

PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOGRAPHY POLICY

Photography or Recording by the Library

Merrick Public Library staff have the right to photograph, film, and record library events and customers for promotional use. Visitors to the library, or participants in any library event being captured on film or by photograph, will be advised in advance, verbally or through signage, that their participation in the event acts as consent to being photographed, filmed or recorded, unless they otherwise clearly indicate to the contrary to library staff. To ensure the privacy of all individuals, their images will not be identified using full names or personal identifying information without written approval from the photographed subject, parent or legal guardian. This policy applies only to open, public events. Closed events such as class visits would require releases and/or permissions from the supervisor of the visiting organization.

Photography or Recording by Members of the Public or the Media

While the library is a public place, it is considered a “limited public forum” under federal law. Public libraries may reasonably restrict the exercise of free speech rights in their buildings, particularly when the conduct would be disruptive to, or interfere with, the other customers or staff or be inconsistent with the library’s mission.

Subject to the preceding paragraph: photography and video or audio recording by visitors to the library are generally permitted if it is strictly for personal use. Photography and video or audio recording for commercial purposes are permitted only if the activity has been expressly approved by the Library Director. In order to ensure that such activity would not be disruptive to, or interfere with, the library staff or customers, or be inconsistent with the library’s mission, all individuals proposing to engage in such commercial activities must request approval in writing and in advance.

All requests to use a library facility as a setting for photography, video or audio recording are to be referred to the Library Director, who has the responsibility and authority to evaluate the requests and to monitor the recording. Requests will be evaluated in terms of their impact on library operations and services. The Library Director will seek approval and make arrangements with the Library Board of Trustees and library personnel in advance of the approved photography or recording.

In order to protect the rights of individual customers and to prevent disruptions, interference with staff or customers, or conduct inconsistent with the library’s mission, photographing and video or audio recording on library property are restricted as follows:

- Under no circumstances may the public, members of the media, or library staff take photographs or record video or audio without the express permission of any library customer or staff member who would be included within the composition. In the case of minors, written permission must come from the parent or legal guardian. Failure to adhere to this policy will result in the offender(s) being asked to put away their equipment or leave the library.
- Media are subject to the provisions of the Patron Behavior Policy and may not disturb the normal operations of the library.
- In the event of a critical incident or emergency requiring police or fire response, public and media access may be limited to allow emergency personnel to ensure safety and security.

The terms above apply to the media as well as to amateur photographers and audio/video creators.