



City of Virginia Beach

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DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES
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LIBRARY ADMINISTRATION
BUILDING 19, ROOM 210
MUNICIPAL CENTER
VIRGINIA BEACH, VA 23456-9115

Petitioning, Picketing and Expressive Activities Policy

Approved April 25, 2016

The Virginia Beach Public Library recognizes the vital importance of the First Amendment to its mission:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

The Library seeks to encourage and permit expressive activities by members of the public to the extent compatible within the mission and purposes of the Library. This policy regarding expressive activities on public library properties is formulated with the following considerations in mind:

- The Library's basic mission of providing access to written and recorded information and literature requires spaces dedicated to reading, studying and research in an atmosphere free of unnecessary interruption or distraction caused by activities not related to library business.
- Customers of the public library have the right of unimpeded access to the facility as well as the right of privacy and confidentiality as they use the services in the facility.
- There is relatively limited space around the entrance of each public library building in Virginia Beach. Entry and exit to library facilities must be regulated to protect public safety in this restricted space.

The restrictions imposed by this policy do not extend to the public sidewalks adjacent to public library properties.

Petitioning, picketing, pamphleting, carrying or erecting signs or banners, conducting surveys and similar expressive activities are not permitted inside the Virginia Beach Public Library buildings. This prohibition does not prevent political or religious activities in any meeting room reserved for and in exclusive use by a group or an organization and scheduled in accordance with the Meeting Area Policy.

An announcement of a gathering for the purpose of petitioning may be posted in accordance with the guidelines of the Posted Announcement Policy, but an actual petition may not be posted on an announcement bulletin board.

Individual building maps indicate the area at each facility where expressive activities may take place.

Expressive activities conducted in an orderly manner shall be permitted on the paved walkways between the parking lots and the library buildings or on the grass areas adjacent to these sidewalks, subject to the following conditions:

- No voice, music or sound amplifying devices will be utilized.
- Any signs, posters, banners, etc., shall be hand-held and not staked or placed on the ground nor fastened to trees, fences or other structures.

Groups sponsored or sanctioned by the City of Virginia Beach or the Department of Public Libraries may conduct expressive activities on library premises if in conformance with the above guidelines.

Furthermore:

- Persons engaged in expressive activities may not occupy the principal walkway extending directly from the main entrance to the parking lot. Pedestrians on other walkways shall not be blocked or impeded in any way.
- No stand, display rack, measuring or testing devices, shelters, parasol or awning shall be placed or erected on Public Library premises. A table not to exceed 30" x 72" and two chairs may be placed on Library premises for the purposes of activities regulated by this policy and this table and chairs may not impede access or block an entranceway or sidewalk.
- The sale of goods or services of any kind, or soliciting orders for goods or services for future delivery, is not permitted.

A person in violation of any provision of this policy will be specifically advised of these restrictions and given the opportunity to comply. If the violation continues, the manager will request that the individual leave. If the individual fails to comply with this request, a police officer will be summoned and the person may be charged with trespassing.



Approved by: Eva Poole, Director