Chapter 38. Law Library[1]

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Subchapter A. General Provisions

38.001 Intent of Chapter

The Law Library is intended for use by persons engaged in law-related research. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Law Library patrons are provided a pleasant atmosphere that facilitates legal research.

38.002 Services

(a) Intent to utilize resources. Patrons shall be engaged in activities associated with the use of a public law library while in the Law Library. Patrons not engaged in reading, studying, or using Law Library materials may be required to leave the Law Library.

(b) Library Hours. The Law Library is open and staffed during County business hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Patrons who repeatedly delay exiting the Law Library until past 5 p.m. may have their library privileges restricted or suspended.

(c) Computer Use. There are two use categories of computers: General Use and Legal Research.

(1) General Use Computers. Computers labeled “General Use” may be used for non-legal research purposes. A one-hour limit applies to use of General Use computers during the County business day with the following exceptions:

[1] Chapter 38 was replaced on 5/26/2015, Item #17.

(A) If another patron needs to use the computers for legal research and no other legal research computer is available; or

(B) If, due to computer malfunctions or similar issues, two or fewer research computers are available for legal research.

(2) Legal Research Computers

(A) All computers not labeled General Use are Legal Research computers.

(B) Legal Research computers may be used for up to two (2) hours per County business day.

(C) Patrons who are not attorneys, legal professionals, or law students may be required to have a Law Library staff member assist them in accessing and using online databases and/or conducting legal research.

(D) Designated Legal Research computers. Computers designated for specific databases, sites, and uses must be used solely for the purpose of conducting legal research using those proprietary tools or for the use specified. Examples of specific sites/databases include Westlaw, Lexis, Texas.gov, and TexasLawHelp.org. Examples of specific uses include e-Filing and completing electronic forms.

(3) Use of any computer to view pornography or play games will result in the patron being asked to leave or being restricted from using the computers.

(4) Computer use log. Law Library staff may maintain an electronic log of patron use of computers and internet access when required to document infractions of the policy.

(d) Circulation of Materials

(1) The Law Library circulates materials to patrons who are current members of the State Bar of Texas and who present a valid membership card.

(2) The Law Library shall discontinue circulating materials to patrons who fail to return materials.

(3) Materials may be checked out for three business days. Materials lacking a check-out card may not be circulated.

(4) Patrons who remove materials from the library without checking the materials out shall be asked to leave and restricted from returning.

(e) Fax Services. The Law Library takes reasonable steps to protect the confidentially and privacy of faxes sent from the Law Library. However, if it comes to the attention of Law Library staff that a patron is sending faxes that, in the reasonable opinion of Law Library staff, are threatening in nature, the Law

Library may discontinue providing the fax service to that patron permanently. All patron faxes will contain a cover sheet with this disclaimer:

"The information contained on the attached pages, which are being transmitted by a fax machine located in a Travis County Law Library, has been prepared, assembled, and compiled by a private citizen acting in his/her own capacity, without the control, direction, endorsement, sponsorship or control of Travis County. Travis County and the Law Library staff make no representation or warranty, express or implied, or assume any legal liability or responsibility for the contents of the information contained on these pages, nor for the accuracy, completeness, usefulness, timeliness, or fitness for any particular purpose of any such information. Travis County, and its officials, agents and employees shall not be liable for any loss or injury, however arising, resulting in whole or in part from the use of any information contained in the information being transmitted or from any reliance placed thereon."

(f) Equipment. Patrons shall not attempt to make repairs or alterations to Law Library computers, software, or equipment. All software must be loaded by staff.

(g) Telephones. The Law Library provides a public access telephone for use by patrons. Calls shall be limited to a maximum of 5 minutes.

(h) Restricted Areas. Only public areas of the Law Library may be accessed by patrons. Patrons are restricted from entering: offices, staff rooms, and areas behind reference desks.

38.003 Environment

(a) Disruptive behavior. Patrons shall respect the rights of other patrons. Patrons shall not harass or annoy other patrons, or otherwise behave in a manner which may be reasonably expected to disturb others.

(b) Theft and vandalism. Patrons shall not write in, damage, remove pages, or mark on Law Library books or other Law Library property.

(c) Noise. To avoid disturbing other Law Library patrons, patrons shall observe silence except when requesting assistance from the reference desk staff. Noise and loud or profane language will not be tolerated. Patrons who need to converse must do so quietly so as not to disturb others.

(d) Solicitation. Selling and solicitation are prohibited in the Law Library.

(e) Sleeping. Sleeping is prohibited in the Law Library.

(f) Eating. Eating is prohibited in the Law Library. Beverages are permitted except in the computer area.

(g) Children. Unattended children are not allowed in the Law Library. In the event that a child is left unattended for more than 15 minutes, Law Library staff shall notify the Travis County Sheriff's Office. Any adult who brings a child into the Law Library must supervise and monitor the child's behavior at all times.

(h) Cell phones. Because ring tones can be loud, patrons' cell phones must be set to "vibrate" or turned off. Any cell phone calls must be conducted in designated areas in the Law Library as telephone conversations may disturb other patrons. Patrons who receive a cell phone call must step outside of the Law Library or into a designated area to hold the conversation.

(i) Laptop computers. Laptops may be plugged in to draw AC power. The volume on all laptops must be set to "mute."

(j) Commercial Activities. The Law Library shall not be used for commercial activities, which activities include using the library as a law or business office.

(k) Personal Belongings

(1) Patrons' personal belongings must fit neatly under the table and may not take up so much space as to deny other patrons a seating opportunity at the same table.

(2) Walkways and aisles shall be kept clear and unobstructed by personal items.

(3) Sleeping bags, bedrolls, and blankets are not permitted in the Law Library.

(4) Patrons must limit their carry-in items to those materials necessary to accomplish their legal research. For safety and security, carry-in items larger than 24 inches x 16 inches x 10 inches or having a combined volume of over 3840 cubic inches are not permitted in the Law Library.

(5) Patrons may not leave belongings unattended. Items that are left unattended shall be handed over to County security personnel. The County will not be responsible for any belongings that are lost or stolen. Arranging for the retrieval of such belongings shall be the sole responsibility of the patron.

(l) Hygiene/Offensive Behavior. Any patron, as well as the personal belongings of any patron, emanating an odor (including perfume) constituting a nuisance to other patrons and is detectable from more than eight (8) feet away may be asked to leave the library until the situation can be corrected. No spitting, cursing or other acts or behavior considered offensive in the reasonable opinion of Law Library staff will be permitted.

38.004 Compliance with Laws, Violations

(a) Patrons shall comply with all federal, state, and local laws, rules, regulations and ordinances while in the Law Library, including without limitation:

(1) copyright, trademark and other intellectual property laws governing access, use, duplication, manipulation, distribution or other handling of materials located in the Law Library or materials accessed through Law Library resources;

(2) privacy and/or confidentiality laws applicable to electronic communications, cable and video technology and the internet; and

(3) laws prohibiting cybersquatting, dilution, deceptive trade practices, unfair competition, and unlawful electronic or computer information transactions.

(b) Patrons who violate any such laws shall be asked to leave the Law Library and may be restricted from returning.

38.005 Application and Enforcement of Policy

A patron who violates the policy will be asked to leave the Law Library until such time as the patron, in the reasonable opinion of Law Library staff, is able to demonstrate an ability and willingness to comply with this policy. Law Library staff members maintain an "incident log" in which all violations of policy are recorded. Patrons who repeatedly violate County policy will be subject to additional Law Library access restrictions and/or restrictions on use of Law Library resources.

Patrons with questions about the amendment, application, or enforcement of the Law Library policies are encouraged to contact the director of Records Management and Communication Resources.

38.006 Posting of Law Library Policy

For patrons' information and convenience, a copy of this policy shall be posted in the Law Library, on the Travis County Law Library webpage, and on the entry screens of all Law Library computers.

38.007-38.015 Reserved for Expansion

Subchapter B. Fees for Library and Information Booth

38.016 Print, Copier, Fax, Imaging Fees

Patrons who use the Law Library or Information Booth printers/copiers/scanners/fax machines will be charged $ .20 per printed page/image. If a patron has accumulated unpaid printing/scanning charges amounting to $5.00 or more, the patron shall be restricted from printing/scanning until such time as the overdue sum is paid in full.

38.017 Notary Fees

(a) Services Provided. Notary Services provided by the Information Booth and the Law Library staff shall include those described in Texas Government Code Section 406.024 (a)(5) and (6), specifically taking acknowledgments and administering oaths.

(b) Services Not Provided. Library and Information Booth notaries shall not provide deposition services nor notarize protests as described in Texas Government Code Section 406.024 (a)(1-4).

(c) Fees Collected. Staff shall collect $3 for each instrument notarized unless the fee is waived.

(d) Fees Waived. Notary fees may be waived for:

(1) Affidavits of Indigency or Affidavits of Inability to Pay Court Costs.

(2) Succeeding instruments if a file-stamped copy of the Affidavit of Indigency is shown.

(3) Affidavits or statements to be filed in connection with the filing for a protective order.

(4) County employees who show a county photo ID.

38.018 Room Rental

(a) Intent of Room Rental. The purpose of room rental is to assist the courts with case management by providing a private space near the courts where attorneys and mediators may conference with their clients privately.

(b) The Law Library may rent offices or conference rooms to legal aid providers, mediators, Texas Bar Association members, and parties sent by the courts to confer.

(c) The rental fee may be waived for:

(1) Non-profit legal aid providers,

(2) Non-profit mediation services, and

(3) Parties referred by the Travis County Courts to conference or mediate during a trial recess.

(d) The rental fee will be $20 per hour, paid by check or cash.

(e) Reservations will be by first come, first serve. If a party makes a reservation two or more times and fails to show and pay the fee, the Law Library may decline to make reservations for that party in the future.