

Policy Name: Public Use of the Internet, WIFI, and Mobile Hotspots.

Adoption Date: February 16, 2022

Supersedes: *Policy #10.53/Policy for Public Use of the Internet*

## BACKGROUND

Tacoma Public Library (TPL) operates under the fundamental belief that libraries play a vital role in the community by supporting access to information. TPL provides the public with access to the internet via public computer workstations, a WIFI network, and mobile Hotspots. The purpose of this policy is to protect the interest of TPL and library users, with specificity for the health and safety of children.

## POLICY INTENT

### Access to Information

All users of the Library may have access to electronic information, services, and networks provided directly or indirectly by the library. In order to access the internet via a library workstation, a user must have a valid library card. The Library has no control over the information on the internet and is not responsible for internet content accessed by the public, when utilizing a library workstation, mobile hotspot, or WIFI.

A user may not tamper with Library hardware or software or use the computing resources of the Library for any purpose that violates the Library's Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy, Patron Community Use Agreement, Special Use of Library Premises for Expression of Opinion or Federal Law such as the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA). Any person doing so may have his or her use of Internet services limited or suspended and may be banned from the Library. Users that violate this policy may be denied access in accordance with the Library's Patron and Community Library Use Agreement and/or Exclusion from Premises Policy.

### Safety and Privacy

The internet is a global network of ideas, images, and commentary that provides access to large amounts of materials from around the world. Some content on the internet may be offensive, illegal, out-of-date, or erroneous. The library cannot control content available via the internet. Nor is the library responsible for materials accessed on devices connected to the library's public WIFI or materials accessed using a Library distributed technology via collections checkout.

The Library cannot guarantee privacy for individuals using electronic or other library resources, as inadvertent viewing of library materials can occur in the public facilities. Users of the internet services should have no expectation of privacy when using public internet or public workstations. The library further assumes no responsibility for damages or violations of confidentiality or privacy when accessing the library's internet/WIFI services.

Transaction logs and other system information that could be used to identify users with specific materials or subject matter are considered by the Library to be confidential, as provided for by Administrative Policy #10.23, "Confidentiality of Records Policy."

### **Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA)**

The Library upholds the right of each individual 17 years or older to have access to constitutionally protected material. The Library considers all materials selected or accessed by adults as protected under the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution until such time as they are determined unprotected by law. Patrons who are at least 17 years of age or older (and provide acceptable photo identification) may request unfiltered internet access.

Otherwise, internet use and materials accessed via the internet, WIFI, or mobile hotspots by youth younger than 17, remains the responsibility of the child's parent or guardian. In compliance with the federal Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), the Library provides a filter on all Library computers available to minors. Per CIPA, a child is defined as a minor if he or she is under the age of 17.

Internet filtering or blocking software is an imperfect technology and can filter material that is not harmful to children and can fail to filter other material that may be harmful to help protect their child's safety, TPL encourages parents to discuss with their child, expectations for use of email, online chatting, disclosure of public information, access to materials, and any other internet activities. The library will implement reasonable technology measures to filter or block child pornography or other illegal material but cannot guarantee all inappropriate materials will be filtered or blocked, or automatically inaccessible to library users.

### **Rules of Behavior**

No user may engage in any behavior that unreasonably interferes with or disrupts the use of Library resources by others. Disruptions include but are not limited to:

- Distribution of unsolicited advertising
- Harassment of other persons
- Failure to use sound-muffling headphones or not muting sound to the disturbance of other users
- Using computer resources to make unauthorized entry to any computer accessible via the network, including the host systems at the Library
- Damaging or altering computer equipment, systems, or software
- Downloading or installing any harmful program defined as, but not limited to, spyware, viruses, Trojans, malware, or any other illegal utility on any computer
- Accessing internet images on library-provided computers that minors may also have access to that are obscene, child pornography or harmful to minors

Users engaging in these activities may lose Library Access via Temporary Suspension or Permanent Exclusion from Library Premises and/or lose computer privileges. Library staff may summon law enforcement authorities if necessary.

### **Copyright Laws**

It is the user's responsibility to check for copyright protection or any licensing agreement for any software, files or data being used, and to comply with the requirements of that copyright or licensing agreement. Failure to comply with copyright protection laws and software licensing agreements may result in suspension of internet, computer workstation, and mobile hotspot usage. Failure to comply may also result in Exclusion from Library premises per policy #10.49.

The library's WIFI and mobile hotspots are connected to an open and unauthenticated network, and the library is unable to trace individual usage of these information resources. The Library assumes no responsibility for copyright infringement committed by library users utilizing Library digital resources.

## STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

This policy supports the following library strategic priorities:

### Equity and Access

By creating opportunities to access the internet at TPL locations or borrow a mobile hotspot to access the online resources from personal devices, the library is contributing to solution-oriented models to help break the digital divide. Internet access also gives users the ability to search for and apply to jobs, helping to create a more equitable job pool in the Tacoma community.

### Learning, Creativity, and Innovation

Access to online resources and materials allow library users to explore beyond their physical environment. Resources accessed via the internet can facilitate and encourage creativity and innovation amongst library users by giving access to materials that the user may not have had access to otherwise.

### Cultivate and Engage Community

Library users are able to use resources such as the internet, computer workstations, WIFI, and mobile hot spots to connect with others via the internet. Connecting to WIFI also allows library users without access to phone or internet service, to contact individuals, community resources etc.

x	<b>Equity and Access</b> We are committed to racial equity and social justice. It guides our work in serving Tacoma's diverse communities, especially the most vulnerable and underserved.	x	<b>Cultivate and Engage Community</b> We will be the center for connecting people, ideas, and places.
x	<b>Learning, Creativity, and Innovation</b> We will be the place for learning, discovery, and innovation.		<b>Responsible and Resilient</b> We will be an integral partner in a sustainable network that supports a thriving Tacoma.
	<b>Investment in Youth</b> We believe that youth are the future and will prioritize services, programs, and partnerships that nurture and develop young minds.		

## DEFINITIONS

**Inappropriate Behavior:** visual depictions that are obscene, child pornography, or harmful to minors or other patrons.

## POLICY HISTORY

Action	Date	Notes
Revised	November 2011	

Revised	May 24, 2021	
Board Adoption	February 16, 2022	

## REFERENCES

[Children's Internet Protection Act \(CIPA\)](#)

[United States Constitution: First Amendment](#)

TPL Policies:

[Library Data Confidentiality Policy #10.23](#)

[Special Use of Library Premises for Expression of Opinion Policy #10.49.3](#)

[Exclusion and Suspension Policy #10.49](#)