

1  
2  
3 **City of Austin**  
4 **Library Department**

5  
6 **Library Use Rules**

7 **1. Purpose.** The Austin Public Library is supported by the taxes of the people of  
8 Austin who expect each of our facilities to be clean, comfortable, and safe. The library is  
9 intended for reading, studying, writing and listening to written or electronically  
10 transmitted materials, and attending library or community sponsored programs and  
11 meetings. To this end, the library has established these rules to protect the rights and  
12 safety of library customers, staff and volunteers, and to help preserve and protect the  
13 library's materials, equipment, facilities, and grounds.

14 **2. Definitions.**

15 (A) Except as provided, words and phrases in these rules mean what the words and  
16 phrases mean in the City Code.

17 (B) In these rules:

18 (1) "customer" means a person, other than an on-duty member of the library  
19 staff, who is present in the library, using the library, or borrowing library  
20 materials;

21 (2) "director" means the director of the Library Department or the director's  
22 designee;

23 (3) "library" means any building or facility of the Austin Public Library,  
24 including the entrance ways and adjacent lawns, landscaping, and parking  
25 areas.

26 (4) "staff member" means a City employee, contractor, or volunteer working in  
27 the library, and includes security personnel;

28 (5) "user" means a customer using a workstation; and

29 (6) "workstation" means a public-access computer and the adjacent space.

30 **3. Not a Public Forum.** Except for the limited purpose of accessing information, the  
31 library is not a public forum.

32 **4. General Expectations.**

33 (A) A staff member may not modify or waive the policies stated in these rules.

1 (B) A customer must abide by the standards of behavior set forth in these rules. These  
2 rules identify prohibited behavior for library customers, with consideration of the  
3 situation and age-appropriateness.

4 (C) A staff member must report criminal activity that occurs in the library to an  
5 appropriate law enforcement officer.

6 **5. Children.**

7 (A) A child under the age of 10 may not remain in the library unless accompanied by a  
8 responsible person who is at least 17 years of age. A person accompanying a child  
9 is responsible for the child and the child's behavior. Unless so accompanied, a  
10 child under the age of ten may not enter, remain in, or be left unsupervised in the  
11 library.

12 (B) If a library staff member determines that a child may not be safely turned away  
13 from the library or that the child is stranded, the staff member shall refer the child  
14 to the Austin Police Department.

15 **6. Animals.**

16 (A) A customer may not bring an animal in the library unless it is the customer's  
17 service animal.

18 (B) This does not apply to an animal used by the library for a special event.

19 **7. Food and beverages.**

20 (A) A customer may not consume food or a beverage in the library.

21 (B) This does not apply to food and beverages that have been purchased in the library  
22 and that are consumed in a designated area.

23 (1) If, due to a disability, a customer must consume special food, the library will  
24 provide a reasonable accommodation for that customer to consume that food  
25 in the designated area.

26 (C) This does not apply to water in a clear, capped bottle that is consumed away from a  
27 workstation.

28 (D) This does not apply to food brought by an adult supervising a child younger than  
29 seven years of age, and consumed by the child in a designated area.

30 (E) This does not apply to breast feeding or bottle-feeding an infant.

31 **8. Attire and Hygiene.**

1 (A) A customer may not enter or remain in the library in a bathing suit, or in clothing  
2 that does not cover both upper and lower torso, or without shoes.

3 (B) A customer may not enter or remain in the library if, because of lack of hygiene or  
4 excessive use of perfume or cologne, the person has a strong odor that would be  
5 offensive to a person of ordinary sensibilities.

6 **9. Sleeping.**

7 (A) A customer more than ten years of age may not sleep in the library.

8 (B) If a disability is involved with a customer sleeping, the library will provide a  
9 reasonable accommodation.

10 **10. Smoking and tobacco use; burning materials.**

11 (A) A person may not smoke or use a tobacco product in the library.

12 (B) A person may not ignite a flame, burn incense or any other material, or light a  
13 candle.

14 **11. Restrooms.**

15 (A) A customer may not bathe, shave, wash clothes, or dry clothes in a library  
16 restroom.

17 (B) A customer may use a restroom lavatory only for washing the person's hands or  
18 face. This does not apply to a customer attending an infant.

19 **12. Personal belongings.**

20 (A) A customer may not bring a bedroll, blanket or sleeping bag in the library.

21 (B) A customer may not enter the library with a cart or other wheeled device for  
22 carrying baggage. This does not apply to a wheelchair or other similar device for a  
23 person whose mobility is impaired.

24 (C) A customer may not leave a personal belonging unattended in the library.

25 (D) The library is not responsible for a lost, stolen, or misplaced personal item,  
26 whether the item was attended or unattended by the owner.

27 (E) A customer who brings a personal item in the library assumes the risk of loss or  
28 theft of the item.

29 **13. Personal Behavior.**

1 (A) A customer may not:

- 2 (1) unreasonably disrupt the normal use of library services or property by the  
3 library staff or other customers;
- 4 (2) enter an area that is not open to the public;
- 5 (3) block access to an entrance, passageway or resource;
- 6 (4) solicit money or a donation or transfer of money or another thing of value  
7 from another person, regardless of the solicitor's purpose or intended use of  
8 the money or other thing of value, and regardless of whether consideration is  
9 offered; or
- 10 (5) distribute literature or otherwise solicit customers on library property.

11 (B) A customer may not:

- 12 (1) enter or remain in the library in possession of any illegal drug or alcoholic  
13 beverage;
- 14 (2) enter or remain in the library if the person is intoxicated by a drug or  
15 alcohol;
- 16 (3) use abusive, indecent, profane, or vulgar language;
- 17 (4) make an offensive gesture or display; or
- 18 (5) access sexually explicit material on a library computer or on a personal  
19 electronic device.

20 (C) A customer may not:

- 21 (1) harass, sexually harass, abuse, threaten, or fight with a person;
- 22 (2) threaten library property;
- 23 (3) incite a breach of the peace;
- 24 (4) except as expressly permitted by state or federal law, carry or display a  
25 weapon;
- 26 (5) perform a criminal act;
- 27 (6) vandalize, steal, or recklessly or intentionally damage library property or the  
28 property of another person.

1 **14. Violations.**

- 2 (A) If a customer violates these rules, a staff member shall orally warn the customer to  
3 stop the behavior. If the customer fails to stop the unacceptable behavior, the staff  
4 member must ask the customer to leave the library.
- 5 (B) If a staff member determines that a violation of this policy is so serious that the  
6 customer remaining in the library creates a danger to library property, the library  
7 staff, or to other customers, or interferes with the use and enjoyment of the library  
8 by other customers, the staff member may ask the customer to leave without an  
9 initial oral warning.
- 10 (C) If a customer refuses a request to leave the library, the staff member should seek  
11 the assistance of library security or law enforcement personnel.

12 **15. Denial of Physical Access to the Library.**

- 13 (A) This rule is cumulative of the “Rules for Public Use of City Properties” adopted by  
14 the City Manager.
- 15 (B) The director shall deny a customer physical access to the library as provided in this  
16 section if the customer is asked to leave the library for:
- 17 (1) a violation of any combination of these rules in any combination of library  
18 properties, for which the person was asked to leave the library three times in  
19 a six month period;
- 20 (2) any single violation of Section 13(B) that involves physical injury to a  
21 person, theft of or damage to City property or to the personal property of  
22 another person, or a breach of the peace; or
- 23 (3) any single violation of Section 13(C).
- 24 (C) The director must give a customer who is denied physical access to the library  
25 written notice and an opportunity for a hearing as provided in the “Rules for Public  
26 Use of City Properties” adopted by the City Manager.
- 27 (D) The period for which a customer is denied physical access to the library under this  
28 section is:
- 29 (1) one year, beginning on the effective date of the denial; or
- 30 (2) in the case of a customer who has had a previous denial of physical access  
31 under this rule that was not rescinded, the denial of physical access is  
32 permanent.

1 (3) A customer who is denied physical access to the library may continue to  
2 access library information and programs in ways that do not require physical  
3 access, so long as the customer meets other requirements for access to the  
4 information and programs. If a disability is involved, the director shall  
5 provide a reasonable accommodation under applicable law.

6 (E) Denial of physical access may be enforced through a criminal trespass notice.

7 **16. Internet Policy.**

8 (A) A user may not:

9 (1) circumvent filtering software;

10 (2) use a workstation or workstations for more than 120 minutes in a single day  
11 in any combination of sessions; however, an extension of time may be  
12 granted if availability of workstations permits.

13 (3) have more than one active logon ID registered in the user database;

14 (4) share a logon ID with another person;

15 (5) use another user's logon ID;

16 (6) use a workstation if the user owes the City for charges associated with the  
17 user's use of a workstation or for damage caused by the user to a  
18 workstation.

19 (B) In consideration for the use of a workstation, a user must agree, and affirmatively  
20 state that:

21 (1) the user has read, and agrees to comply with, all library policies and  
22 procedures;

23 (2) the user understands and agrees that the Internet contains information, both  
24 written and pictorial, which may be offensive or harmful to the user or to  
25 others;

26 (3) the user releases and indemnifies the City of Austin from any liability for  
27 damages associated with the user's viewing of, use of, or exposure to any  
28 information, machine-readable file, picture, graphical representation, or  
29 illustration encountered while using a workstation, whether or not the  
30 information appears or is delivered through the station the user operates;

31 (4) the user will not violate any state or federal laws including, but not limited  
32 to, those related to child pornography or the display of harmful materials to

1 minors; the user will not access sexually explicit sites on any workstation or  
2 any personal electronic device used on library property;

3 (5) the user creates, stores, and uses personal files at the user's own risk. The  
4 library is not responsible for the loss of the user's personal electronic  
5 documents, storage devices, or files;

6 (6) the user is financially responsible for damage the user causes to the library's  
7 computers whether physically, or by the use of damaged or virus-infected  
8 software, or by any other means, and the user must promptly pay the City for  
9 cost of repair or replacement of equipment resulting from the damage; and

10 (7) the user shall promptly pay for all pages the user prints.

11 (C) A user of a workstation that does not have filtering software:

12 (1) must be at least 18 years of age;

13 (2) must provide photo identification that includes the user's date of birth to the  
14 library staff before using an unfiltered workstation; and

15 (3) may not permit another person to use or view the workstation during the  
16 user's session unless the other person has also provided library staff with  
17 photo identification proving that the other person is at least 18 years of age.

## 18 **17. Meeting Room Policy.**

19 (A) This rule applies to the use of a library meeting room by members of the public. It  
20 does not apply to use of a library meeting room by the library or by another  
21 department of the City of Austin. This rule is cumulative of other library use rules.  
22 This rule supersedes another library rule to the extent of a conflict. This rule may  
23 be referred to as the Meeting Room Policy.

24 (B) Terms of Use.

25 (1) The use of a library meeting room by a group or a customer signifies the  
26 group's or customer's acceptance of the terms of the Meeting Room Policy.

27 (2) There is no charge for meeting room use.

28 (3) The use of, and the scheduling of the use of, a meeting room is subject to the  
29 needs of the library, and may not interfere with the library's operations or  
30 the use of the library by customers. City or library needs preempt any other  
31 scheduled event in a meeting room.

1 (4) The use of a meeting room does not constitute library or City of Austin  
2 endorsement of a viewpoint expressed by a group or by a participant in a  
3 meeting or activity.

4 (a) A group using a room may not advertise or announce an event to be held in a  
5 meeting room if the advertisement or announcement states or implies  
6 the endorsement of the library or the City of Austin.

7 (b) An announcement or notice to publicize an activity may not be posted or  
8 distributed on library premises without advance approval from the  
9 librarian in charge.

10 (C) Who May Use a Meeting Room?

11 (1) A library meeting room may be reserved by a not-for-profit, non-commercial  
12 group of at least three individuals engaged in an educational, cultural,  
13 intellectual, or civic activity. If a meeting room is equipped with  
14 videoconferencing equipment installed by the library it may be reserved by a  
15 group or by a single individual.

16 (2) A use of a meeting room must be open to the public and may not be  
17 restricted to the membership of the group. A member of the public that sees  
18 a meeting taking place may enter and participate in the meeting.

19 (3) A customer may not reserve a meeting room for individual use.

20 (a) A library customer may, upon request, use a meeting room which is not in  
21 use until the next group's reservation time.

22 (b) A customer must sign in at the service desk for individual use of a meeting  
23 room.

24 (c) Other customers may use the room at the same time, in the same manner.

25 (4) A child under the age of 10 may not be in a meeting room unless  
26 accompanied by a person who is at least 17 years of age, and who is  
27 responsible for the child's behavior.

28 (5) A meeting room may not be used for commercial purposes. A group or  
29 customer using a meeting room may not solicit money or another thing of  
30 value, charge admission, or sell, or advertise for sale, goods or services.

31 (6) A meeting room may not be used for a social gathering such as a wedding  
32 shower, a baby shower, a birthday party, a dance, or a similar activity.

1 (7) A meeting room may not be used for a political rally or a campaign for or  
2 against a specific ballot issue or candidate. However, a meeting room may  
3 be used for a forum or study group on a political issue.

4 (8) A meeting room may not be used to provide a direct healthcare service,  
5 including an examination, a hands-on demonstration, or a treatment.  
6 However, a meeting room may be used for a forum on or the sharing of  
7 information about healthcare services.

8 (9) Permission to use library meeting rooms will be withheld from a group that  
9 has failed to comply with the Meeting Room Policy or from a group that  
10 damages a meeting room, the carpet, equipment, or furniture, or causes a  
11 disturbance.

12 (D) Reserving a Meeting Room.

13 (1) A group may request the use of a meeting room online, in person, or in  
14 writing. The library will consider requests on a first-come, first-served  
15 basis.

16 (2) To provide an opportunity for other groups to use the meeting rooms, a  
17 group may use a meeting room at a particular branch only once each month,  
18 and may reserve only one meeting room for use at the same time.

19 (3) A group that is cancelling a meeting must provide notice of the cancellation  
20 to the library's Meeting Room Coordinator as soon as possible. A group  
21 forfeits its reservation if the group fails to appear within 30 minutes after the  
22 scheduled time.

23 (4) If a group fails to appear for two consecutive meetings without making a  
24 cancellation, all future reservations of the group are cancelled until the group  
25 reschedules.

26 (5) Meetings may not be scheduled before or after library hours. Group  
27 representatives may not enter library buildings, nor will deliveries be  
28 accepted, before the regular opening time.

29 (6) A group may not assign or transfer its reservation to another group.

30 (E) Care and Use of a Meeting Room.

31 (1) A group or customer using a meeting room may not make noise that disturbs  
32 another library customer or the library staff.

33 (2) A group or customer using a meeting room must completely vacate the room  
34 at least 15 minutes before the library's closing time.

- 1 (3) A group or customer must leave a meeting room in the condition in which  
2 the room was found.
- 3 (4) The library does not set up or arrange furniture or equipment in a meeting  
4 room.
- 5 (a) If a group or customer rearranges the furniture, the group or customer  
6 must return the furniture to the original arrangement before leaving  
7 the room.
- 8 (b) A group or customer may not bring furniture or equipment from the  
9 main area of the library into a meeting room.
- 10 (c) A group may bring its own furniture or equipment into a meeting  
11 room with advance approval by the Meeting Room Coordinator.
- 12 (i) Arrangements for the use of such furniture or equipment must  
13 be made at the time the room is reserved.
- 14 (ii) A group or customer must notify Library Security or the Branch  
15 Librarian when furniture or equipment is brought into the  
16 library, and must promptly remove the furniture or equipment  
17 at the end of the meeting.
- 18 (d) A group or customer may not store equipment, furniture, supplies, or  
19 personal effects in a meeting room before or after use.
- 20 (5) A group or customer may not leave trash in a meeting room. A group that  
21 has produced trash during a meeting must remove that trash from the library  
22 at the end of the meeting.
- 23 (6) A group or customer may not affix, tape, or fix with an adhesive any item to  
24 any part of a meeting room, including a wall, door, window treatment, or  
25 woodwork.
- 26 (7) The library does not provide audio, video or other equipment other than that  
27 which is already installed in the room. Written instructions for the use of the  
28 equipment within the meeting room are posted in the room. The library does  
29 not assist with the equipment.
- 30 (8) A group or customer must keep all doors unlocked at all times. Open aisles  
31 must be maintained within the seating arrangement to provide clear access to  
32 exits.
- 33 (9) A group or customer must use a public entrance for all access to and from  
34 the building, including all deliveries.

1 (10) Attendance at a meeting is limited to the capacity of the individual meeting  
2 room. Seating or furniture may not be placed in a corridor outside the  
3 meeting room.

4 (11) Food and Drink in a Meeting Room:

5 (a) Food and drink may be consumed in a meeting room if the food or drink is  
6 individually packaged and does not have to be maintained at a certain  
7 temperature, for example: packaged snacks, individual containers of  
8 soda, whole pieces of fruit, and cookie trays.

9 (b) Food items that are not individually packaged or that must be maintained at a  
10 certain temperature require a temporary food permit issued by the  
11 Austin/Travis County Health & Human Services Department.

12 (c) Kitchen facilities or equipment are not provided by the library, except for  
13 minimal kitchen facilities at the Carver Branch and the Austin History  
14 Center which may be used with permission from the librarian in charge.

15 (d) Protective mats or tablecloths must be used on tables when refreshments are  
16 being served.

17 (12) The individual making the reservation, as well as the group as a whole, is  
18 responsible for damages that result from the group's use of the meeting  
19 room.

20 (F) The City of Austin is committed to compliance with the Americans with Disabilities  
21 Act. Reasonable accommodations will be provided on request.