

Security for Library Collections

“Library Security Summit”

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Introduction

“[Librarians] ... have an obligation to protect their collections from loss and from damage of any sort, and they have an obligation to protect their staff and their visitors as far as possible from hazards that may exist in work, study, and exhibition areas.”

Security

- Webster's: "Freedom from damage."
- "Measures taken to protect materials from unauthorized access, change, destruction, or other threats." (Pearce-Moses, Richard. *A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology*, 2005.)

Responsibilities

- Librarians are responsible for
 - Building collections and for the cataloging, access, preservation, security, and safe storage of collections
 - Providing proper housing, storage, and protection for materials (*Responsible Custody*)
 - Ensure that the materials do not deteriorate and are not lost through theft or mutilation
 - Making security a basic library function

Security and the Collections

- Security is a primary staff responsibility, yet it is one of the most difficult to enforce.

The staff must

- Enforce the security rules and regulations uniformly with *all* patrons/researchers
- Provide access to the materials with security
- Ensure the preservation and security of the collections

Reasons for Security Planning

- Sound asset management
- Ensures continuing mission of organization
- Ensures survival and access to the collections
- Potentially saves money
- Stewardship of these collections is the staff's professional, and sometimes legal, responsibility.

Reasons for Security Planning

- Allows staff to be prepared as much as possible in the event of a breach in security
- Morale issues can be addressed more easily following a breach in security

Security Operations

- Detering the theft of library and archival materials
- Identifying missing items
- Controlling the environment
- Preparing for and preventing disasters
- Protecting exhibited and loaned materials
- Insuring valuable holdings

Evaluating Library and Archival Security

- No two repositories have the same needs
- Need to take into account the library's unique nature, collections, mission, building, and location
- Survey each area of library
 - Determine what materials should be protected against what threats
 - Think broadly when considering threats and be hard on the staff and the institution

Evaluating Library and Archival Security

- Consider the *modus operandi* of thieves
- *Remember*: It is far more economical to provide protection for collections than to recover them when lost to theft, fire, or natural disaster

Security Plan Components

- Security policies and procedures that cover staff, patrons/researchers, and collections
- Staff education and training
- Physical security
- Storage and local history/special collections room design
- Techniques of processing and cataloging

Security Plan Components

- Secure exhibit policies and procedures
- Controlling the environment
- Disaster preparedness
- Procedures for responding to a breach in security
- Relationships with local police/security

Security Plan Requirements



- Needs to be written down
- Must be approved by the highest authority in the institution
- Distributed to, and signed off on, by the staff at all levels

Deterrents and Prevention of Theft

- Special kind of protection
 - Highly selective as to how it is implemented
- Determine what kind of protection is necessary and feasible for your institution
- Items with marketable value in a local history/special collection should be identified, appraised, and scheduled for protection
- Public access to public areas only!

Security Steps To Be Taken

- Identification badges worn by repair, construction, and custodial staff especially, but all staff preferably
- Develop clear and specific opening and closing procedures
- Create and maintain complete, accurate, and up-to-date records of holdings, their contents, and their locations

Security Steps To Be Taken

- Accession and cataloging records, finding aids, *signed* call slips, conservation reports, collection condition surveys, loan and exhibition forms, ownership records, literary property rights (when applicable)
 - Trace the material's existence in the institution
- Marketable items may need to be removed from collection and replaced with surrogates
- Special insurance policies are a possibility

Security Steps To Be Taken

- Monitor all exits and unprotected staff areas
- Supervise the use of all materials of any value within the local history/special collections room
- Patrol all areas of the library on an irregular basis with an eye to book and patron security
- Examine the library with an eye to sight-lines from reference and circulation desks and from offices

Security Steps To Be Taken

- Examine photocopy machine use to minimize damage to the materials
- Have cleaning crew work only when library is open
- Work with book and manuscript dealers and other libraries

Think Like Thieves

- Librarians must learn to think like thieves.
 - Determine which items upon which to focus
 - Possible strategies
 - Use photocopies instead of originals especially when providing access to fragile and/or local history materials
 - Microfilming
 - Marking materials
 - Special insurance policies

Security in the Local History Reading Room

- Encompasses sign-in, personal belongings, staff surveillance, environmental controls, water and fire threats, and staff training
- Reference Service
 - Good service leads to more secure library program
 - Reference interview
 - Educate patron, define and refine subject, focus researcher on specific collections, minimizes wasted time, reduces wear and tear on the materials

Security in the Local History Reading Room

- Rules and regulations
 - Contract between researcher and institution
 - Developed and improved upon by staff
 - Alert researchers to security concerns of library
 - Permit librarian to set ground rules for consulting materials and are uniformly enforced
 - Require positive (photo) identification
 - To be read and signed by researcher
 - All personal belongings to be stored in locker or secure area

Security in the Local History Reading Room

- Consult materials **ONLY** in the local history room and/or under the supervision of staff
- All materials handled carefully and left in the order found
- Note-taking in pencil only on blank paper
- Information on copyright and publication
- Other institution-specific regulations
- All photocopying done *only* at discretion of and by the staff

Security in the Local History Reading Room

- Reading Room physical arrangement
 - Chairs should be only on one side of the tables for clear supervision
 - Staff needs a clear view of all researchers
 - Provide book carts on which materials can be kept instead of on the tables

Physical Security Measures

- Locking and access systems
 - > 60% of illegal entries occur through doors
 - Reflects poor quality of many locks and systems
 - Locks
 - Most inexpensive component of security system
 - It is frequently an area where repositories cut costs
 - *Deadbolt locks* are the most secure (several versions)
 - *Panic or crash bars* often on emergency exits
 - Problem if no delay, or alarm, or if it is not wired directly to security office

Physical Security Measures

- Keys are integral part of locking systems
 - All keys must be recovered when someone leaves the institution
 - Locks can be re-keyed as well if necessary
- Electronic Digital locks
 - Operated via a keypad integrated into the lock or attached to the adjacent wall
- Card-reading access systems
 - Card reader at each door that controls the lock and is connected to a computer

Physical Security Measures

- Each person assigned a PIN to be used
 - Can provide or deny access to areas based on need
- All electronic security devices need back-up systems to ensure that with a loss of electricity security is not compromised

Physical Security Measures



- Detection Equipment
 - External devices
 - Glassbreak detectors, magnetic contact switches, vibration detectors, door prop alarms, latch position indicators
 - Internal devices
 - Ultrasonic device
 - Balloon-like pattern of high-energy sound waves that sets off an alarm if disturbed

Physical Security Measures



- Microwave alarm
 - Electromagnetic field that triggers an alarm when disturbed
- Passive infrared sensor
 - “Examines” an area for any changes in infrared energy or temperature emitted from objects in the area
- Photoelectric beam
 - Transmits infrared or ultrasonic beams to a receiver
 - When the beam is broken, the alarm is triggered
- Dual tech sensors
 - Passive infrared sensors and ultrasonic device

Physical Security Measures

- Lighting and alarms
 - Adequate perimeter lighting that produces few shadows is a deterrent to intruders and allows security personnel to observe grounds clearly
 - Choice between local and silent alarms
- Surveillance equipment
 - CCTV is expensive but often a deterrent
 - Problems exist with continual monitoring
 - Much better now that most are digital

Crisis Management

- Disaster response
 - Staff safety is of primary importance
 - Implement your disaster preparedness plan
 - Address vulnerability of collections from a security point of view
 - Use of identification badges, sign-in and sign-out procedures, supervision of staff and volunteers must be implemented

Crisis Management

- Suspected theft
 - Often suspicion comes from an outside source such as a manuscript or rare book dealer
 - Sometimes comes to light because of an altered bibliographic record
 - Sometimes there is a pattern of systematic loss without explanation

Crisis Management

- Recovery usually depends on quick action, bolstered by a written security plan, and previous contacts with dealers
- Suspicious activities by a patron or other staff member
 - No action can be taken unless activity is *actually witnessed* by a staff person
- Internal theft is always a problem and must be thoroughly investigated and documented before any confrontation

Crisis Management

- Insurance policies
 - Can play a major role in the recovery of stolen materials, especially valuable ones
 - Must investigate various types of policies and choose appropriate one
- State and federal laws
 - Be aware of Massachusetts current laws and applicable federal laws before acting
 - Have a commitment to *enforcing the applicable ones*

PUBLIC NOTICE

Effective September 6, 1990

State Law makes theft of mutilation of library materials or property a crime

(M.G.L. Chapter 61, Acts of 1990; M.G.L. Chapter 266, Sections 99 and 100)

Any person who willfully:

1. Conceals and or removes any library materials or property from the premises without authority; or
2. Fails to return any library materials or property which has been lent to said person by the library facility, within thirty (30) days after demand has been made for their return; or
3. Uses false identification or a fictitious name; misuses another person's library card, uses a revoked, expired or canceled library card or uses a falsely made library card to borrow library materials or property; or
3. Alters or destroys library ownership, electronic or catalog records; or
4. Mutilates, destroys or otherwise damages, in whole or in part, any library materials or property;

**May be punished upon conviction by imprisonment and/or fine of
up to \$25,000 and required to make full restitution**

Conclusions

- “Local History/Special Collections” are special and therefore have “special rules and regulations”
- Rules and regulations are there to protect the materials so they can be consulted in the future
 - Once the materials are gone they may well be gone forever

Conclusions



- Prevent accidental damage
- Apply to ALL persons
 - No one singled out
- Contract between researcher and institution
 - Institution provides for patron's research needs
 - Researcher follows rules and regulations
- Seriousness of security is crucial and must be understood in libraries and local history/special collections

Conclusions

- Implementation is responsibility of ALL staff
- Activities aimed at protection of library collections lie at core of any good security system
- Few librarians know the value of their collections/holdings
- Security is not just fancy locks, motion detectors, fire alarms, sprinklers, etc.

Conclusions

- Security is a state of mind integral to a librarian's *modus operandi*
- Fancy equipment does little if policies, procedures, and activities of librarians are lax and present a “devil-may-care” attitude
- Collection security also addresses potential monetary value and loss
 - Need to replace materials stolen or mutilated

Conclusions



- Policies and procedures are at the core of any security program
- Finally, the librarian must be friendly, cordial, and helpful but also firm and resolute in enforcing security

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Questions?



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