

Photography and Recordings Policy

Approved: December 18, 2023

Effective: December 18, 2023

Revisions: January 22nd, 2024

Review: March 31st, 2025

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set guidelines that balance the privacy rights of library staff and patrons with the reasonable use of cameras for photography and recording on library property. For the purposes of this policy, “recordings” includes video, audio, and live streaming. “Specialized equipment” refers to larger equipment that could impede foot traffic or create a similar disturbance to library operations. “Photography” includes still images.

Photography and Recordings by Library Patrons

While the Library is a public place, it is considered a “limited public forum” under federal law. Public libraries may reasonably restrict the exercise of free speech rights in their buildings, particularly when the conduct would disrupt or interfere with other visitors or staff or be inconsistent with the Library’s mission.

Subject to the preceding paragraph, permission is not required to take photographs or recordings in the public areas of the library for personal, non-commercial use if non-specialized equipment is used. If specialized equipment is to be used, requests must be made at least 24 hours in advance to the Library Director. Photographs and recordings are not allowed in non-public areas (restrooms and staff only areas) unless consent is given by the Library Director. Permission to photograph or record any person under 18 years of age must be obtained from a parent/guardian on behalf of said minor child. Library staff reserve the right to stop anyone from taking photographs or recordings if it compromises a patron or staff member’s right to privacy, results in disruption of normal library operation, is deemed to be harassing, intimidating, or threatening toward a patron or staff member, or if the activity blocks walkways, doors, or stairways. Taking photographs and recordings of the exterior building and grounds does not require permission but the activity may not impede the ingress or egress to or from the library building or property.

Public Meeting Spaces

As stated in the “Photography and Recordings by Library Patrons” section of this policy, photographing and video recording is permitted in public spaces, including in meeting rooms, so long as it does not result in the disruption of the meeting. This includes the recording of library board meetings.

Photography and Recordings by Library Staff

Staff of the Amery Area Public Library District routinely take pictures, audio recordings or video recordings of events at the Library to use for news stories or publicity, in print or online. These photographs and/or audio or video recordings may appear in future publications without the permission of the person being photographed and/or audio or video recorded. The images may also be posted on the Library's website, in marketing materials, and on social media networks such as Facebook and/or Instagram. All Library patrons consent to the use of their photo or audio or video recording taken at the Library or during Library events, unless they specifically inform a librarian or the staff member in charge of the program attended of an objection to such use. This policy extends to photographs and recordings by library staff at any of the library's outreach events in the community.

Library Security Use of Video Recordings

The Amery Area Public Library strives to maintain a safe and secure environment for its staff and patrons and as such, selected public areas of the library premises are under continuous video surveillance and recording. Signs disclosing video surveillance will be posted at the library entrance. Staff will follow record retention guidelines when disposing of video recordings. Access to the recordings is only available to the Library Director, their designee, and the Library Board President.

Library Security Video General Guidelines:

- Video recordings will be used to identify the person or persons responsible for library policy violations, criminal activity, or actions considered disruptive to normal library operations.
- Video recordings may be used to assist law enforcement agencies in accordance with applicable state and federal laws.
- Video recordings of incidents can be retained and reviewed as long as considered necessary by the Library Director or a designated delegate.
- Images may be shared with other library staff to identify person(s) banned from library property and to maintain a safe and secure environment.

Liability and Enforcement

Members of the public who take photographs or recordings are solely liable for any injuries to persons or property that result from their activities on library property. They are responsible for obtaining necessary releases and permissions required by law and obtaining consent or other permission when taking photographs or recordings of copyrighted material. Library staff reserve the right to ask any individual or group who violates this policy to cease taking photographs or recordings on library property.