

Confidentiality of Patron Identity & Circulation Records

Circulation staff members have the primary responsibility for insuring the privacy of each patron's record on the database. Staff members do not give out patron information, such as names, addresses, telephone numbers, who has which items out, who has a particular item on Hold, etc. By being careful when showing patrons their screens at the Circulation Desk, and clearing each record when all transactions are completed, we make every effort to protect an individual's right to privacy.

Parents are allowed to access their children's records, since they are legally responsible for their children as patrons until the age of 18. However, children may not access their parents' records, including checking out materials on their parents' accounts, unless they have a parent's card in hand. You may call the parent for a one-time authorization for the child to check out. Upon approval, inform the patron of the necessity to add their child as an "Authorized Borrower" if the child will be using the account in the future. Spouses may not access each other's records unless they have "permission" or the spouse's card in hand. Every adult patron is encouraged to have his or her own card.

Each patron's right to privacy includes staff being completely discreet in not identifying library patrons or their reading interests in social settings, or in procedural or policy discussions at staff meetings.

For this same reason, we do not "page" a person for a phone call. When time permits, we can look around the library for the person to be reached.

(See sample Confidentiality of Circulation Records Policy, adopted by the Library Board of Trustees, 5/7/81).