

Confidentiality Policy

The Mark Skinner Library will make every reasonable and responsible effort to protect the privacy of all individuals who use its resources. Library customers must be confident that others will not become aware of what books they read, what materials they use, or what questions they ask. Such a possibility would inhibit full and effective usage of the library and is contrary to the American Library Association's *Code of Ethics* which is available at the ALA web site: <http://www.ala.org>

The library will collect and maintain only the minimum number of records necessary to support daily library operations. When no longer needed for administrative purposes, all customer data and circulation records will be expunged from library databases and/or record books.

According to 1 VSA 317(c)(19), "records relating to the identity of library patrons or the identity of library patrons in regard to the circulation of library materials" are exempt from public inspection and copying. The Mark Skinner Library recognizes that such records include but are not limited to:

- a registered borrower's name
- a registered borrower's address
- a registered borrower's telephone number
- a registered borrower's e-mail information
- whether or not an individual is currently a registered borrower
- whether or not an individual has ever been a registered borrower
- circulation records for all library materials
- reserve records for all library materials
- the online resources accessed by an individual
- the frequency or nature of an individual's visits to the library, including program attendance
- the frequency or nature of an individual's reference questions

There are only three acceptable circumstances under which such information will be disclosed:

1. For library administrative purposes parents or legal guardians of children under the age of 10 may be contacted regarding overdue materials checked out on their child's account.
2. Caregivers for library customers of any age may request and receive information about materials checked out on the customer's account when the customer himself or herself has contacted the library staff and made such arrangements.
3. Such information will also be disclosed in response to a valid court order or subpoena properly presented to the library director. Upon

presentation of a court order or subpoena, any and all library employees subject to such a document shall delay its enforcement until the library administration has had time to consult with legal counsel to determine the validity of the order.

Library users should be aware that the USA PATRIOT Act of 2001 increases the authority of federal investigative agencies to compel the disclosure of personal information through use of orders duly issued by a federal court of lawful jurisdiction. Under provisions of this act, the FBI and law enforcement officials may seek court orders for library records during investigations relevant to national security or terrorism. Libraries and librarians served with these orders may not disclose, under penalty of law, the existence of the orders, or the fact that records were produced as a result of the orders. Library users cannot be told their records were given to law enforcement officials or that they were the subject of an FBI investigation. More information on the USA PATRIOT Act is available from the American Library Association web site.

Approved by the Board of Trustees
September 6, 2005