

**TITLE:** Customer Suspensions – Short and Long Term **POLICY:** A-1012

**AUTHORITY:** Chief Executive Officer

|                                       |                                     |                                 |
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| <i>Effective:</i><br>February 6, 2008 | <i>Reviewed:</i><br>August 21, 2019 | <i>Revised:</i><br>May 23, 2024 |
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**POLICY STATEMENT**

*This Policy and accompanying procedures support Policy A-1009: [Customer Conduct - Management of.](#)*

When a customer’s behaviour threatens the safety of staff or other library customers and/or violates the acceptable use of library spaces, equipment or services, their access to and use of library services and/or library facilities may be suspended.

Through the “Agent Status” agreement in place for all EPL service points, Edmonton Police Services (EPS) may suspend individuals from library facilities.

**Authority and Suspension Lengths for Various Offenses**

Below are suspension lengths for various offenses and staff authority levels. Repeated offenses, or offenses deemed to be more serious in nature, may result in longer-term suspensions. Where the suggested suspension length states “up to”, Managers may use their discretion in issuing a suspension. Note that some infractions may require consultation to determine suspension length as they relate to repeat behaviour and/or illegal activities.

| <b>Infraction</b>  | <b>Suspension Lengths</b>  | <b>Authority to Initiate and Communicate Suspension</b> | <b>Authority to formally Issue Suspension</b> |
|--|--|---|---|
| Minor Disturbance including Computer Violations          | Up to one month local  | Library Staff   | Managers, Library Services Coordinator        |
| Intoxication (alcohol or drugs) - first infraction       | One day local<br><i>(Repeat offenses will be three months or more system wide)</i> |   | Library Staff<br>Milner Security              |
| Intoxication (alcohol or drugs) - repeated infraction    | Three months system wide   | LSCs  | Managers, Milner Security                     |
| Possession of open** alcohol or drugs – first infraction | One day local<br><i>(Repeat offenses will be three months or</i>                   |   |   |

|   |                              |   |   |
|---|------------------------------|---|---|
|   | <i>more system wide)</i>     |   |   |
| Possession of open** alcohol or drugs – repeated infraction                           | Up to six months system wide | Library Staff                           | Managers, Milner Security               |
| Consumption of and/ or selling controlled substances, drugs or alcohol in the library | One year system wide         | Milner Security, Library Staff          | Managers                                |
| Property damage   | Up to one year system wide   | Milner Security, Library Staff          | Managers                                |
| Harassment (verbal abuse or threatening statements)                                   | Up to six months system wide | Milner Security, Library Staff          | Managers                                |
| Sexual Harassment or Sexual Misbehavior   | Up to one year system wide   | Milner Security, Library Staff          | Managers                                |
| Physical Altercation or physically threatening behaviour with no contact              | One year system wide         | Library Staff<br>Milner Security        | Managers                                |
| Weapons (display or use)  | One year system wide         | Library Staff, Milner Security          | Managers                                |
| Other illegal activities  | One year system wide         | Milner Security, Library Staff          | Managers                                |
| Severe cases of offenses above  | Up to two years              | Managers                                | Director, Branch Services               |
| Significantly severe cases of offenses above  | Up to three years            | Director, Branch Services               | Executive Director, Customer Experience |
| Physical Assault causing bodily harm or extensive damage to Library property          | Up to Five Years             | Executive Director, Customer Experience | CEO                                     |

**\*\* Open means the seal on the bottle is broken, the alcohol is in a cup or other container, the can/bottle is uncapped, or openly displayed**

Discretion needs to be applied when considering the duration of a suspension for juveniles, and those with cognitive disabilities. For suspensions where conditions of use are attached, Managers need to discuss options with their Director prior to proceeding with a suspension, as conditional usage such as attending the library with a case worker, parent or guardian present may be considered.

Library staff have the authority to issue one day suspensions. Staff will apprise their managers of the suspension and complete an incident report.

Library Services Coordinators may issue local suspensions of up to one month in length. In exceptional circumstances, managers may issue local suspensions for up to three months. Managers may also issue system wide suspensions for up to one year. Consultation with a Director is encouraged when there is uncertainty around a decision.

Directors approve suspensions of greater than 1 year and up to 2 years. The Executive Director, Customer Experience approves suspensions greater than 2 years and up to 3 years. The CEO approves suspensions beyond 3 years.

## **Appeals**

Suspended customers are entitled to an appeal process. Managers or Directors may provide provisions for reinstatement to EPL, based on the offense and the individual's appeal. For example, a customer may be permitted to return to the library only if the individual is escorted by a guardian. For local suspensions, customers may appeal directly to the management team of the branch where the incident occurred.

Appeals to the Director's decisions may be heard by the Executive Director, Customer Experience and/or CEO, as appropriate.

## **Procedures**

### **Confirm Customer Identity:**

Identity of the customer should be confirmed before issuing a suspension. As per the Library Use Policy: "All persons using facilities or services provided by the Library shall provide correct names and current addresses when requested to do so by library staff or as otherwise required."

### **Photographing Customers Involved in Incidents:**

Staff or Security may photograph customers, on an exceptional basis, to support documentation of an active, serious incident when a) a customer's identity is unknown and b) when staff or customer safety is being threatened.

A photograph should not be taken if doing so will escalate the situation or compromise staff safety.

If a suspension includes physical altercation or damage to library property over \$500, a manager may request video playback review to retrieve an image, if available. Requests to view video playback are approved by the Director, Branch Services or Executive Director, Customer Experience. Alternate sources of photos, such as social media platforms or other online sites may also be used.

### **Suspension Dates:**

Suspensions are issued for terms that are one day less than the incident date. For example, for a three-month suspension effective on March 15<sup>th</sup>, the suspension will extend until June 14<sup>th</sup> inclusive; the individual is welcome back to EPL on June 15<sup>th</sup>.

### **Short-Term (Local) Suspensions (1 month or less)**

For minor offences, Managers or Library Services Coordinators may impose a short-term suspension, suspending a customer's use of a service point and/or its Internet stations for up to one month.

1. Staff issue a verbal warning, notifying the customer about the inappropriate activity, requesting that the action cease.
2. If the activity persists, the customer is asked to leave. In the case of computer activity, the computer session is terminated.
3. A printout of the customer's booking history, if applicable, and a description of the incident may be provided for the Manager/ Library Services Coordinator. Staff will submit a record of the incident into the incident reporting software.
4. Manager or Library Services Coordinator enters the term of the suspension and the branch where the incident occurred into Workflows as a note, and then blocks the card for access at that branch in MyPC. Managers will enter the length of the suspension in the incident reporting software.
5. For suspensions greater than 7 days, the Manager provides written notification to the customer and uploads a copy of the notification to the incident report in the incident reporting software. If the customer is under the age of 18, the Manager will attempt to contact the guarantor before a letter is sent.

*Note: Managers will be provided a template for the letter.*

### **System-Wide Suspensions**

When an incident is more serious in nature (e.g., a customer's behaviour is illegal, verbally abusive or threatens the safety of staff, customers or security agents, or is a repeat offence), a longer-term, system-wide suspension will be issued.

1. Manager submits the incident report, which generates an e-mail to the Administrative Assistant and others, as required. At Stanley A. Milner, security agents have the authority to initiate and communicate suspensions in the following instances:
  - Repeat intoxication or intoxication combined with other poor behaviour
  - Drug dealing
  - Open possession of alcohol and/or drugs
  - Use of alcohol and/or drugs, including opioid poisonings
  - Observed purposeful EPL property damage or fire alarm (not accidental)
  - Observed sexual misbehavior
2. Manager updates the suspended customer account in Workflows: "Suspended from EPL until MM/DD/YYYY". Manager initials and notes the branch where the suspension applies, changes PIN, and bars the card.
3. The Administrative Assistant drafts a letter to the customer for the manager authorizing suspension, updates the suspension length in the incident reporting software, uploads the letter and mails it if an address is available.

4. At a minimum, each Friday, the Administrative Assistant updates the Suspensions list on the Safety and Security staffweb page, noting the names of the individuals, the branches and the incident numbers.
5. For serious infractions of harassment, assault, property damage, or other illegal activities, the manager should fill out an EPS witness statement.

*Note: In the case of Internet suspensions, privileges are suspended system-wide, regardless of the length of the suspension.*

### **Issuing Suspensions Greater than one year**

In some escalated incidents, a suspension greater than one year may be issued. Decisions are made on a case-by-case basis. The following guidelines are applied when issuing or recommending suspensions greater than one year:

#### **Up to 3 years**

- Physical assault/ harassment of staff, customers or security agents
- Threat of assault of staff, customers or security agents with a weapon on display
- Incidents involving two or more infractions within a one-year suspension category such as a physical altercation combined with sexual harassment

#### **Up to 5 years**

- Actions taken that: a) result in staff, customers or security agents requiring medical attention, b) result in significant damage to Library property or c) are serious enough to warrant this length of suspension

### **Suspended Customers Who Re-Enter the Library**

If suspended customers re-enter the Library, they are asked to leave. If they refuse, library staff call Security or Edmonton Police Service (EPS). All trespassing is to be noted in the incident reporting software as an additional incident and the Administrative Assistant needs to be copied in the notifications tab for tracking purposes.

### **Systemwide Suspension Appeal Procedures**

Appeals are addressed through meetings with a Manager and/or Director, Branch Services, and Security (as necessary). Managers or Directors may provide provisions for reinstatement to EPL, based on the offense and the individual's appeal.

#### **Procedures:**

1. Customers with system-wide suspensions may request an appeal meeting by submitting a [suspension appeal form](#) to the Administrative Assistant as per instructions in the suspension letter. Suspension appeal meetings are typically conducted at Stanley A. Milner or by exception, via video call.
2. Generally, the suspended customer must wait 2 weeks before requesting an appeal meeting.

3. Appeals are not offered for any suspension when the remaining length of the suspension is less than 4 weeks.
4. Suspensions can be retained, reduced or rescinded. Typically, the rationale to amend suspensions is made if the customer makes a compelling argument that the behaviour will not occur again.
5. Once a decision is made, the Manager formulates a response and responds to the customer in writing.
6. In instances where the suspension is reduced or rescinded, the Administrative Assistant will update the PITS incident and communicate to the Service Point leadership team where the incident occurred. The Manager will update the customer's account as appropriate.
7. EPL will conduct one suspension appeal meeting per customer. Under exceptional circumstances, a secondary appeal meeting may be conducted.
8. For suspensions greater than a year, the suspended customer will be required to meet with EPL to discuss the incident and demonstrate remediation or a change in behavior prior to reinstatement of EPL privileges. A reinstatement request can be initiated by submitting a [suspension appeal form](#)

### **Related Policies and Procedures**

[Public Internet Access Policy \(B-2010\)](#)

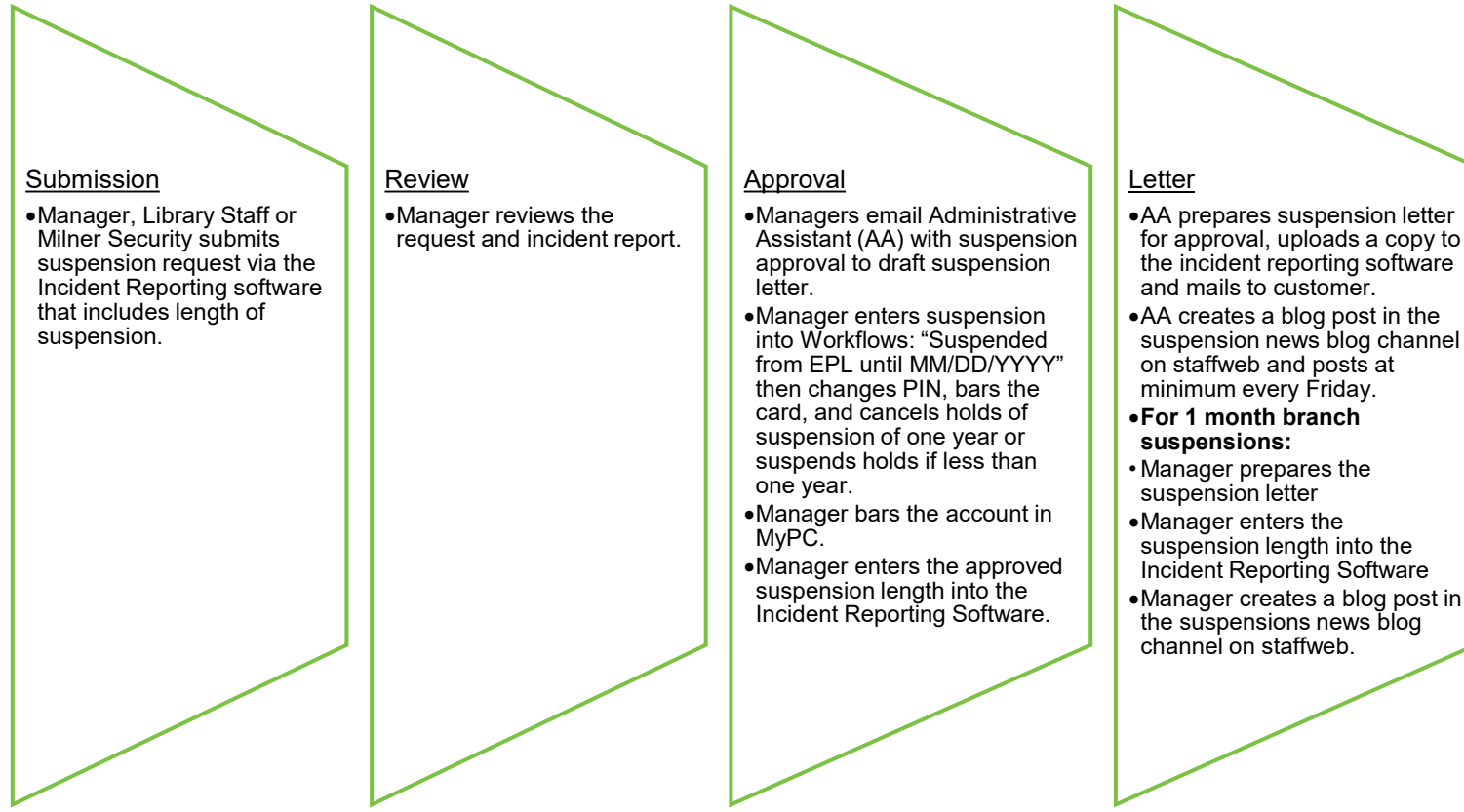
[Library Use Policy \(B-2028\)](#)

[Customer Conduct - Management of \(A-1009\)](#)

[Camera Surveillance \(A-1010\)](#)

[Incident Software System Report](#)

## System Wide Suspension Process



### Timelines:

- Suspension Review / formal suspension submission – 24 hours
- Suspension Approval – 24 hours
- Suspension Letter – 48 hours

### List of Categories:

- Computer Violations
- Customer Distress
- Drugs and/or Alcohol
- Minor Disturbance
- Near Miss
- Offsite Incident
- Physical Altercation
- Property Damage
- Sexual Misbehavior
- Staff Injury
- Theft
- Harassment
- Weapons
- Trespass