellectual freedom, and respect for the rights of all library users.

Approved by the Rogers Free Library Board of Trustees on June 25, 2026.