

GULFPORT PUBLIC LIBRARY

POLICY TITLE: CONFIDENTIALITY OF LIBRARY RECORDS

EFFECTIVE DATE: SEPTEMBER 1, 2013

Philosophy:

As the choice of books and other library materials, along with the use of the informational resources of the library is a personal and private endeavor on the part of each individual patron, adult, or child, the library shall make every effort to see that information about that persons choices remain confidential. To make full and effective use of library resources, people must be confident that others will not become aware of what books they read, the materials they use, the questions they ask. Such a possibility would inhibit free usage of the library and is contrary to the American Library Association's [Bill of Rights](#) and [Freedom to Read Statement](#), and the freedoms guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution.

Statement of Policy:

It is the intent of the Gulfport Public Library to protect the privacy of those who use the Library. The Library collects and maintains only the minimum number of records necessary for maintaining operations.

In accordance with [Florida State Statute 257.261](#), the Gulfport Public Library shall not disclose any record or other information that identifies a user of library services as requesting or obtaining specific materials or services or as otherwise using the Library. Library user records may be disclosed only in the following circumstances:

- In accordance with a proper judicial order. If a court order, search warrant or subpoena is issued. Before complying, the library will consult the City Attorney to assure the document is in proper form.

- **For the purpose of collecting fines or recovering overdue books, documents, films, or other items or materials owned or otherwise belonging to the library only, the library may disclose information to**
 1. The library patron named in the records
 2. In the case of a library patron less than 14 years of age, the parent or guardian of that patron named in the records
 3. Any entity that collects fines on behalf of the library
 4. Municipal or county law enforcement officials
 5. Judicial officials

Any person who violates the Statute commits a misdemeanor of the second degree.

US Patriot Act of 2001:

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 the act, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and law enforcement officials may seek court orders for library records for investigations relevant to national security or terrorism. Libraries or 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 agencies or that they were the subjects of FBI investigations.