

Section 11 Confidentiality Policy

It is the policy of the Matteson Public Library, as well as State law under the Illinois Library Records Confidentiality Act, that all registration and circulation records of library patrons are confidential. Examples of those records that are considered confidential are borrowing records, records of reference questions asked, and records of the use of library's computers for Internet access.

Such registration and circulation records may, however, be released pursuant to a court order, which includes a search warrant, served upon the library by a sworn law enforcement officer. Additionally, if a law enforcement officer has probable cause to believe that there is imminent danger of physical harm to a person and an emergency situation exists making impractical the obtaining of a court order, the library is compelled to provide information from its records limited to identifying a suspect, witness or victim of a crime. However, the information so provided cannot include disclosure of circulation records that would indicate materials borrowed, resources reviewed or services used at the library.

Additionally, library patrons should be aware that Section 21.5 of the U.S.A. PATRIOT ACT gives federal law enforcement officers the ability to obtain a search warrant to gain access to certain library records on the basis that the officer(s) believe that the records sought may be related to an ongoing investigation related to terrorism or intelligence activities.

The PATRIOT ACT also prohibits libraries or librarians served with a search warrant issued under FISA (Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act) rules from disclosing the existence of the warrant or the fact that records were produced as a result of the warrant, under penalty of law. A patron cannot be informed that his/her records were given to a federal agent or that the patron is the subject of any federal investigation.

The Matteson Public Library protects the privacy of its patrons. Only records that are essential to conducting the library's business are retained and only as long as necessary to complete our business. For example, the record of material that a patron borrows is removed from the computer system when the material is returned and for six months after any fines accrued on a particular item are paid. We do not maintain a history of materials that a patron has checked out. Records of computer use are only retained long enough to tabulate usage statistics.

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