



# Conduct in the Library Policy

Section: Library Operations

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Ames Public Library provides a safe, comfortable environment conducive to the use of Library materials and facilities. The Library is intended for the use of all members of the public. Customers are expected to observe the rights of other customers and staff members and to use the Library for its intended purposes. Misconduct will not be allowed in the Library and may be subject to follow-up by law enforcement, if necessary.

Library staff members are responsible for identifying incidents of misconduct and for policy enforcement. Customers who observe misconduct should avoid confrontation and immediately notify Library staff.

## Definition

Misconduct is behavior that is illegal or that:

- Interferes with the rights of individuals to use Library materials, services and premises.  
*[The term “premises” includes: inside and outside areas of Library property and the Bookmobile.]*
- Interferes with the ability of Library staff to conduct Library business, or
- Threatens the safe and comfortable environment of the Library or the safety of any person on Library premises.

Misconduct on Library premises may include, but is not limited to the following:

- Violation of any Library policy or any municipal, state, or federal law or code.
- Possession, use, or threat of use of dangerous weapons, including all firearms.
- Refusing to comply with the directive of a Library staff member.
- Willfully annoying, harassing, or threatening any person.  
*[According to the Iowa Code, a person commits harassment when the person purposefully and without legitimate purpose has personal contact with another person with the intent to threaten, intimidate, or alarm that other person. Personal contact means an encounter in which two or more people are in visual or physical proximity to each other. Personal contact does not require a physical touching or oral communication, although it may include these types of contacts.]*
- Any behavior that endangers or could endanger the safety or health of others.
- Behaving in a disorderly, loud, or boisterous manner.
- Using electronic devices at a volume that is disruptive to others.
- Using abusive or profane language.
- Violating indecent exposure laws.
- Inappropriately touching oneself or others.
- Using tobacco products, vaping products, or e-cigarettes.
- Using alcohol or possessing an open or unsealed bottle, can, jar, or other receptacle containing an alcoholic beverage.
- Using false identification or using a fictitious name or address.

- Misusing, misappropriating, damaging, vandalizing, stealing, deliberately misplacing or obstructing use of Library equipment, premises, or the personal property of customers or Library staff.
- Maliciously accessing, damaging, or destroying computers or peripheral equipment, or altering, deleting, damaging, or destroying the computer system, computer network, computer programs or data.
- Using sports equipment such as skateboards or in-line skates.
- Parking bicycles anywhere other than in the provided bicycle racks.
- Leaving bicycles in bicycle racks overnight.
- Campaigning, petitioning, interviewing, survey taking, soliciting, posting notices, fundraising, or selling outside of a meeting room, unless authorized by the Program Policy or Director.
- Panhandling.
- Busking without registering and receiving an identification badge from the City Clerk's Office.
- Impeding access to Library resources, premises, or an area of the premises, or blocking access to Library materials for extended periods of time.
- Entering the non-public or locked areas, unless accompanied by a staff member or through prior authorization from a staff member.
- Leaving a child 8 years old or younger unattended in the Library. Leaving an individual who requires a caregiver unattended in the Library.
- Intentionally leaving personal items unattended.
- Photographing or video recording in a manner that disturbs other Library users (setting up tripods or using flash, for example) or is disrespectful of others' privacy.
- Consuming food or beverages in a manner that creates an unclean environment, disrupts others, or is harmful to Library resources or premises.
- Not wearing shoes.
- Entering the Library with infestations of bed bugs, fleas, or other pests.
- Bringing animals into the Library, except trained service animals or as authorized for Library-sponsored events.  
*[Ames Public Library welcomes trained service animals. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines service animals as "dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities." It also states that "the provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship does not constitute work or tasks for the purposes of this definition." In addition, ADA regulations state if a particular service animal is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it, or if it is not housebroken, the animal may be excluded. Service animals are working animals, not pets. Under ADA regulations, staff may ask if an animal is required because of a disability; they may also ask what work or tasks the animal has been trained to perform.]*
- Leaving an animal unattended.
- Using public restroom facilities for bathing, shaving, or laundering clothes.

## Consequences

Enforcement of these rules may take the form of any of the following actions, depending upon the severity of the misconduct as determined by the staff on duty or Director.

- Customers who engage in misconduct will be given one warning and asked to behave in an appropriate manner. Customers who do not modify their behavior after one warning may be asked to leave the Library.
- Customers who engage in misconduct that in the judgment of a staff member is extreme will be ordered to leave the building immediately.

- If necessary, the designated Person In Charge may call the police.

Customers who engage in repeated or egregious misconduct may receive a written notice or be subject to additional action, including being banned from the Library or served with a Trespass Notice.

## References

American Library Association: [“Guidelines for the Development of Policies and Procedures Regarding User Behavior and Library Usage.”](#)

U.S. Department of Justice:

[Americans with Disabilities Act, Title II, State and Local Governments](#) Section 35.136

[ADA Requirements: Service Animals](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions about Service Animals and the ADA](#)

Code of Iowa:

Rights of Persons with Disabilities, [Chapter 216C](#)

Dangerous Weapons, [§702.7](#)

Disorderly Conduct, [§723.4](#)

Assault, [§708.1](#)

Harassment, [§708.7](#)

Harassment of Public Officers, Employees, [§718.4](#)

Willful Disturbance, [§718.3](#)

Iowa Smokefree Air Act, [§142D.3](#)

Intoxication, [§123.46](#)

Theft, [§714.1](#)

Trespass, [§716.7](#)

Criminal Mischief, [§716.1](#)

Indecent Exposure, [§709.9](#)

Unlawful Assembly, [§723.2](#)

Use of Computers, [§622.51A](#), [§714.1](#), and [§716.6B](#).

City of Ames Municipal Code:

[Miscellaneous Offenses](#), Skateboards Prohibited in Certain Locations, Waiver, §17.28

Library Policies:

[Internet Use](#)

[Meeting Rooms and Study Rooms](#)

[Petition](#)

[Programs](#)

[Unattended Child](#)