

# Temple University Libraries

## Theft of Library Materials

### Purpose and Scope:

The Libraries' mission depends on the Libraries' continued ability to preserve materials for present and future use. Therefore it is library policy that theft and attempted theft shall be treated seriously.

Theft or concealment of library materials for purposes of theft are offenses proscribed by Pennsylvania statute ([18 PA.C.S. § 3929.1](#)) and are violations of Temple University regulations.

This policy applies only to incidents that occur within the library, not, for example, to those who simply refuse to return library materials after borrowing them in the normal way.

### General Procedures:

1. Signage: Pursuant to [PA statute 3929.1](#), a copy of the governing statute (or excerpt approved for posting by University Counsel) shall be prominently posted in each library. Where an excerpt is posted, a full copy of the statute shall be kept at an appropriate service desk within that library.
2. Exit Control: Where feasible, electronic book theft detection systems will be installed at library exits and security officers stationed at these exits.
3. Assigned security officers or library staff may follow the steps below in cases where a book theft detection exit alarm has sounded or in other circumstances (e.g., by direct observation of mutilation or concealment) where staff have probable cause to believe there is an attempted theft, mutilation of library materials, or apparent concealment of library materials for purposes of theft.

Examples of suspicious circumstances:

- damaged library materials which person attempted to remove from the Library (e.g., barcode scraped off, cover or pages, etc).
- library materials not properly checked out (and perhaps concealed) which person repeatedly or with excessive insistence attempted to remove from the Library despite the alarm sounding.
- library materials not properly checked out and which were carried/concealed in such a manner as to indicate attempted theft.

a) **Ask the person to relinquish the library materials** in their possession.

b) **Ask the person for identification.**

Students and visitors are required under University policy to produce identification upon demand by any staff member. They may need to be reminded of this requirement stated in the Code of Conduct for Library Users ([link to URL](#)).

c) **Immediately call campus police** to request that they come directly to the library and assist. Verbally persuade the person to await police; **do not physically detain the person**. The responding police officer(s) will follow standard campus protocol in making an arrest or otherwise referring the matter for University disciplinary action.

1-1234 Main Campus Police      4-2800 Tyler Campus Police  
3-1336 Ambler Campus Police    717-238-2726 Harrisburg Campus, Strawberry Sq. Mall Security

d) The library staff member should take notes concerning the incident and inform his/her supervisor or department head of the incident as soon as practicable.

e) Thereafter, the Library will press the issue of replacement and/or library fines, and any additional action.

Any questions should be referred to the appropriate Library Department Head or to the University Libraries' Director of Administrative Services.

**References:** [18 PA.C.S. § 3929.1](#)

LeBreton correspondence w/ T. Mahoney, University Counsel, February 2004

**History:** JNM/July 11, 1989

revised February 7, 2004

Approved by Administrative Council August 2004