

Privacy, Subpoenas, and Search Warrants...

The Hampton Falls Free Library strives to protect the privacy of library patrons to the fullest extent of the law. No confidential information about library patrons will be revealed to the authorities without presentation of a subpoena or search warrant.

The library will retain only as much information as required to provide services. Personal information regarding patrons will be discarded as soon as it is no longer needed. The library keeps no permanent record of Internet sites visited, electronic databases used, or searches performed by patrons.

Some search warrants or subpoenas issued under the USA Patriot Act come with a “gag order” automatically attached, preventing staff from telling the patron or the public that information has been provided to the FBI.

Compliance with Law Enforcement

The library staff will comply with law enforcement when supplied with a legal subpoena or warrant. The staff, trustees and legal counsel will review the following procedures when the Patriot Act is modified.

1. If a staff member is approached by anyone alleging to be a law enforcement official, do not disclose to that individual any information. Immediately contact the Library Director.
2. The Library Director (or person in charge) will ask for identification from the agent-in-charge and verify validity.
3. Ask for a copy of the search warrant and its affidavit.
4. Fax the warrant to legal counsel so s/he can review it as soon as possible.
5. Remind library staff not to interfere with the parameters of the search, but that they are not required to answer questions from law enforcement. If the library is asked for consent to search items beyond the scope of the warrant, decline.
6. Keep track of any expenses incurred as a result of the search.
7. Double check to see if a gag order has been included with the court order.
8. Apprise the library trustees if possible.

Library users will be informed that their usage is subject to the U.S.A. Patriot Act through notices at the circulation desk and on the library’s website. For more detailed information, consult the U.S.A. Patriot Act file in the Library Director’s Office.

Updated and approved subject to review 12/27/2012