
Guidelines regarding thefts in libraries

By the RBMS Security Committee

William A. Moffett, Chair

The final version, approved by the ACRL Board of Directors in January 1988.

The "Guidelines Regarding Thefts in Libraries" have been developed by the ACRL Rare Books and Manuscripts Section's Security Committee has developed over the past eight years. The Committee began in 1978 with an *ad hoc* charge to develop guidelines for the marking of rare materials so that they could be properly identified when recovered. First published in 1979, these were later made an appendix to the broader "Guidelines for the Security of Rare Book, Manuscript, and Other Special Collections," published by ACRL in 1982, and currently under revision by the Committee (see draft in *C&RL News*, March 1982, pp.90-93).

From 1983 to 1986 successive drafts of the guidelines were reviewed by the RBMS Security Committee. The general policies were further expanded to include guidelines for "What to do before a theft occurs"; a checklist of steps to follow when a theft is discovered, "What to do after a theft occurs"; and "Model legislation: Theft and mutilation of library materials," which the Committee hopes libraries and ACRL Chapters will take to their state legislatures to strengthen the laws for the prosecution and punishment of library thieves. A final draft was approved at ALA Annual Conference in 1986 and published in *C&RL News*, November 1986, pp.646-49. Open hearings were held at the ALA Midwinter Meeting in January 1987. No revisions or emendations were offered, so the guidelines were approved by the RBMS Executive Commit-

tee, the ACRL Standards and Accreditation Committee, the ACRL Board of Directors, and the ALA Standards Committee (the latter two taking place at the ALA Midwinter Meeting in 1988).

The RBMS Security Committee has emphasized two important points about these guidelines. First, the guidelines are interrelated and should be considered in conjunction with the previously published guidelines as well. Second, the guidelines concern *all* library thefts, not just those which may occur in rare book, manuscript, and other special collections departments within a library system. Some informal surveys over the past few years have shown that these latter departments have stronger physical and procedural security systems in place than do their parent libraries for the general collections. Publicized thefts, furthermore, such as the James Shinn case, show that thieves, rather than infiltrating established systems, instead pilfer from open stacks where rare materials acquired years before remain unidentified and unprotected. The Committee itself conducted one informal, geographic survey in 1982 among special collections libraries and found that most had security policies in place following the RBMS general guidelines or had developed parallel guidelines on their own. An ARL/Office of Management Studies survey in 1984 as part of its SPEC Kit on "Collection Security in ARL Libraries" showed, however, that only 32% of the eighty-nine responding libraries had ap-

pointed a security officer and only 15% had written security policies to follow.

Perhaps it is time for ACRL and ALA to consider the serious problem of library thefts as a library-wide issue rather than limiting the concern to rare books, manuscripts, and other special collections. The Rare Books and Manuscripts Section stands ready to develop and co-sponsor ACRL and ALA programs at annual conferences which will educate all librarians about the epidemic proportions of library thefts and the means to cope with them.

Guidelines for what to do before a library theft occurs

I. Library security officer

Appoint a senior library staff member as Security Officer who has delegated authority from the library and the institution to act on their behalf, working with the institution's legal counsel and security force.

II. Security planning group

Form a group made up of the library Security Officer and other appropriate personnel to develop a specific plan of action to follow when a theft is discovered.

III. Publicity

Establish liaison with the institution's public relations office so that timely and accurate announcements can be made to the press when a theft is discovered.

IV. Law enforcement

A. Establish contact with law enforcement agencies—institutional, local, state, and/or federal—to determine who will be called and under what circumstances. The library should maintain a list of contacts in each level of law enforcement and discuss the plan of action with each. The value of materials or other circumstances will dictate which law enforcement agency will handle the case; for example, the FBI may become involved if the dollar amount exceeds a minimum level, and the U.S. Customs may be involved if stolen items might be smuggled out of the country.

B. Work with the library's institutional administration to insure support for the prosecution of thieves. This support may range from an active willingness to participate in the collection of evidence to be turned over to the District Attorney or U.S. Attorney for further consideration, or it may involve direct participation in the prosecution by the institution.

C. Work with appropriate institutional, local, and state groups to lobby for strengthening of state laws regarding library thefts and for diligent prosecution of such crimes.

V. Other outside contacts

A. Establish liaison with local rare book, manuscript, and second-hand dealers to inform them of the library's collecting areas. Thieves sometimes

try to sell stolen property quickly, and dealers with knowledge of the library's collections can recognize, or at least be suspicious of, materials they know the library collects which are offered to them.

B. Report the name of the library's Security Officer to the RBMS Security Committee and note changes. The RBMS Security Committee will compile a list of the security officers annually. The list will be available from the ACRL office and will be forwarded to the Antiquarian Booksellers Association of America (ABAA).

C. Establish liaison with the national, online network, Bookline Alert/Missing Books and Manuscripts (BAMBAM) so that thefts can be reported immediately upon discovery. BAMBAM may be used not only to report missing books but also to check when materials are offered to the library.

VI. Preventive measures in the library

A. Implement the RBMS *Guidelines for the Security of Rare Book, Manuscript, and Other Special Collections* (1982), available from the ACRL Office.

B. Coordinate work in the library to assure proper ownership marks appear on the institution's holdings, providing proof that materials, if stolen, belong to the library. The RBMS Security Committee urges the use of its marking guidelines (an appendix to the security guidelines mentioned above) for rare materials. The Committee also recommends recording distinctive characteristics of individual copies in cataloguing notes as another means of identifying appropriate items.

C. Begin a process of reviewing materials in the library's general collections and open stacks for consideration of transfer to Special Collections or to a caged, limited access area of the library. The RBMS Transfer guidelines (*C&RL News*, July/August 1985, pp.349-52) will help the library identify candidates for transfer. Some libraries have identified rare materials in the open stacks in the course of projects, such as reporting to the Eighteenth Century Short Title Catalogue or working through a collection development policy using the Research Libraries Group Conspectus. While the task seems overwhelming for libraries large and small, the Committee recommends that libraries make a beginning.

VII. Addresses

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Checklist of what to do after a theft occurs from a library

I. Notification

Notification of Security Officer and appropriate

library administrators upon suspicion that a theft has occurred.

II. Discovery of theft

The library's collection of evidence of theft.

- Evidence of intrusion connected with missing library materials.
- Indication that patron or staff member has stolen books or manuscripts.
- Apprehension of person(s) in act of theft.
- Discovery of systematic pattern of loss.
- Recovery of materials stolen from library.
- Other evidence.

III. Evaluation

Security Officer's evaluation of evidence with administration, law enforcement personnel, library security group, and legal counsel as appropriate, and determination of action.

IV. Actions

- Notify Bookline Alert/Missing Books and Manuscripts (BAMBAM), and other appropriate networks.
- Notify local booksellers, and appropriate specialist dealers.
- Request action from law enforcement agencies. Contacts:
- Request action from legal authorities. Contacts:

V. Publicity

- Security officer meets with administration and public relations officer to plan appropriate publicity strategy.
- Security officer or public relations officer prepares news releases to alert staff and community to problem and action.
- Security officer or public relations officer handles inquiries from news media.

VI. Security officer's coordination of staff efforts

- Compilation of inventories.
- Arrangement for appraisals of loss or recovery.
- Preparation of communications to staff about progress on case.
- Maintenance of internal records of actions followed during progress of case.

Draft of model legislation: Theft and mutilation of library materials

Declaration of purpose

Because of the rising incidence of library theft and mutilation of library materials, libraries are suffering serious losses of books and other library property. In order to assure that research materials are available for public use, it is the policy of this state to provide libraries and their employees and agents with legal protection to ensure security for their collections. It is the policy of this state to affirm that local, state and federal prosecution of crimes affecting books or other library property is executed with the same degree of diligence as is ex-

ercised in prosecution of crimes affecting all other forms of property. Federal statute pertaining to stolen property is designed not only to implement federal-state co-operation in apprehending and punishing criminals who utilize, or cause to be utilized, channels of interstate commerce for transportation of property (in value of \$5,000 or more) of which the owner has been wrongfully deprived, but also to deter original theft.

Definition of terms

"Library" means any public library; any library of an educational, benevolent, hereditary, historical or eleemosynary institution, organization or society; any museum; any repository of public or institutional records. "Book or other library property" means any book, plate, picture, photograph, print, painting, drawing, map, newspaper, magazine, pamphlet, broadside, manuscript, document, letter, public record, microform, sound recording, audiovisual material in any format, magnetic or other tape, catalogue card or catalogue record, electronic data processing record, artifact, or other documentary, written or printed materials, or equipment, regardless of physical form or characteristics, belonging to, on loan to, or otherwise in the custody of a library.

Proposed wording

Section I.a.) Any person who willfully, maliciously or wantonly writes upon, injures, defaces, tears, cuts, mutilates, or destroys any book or other library property belonging to, on loan to, or otherwise in the custody of a library shall be guilty of a crime.

Section I.b.) The willful concealment of a book or other library property upon the person or among the belongings of the person or concealed upon the person or among the belongings of another while still on the premises of a library shall be prima facie evidence of intent to commit larceny thereof.

Section I.c.) The willful removal of a book or other library property in contravention of library regulations shall be prima facie evidence of intent to commit larceny thereof.

Section I.d.) The willful alteration or destruction of library ownership records, electronic or catalogue records retained apart from or applied directly to a book or other library property shall be prima facie evidence of intent to commit larceny of a book or other library property.

Section II.a.) An adult agent or employee of a library who has reasonable grounds to believe that a person committed, was committing, or was attempting to commit the acts described in Section I may stop such person. Immediately upon stopping such person the library employee shall identify himself and state the reason for stopping the person. If after the initial confrontation with the person under suspicion, the adult agent or library employee has reasonable grounds to believe that at the time stopped the person committed, was commit-

ting, or was attempting to commit the crimes set forth in Section I, said employee or agent may detain such person for a time sufficient to summon a peace officer to the library. In no case shall the detention be for a period of more than one-half (1/2) hour. Said detention must be accomplished in a reasonable manner without unreasonable restraints or excessive force, and may take place only on the premises of the library where the alleged crime occurred. Library premises includes the interior of a building, structure, or other enclosure in which a library facility is located, the exterior appurtenances to such building, structure, or other enclosure, and the land on which such building, structure, or other enclosure is located. Any person so stopped by an employee or agent of a library shall promptly identify himself by name and address. Once placed under detention, such person shall not be required to provide any other information nor shall any written and/or signed statement be elicited from him until a peace officer has taken him into custody. The said employee or agent may, however, examine said property which the employee or agent has reasonable grounds to believe was unlawfully taken as set forth in Sections I.b and/or I.c. or injured or destroyed as set forth in Sections I.a and/or I.d. Should the person detained refuse to surrender the item for examination, a limited and reasonable search may be conducted. Only packages, shopping bags, handbags, or other property in the immediate possession of the person detained, but not including any clothing worn by the person, may be searched.

Section II.b.) For the purposes of Section II.a "reasonable grounds" shall include, but not be limited to, knowledge that a person has concealed or injured a book or other library property while on

the premises of the library.

Section II.c.) In detaining a person whom the employee or agent of the library has reasonable grounds to believe committed, was committing or was attempting to commit any of the crimes set forth in Section I, the said employee or agent may use a reasonable amount of nondeadly force when and only when such force is necessary to protect himself or to prevent the escape of the person being detained or the loss of the library's property.

Section III. An adult agent or employee of a library who stops, detains and/or causes the arrest of any person pursuant to Section II shall not be held civilly liable for false arrest, false imprisonment, unlawful detention, assault, battery, defamation of character, malicious prosecution or invasion of civil rights of the person stopped, detained and/or arrested, provided that in stopping, detaining or causing the arrest of the person, the adult agent or employee had at the time of the stopping, detention or arrest reasonable grounds to believe that the person had committed, was committing, or was attempting to commit any of the crimes set forth in Section I.

Section IV. The fair market value of property affected by crimes set forth in Section I determines the class of offense: value under \$500 indicates a misdemeanor; \$500-\$5,000 a Class I felony; above \$5,000 a Class II felony.

The aggregate value of all property referred to in a single indictment shall constitute the value thereof.

Section V. A copy or abstract of this act shall be posted and prominently displayed in all libraries.

Section VI. This act shall take effect upon passage.



ACRL supports multi-type networking and LSCA re-authorization

The following resolution, prepared by the ACRL Legislation Committee, was passed by the ACRL Board of Directors at the Midwinter Meeting on January 12, 1988.

WHEREAS, academic libraries and their information resources are a key component of the information infrastructure of the United States, and

WHEREAS, academic libraries have worked cooperatively with public, school, business, medical, governmental, and private libraries to furnish statewide library and information services, and

WHEREAS, in most states there are a number of regional resource sharing organizations and activities supported by LSCA Title III, in which the resource collections of academic libraries are needed, and

WHEREAS, local, regional, and state union lists supported by LSCA create a database which benefits as well as requires participation of academic libraries, and

WHEREAS, many states use LSCA funds to promote access to nationwide bibliographic databases which benefit academic libraries, and

WHEREAS, LSCA funds strongly interlibrary loan capabilities on which academic libraries depend; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that academic librarians continue to explore, create and participate in networks which unite public, school, state and special libraries in coordinated efforts to serve the citizens of their states and work toward continued Federal support for these programs,

AND, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that ac-

ademic librarians express their strong support for re-authorization of the Library Services and Construction Act, including Title III, as essential for

the information flow vital for continued productivity, education, research and an informed populace. ■■

Bylaws of the College Libraries Section

The latest revision, approved by the ACRL Board at the Midwinter Meeting.

Article I. Name

The name of this organization is the College Libraries Section of the Association of College and Research Libraries, a division of the American Library Association.

Article II. Object

The object of the Section shall be to advance college librarianship and encourage the development of library services in baccalaureate degree-granting institutions.

Article III. Membership

Any member of the Association of College and Research Libraries may elect membership in this Section.

Article IV. Officers

Sec. 1. *Officers.* The officers of the Section shall be a chair, a vice-chair/chair-elect, and a secretary.

Sec. 2. *Terms.* The chair shall serve as such for one year. The chair-elect shall serve for one year as vice-chair. At the expiration of that term, or upon the occurrence of an earlier vacancy, the vice-chair/chair-elect shall succeed to the office of chair. The secretary serves for one year. All officers and members of the Executive Committee begin their terms with the adjournment of the annual conference.

Article V. Executive Committee

Sec. 1. *Composition.* The Executive Committee shall consist of the officers, the immediate past chair, the past secretary, and two members-at-large. The members-at-large shall serve overlapping two-year terms, with one member elected each year. The Executive Director of the Association of College and Research Libraries shall be an ex-officio member, without vote.

Sec. 2. *Meetings.* Regular meetings of the Executive Committee are to be held at times and places of the annual and mid-winter meetings of the American Library Association. Special meetings may be called at the discretion of the chair. All regular meetings of the Committee shall be open to all members of the Section.

Sec. 3. *Powers and duties.* The main function of the Executive Committee shall be to provide direction for the Section. The Committee has authority over the affairs of the Section during the period between meetings of the Section, subject to review by the members of the section.

Sec. 4. *Quorum.* A majority of members constitutes a quorum at any meeting of the Executive Committee.

Article VI. Committees

Sec. 1. *Authorization.* Committees of the Section shall be established by action of the chair after consultation with the Executive Committee.

Sec. 2. *Standing Committees.* Standing committees may be established to consider matters of the