

# Policy on Public Use of the Internet

## Policy Statement

To fulfill its mission of providing access to information of all types in a wide variety of formats, Sterling Municipal Library provides access to Internet resources. The Internet offers access to many valuable local, national and international sources of information. However, some information found on the Internet may be inaccurate, incomplete, dated or offensive to some individuals. A good information consumer must evaluate the validity and appropriateness of information found. The Library does not monitor or control information accessed through the Internet and does not accept responsibility for its contents.

This policy applies to all users of Sterling Municipal Library computers or networks. If you have any questions about the policy or what it means, please contact a librarian for more information. If you have read, understand and accept the Policy on Public Use of the Internet, you may access the Library's Internet resources.

## Filtering

As required by the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), the Library has implemented software filtering that blocks access to visual depictions of obscene material, child pornography and material that is "harmful to minors" on all its computers. Although filtering software protects against access to this type of material, users should be aware that currently available filtering software results are not 100% effective. The software cannot block out all objectionable sites, and it sometimes blocks useful material, including sites that are suitable for children, teens and adults. The Library has made every attempt to select filtering software that complies with CIPA while providing Library users with the broadest possible access to information. The Library cannot and does not guarantee that the filtering software on its Internet accessible computers will block all obscenity, child pornography, or materials that are harmful to minors, nor does it guarantee that the filtering software will not restrict access to sites containing legitimate research. Adults over the age of 17 who wish to access sites blocked by filters may ask that the filtering software be disabled. If you have any questions regarding the Library's filtering software, please ask a librarian.

## Access by Minors

The Library does not serve in place of parents or guardians, and librarians cannot provide care and supervision of children as they explore the Internet. Parents, legal guardians and caregivers assume the responsibility of deciding which library resources are appropriate for their children. Parents should supervise their child's Internet sessions and let their children know the materials or websites they should not use.

For information on children and the Internet, see *Child Safety on the Information Highway*, produced by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and Interactive Service Organization. ([www.missingkids.com](http://www.missingkids.com))

## **Rules Governing Use of Library Internet Accessible Computers**

By using an Internet accessible computer at Sterling Municipal Library, users agree to the rules and guidelines outlined in this policy.

### **General Rules**

- A valid library card is necessary for computer use
- There is a limit of two users per Internet station at a time. Users may not gather around Internet stations as this may distract others
- All users must comply with federal, state and local laws, including laws governing the transmission and dissemination of information while accessing the Internet, and with all Library policies and procedures
- Due to the limited resources available for provision of public access to the Internet, the Library may set limits on use of large files of still or moving images or sound, or on downloading files in any medium

### **Assistance**

Although library staff may offer searching suggestions and answer basic questions they cannot provide in-depth training on Internet operations or personal computer skills.

### **Time Limits**

Patron computer usage is scheduled in one hour increments with a maximum of five hours in each 24 hour period.

### **Lawful Activities**

Users may not access or use the Internet for any illegal activity or place any material on the Internet related to any illegal activity. It is the responsibility of the user to respect the copyright laws as described below, as well as all licensing agreements.

### **Prohibited Activities & Misuses**

Prohibited activities and misuses include, but are not limited to:

- Viewing illegal material or using the Internet for any illegal activity
- Violating copyright laws or rights of other third parties, or software licensing agreements
- Hacking into the Library's computer system or any other computer system
- Mishandling, damaging or attempting to damage computer equipment or software, and tampering with computer settings
- Interfering with system operations, integrity or security
- Distributing unsolicited advertising
- Invading the privacy of others
- Harassing others with messages, prints or images
- Engaging in any activity which is deliberately and maliciously offensive, libelous or slanderous
- View, print, distribute display, send, or receive images of material that might reasonably be considered obscene, or material that violates laws relating to child pornography

- Installing or downloading any software
- Failing to pay for printing
- Refusing or ignoring a librarian's request to give up an Internet terminal
- Any other violation of the Policy on Public Use of the Internet

### **Loss of Internet Privileges**

Use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right. Violations can result in loss of access. Unlawful activities will be dealt with in an appropriate manner. Damages resulting from misuse are the responsibility of the user, or in the case of minors, the parent or legal guardian.

### **Fees**

The user assumes responsibility for all payment of fees for any fee-based service accessed through the Internet.

### **Downloading**

Users may, if lawful, download information to a pre-formatted disk, CD-Rom or USB drive. Such items must be provided at the user's expense. The Library is not responsible for any loss or damage to personal disks, files, etc., when downloading. All downloading must be accomplished within the time period allowed for Internet use.

### **Printing**

Printing is allowed and counts as part of the time limit. There is a charge for printing, and the fees are posted.

### **Right to Terminate Session**

The Library reserves the right to terminate an Internet session at any time and seize any materials which may have been printed in violation of this policy, the rules and regulations of the Library, or any local, state or federal law.

### **E-Mail**

The Library does not provide personal e-mail accounts. Users may, however, sign up for free e-mail accounts provided by various Internet companies.

### **Privacy and Precautions**

Users should be aware that the Internet is not a secure medium, and that third parties may be able to obtain information regarding a users' activities. Sterling Municipal Library takes measures to protect your privacy while you are using library computers. The Library will not release information on the use of specific Internet resources by members of the public except as required by law, or when necessary for the proper operation of the Library.

Illegal activities or activities that interfere with or disrupt the network, users, services or equipment are prohibited. The Library does not routinely monitor public computers, but reserves the right to do so when a violation of this policy or illegal activity is suspected. Staff is authorized to take immediate action to protect the security of computers and the network. This includes confiscating any removable media, requiring a user to leave a search station or the premises, and contacting law enforcement authorities.

### **Copyrights**

U.S. copyright law (Title 17, U.S. Code) prohibits the unauthorized reproduction or distribution of copyrighted materials, except as permitted by the principles of "fair use." Users may not copy or distribute electronic materials (including electronic mail, text, images, programs, or data) without the explicit permission of the copyright holder. Any responsibility for any consequences of copyright infringement lies with the user. The Library expressly disclaims any liability or responsibility resulting from such use. The Library expressly disclaims any liability or responsibility arising from access to or use of information obtained through its electronic information systems, or any consequences thereof.

### **Guidelines on Access to Information**

Sterling Municipal Library adheres to the following American Library Association ([www.ala.org](http://www.ala.org)) statements on access to Information:

- *The Library Bill of Rights*  
[www.ala.org/ala/oif/statementspols/statementsif/librarybillrights.htm](http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/statementspols/statementsif/librarybillrights.htm)
- *The Freedom to Read Statement*  
<http://www.ala.org/ala/ourassociation/othergroups/ftfr/freedomreadfoundation.htm>
- *Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights: Free Access to Libraries for Minors*  
<http://www.ala.org/Template.cfm?Section=interpretations&Template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=8639>
- *Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights: Access to Electronic Information Services and Resources.*  
<http://www.ala.org/Template.cfm?Section=interpretations&Template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=31872>