



Employee and Public Safety Measures at SPL

June 8, 2018

Recently public attention has been given to some of the complex social issues faced by the public library, particularly concerning Frances Morrison Central Library (FMCL).

SPL wishes to make clear we take the safety of our employees and patrons very seriously. SPL's [Safe Use Bylaw](#) prohibits activities including drugs, alcohol, and intoxication in the library.

Drug and alcohol addiction, poverty and homelessness are growing problems in Saskatoon. These are large issues facing our community, and they are not unique to the library.

We are taking active steps to manage what we can. However, there are limits to what we alone can do. SPL relies on the support from Saskatoon Police Services who remove the offender(s) from the premises, and other community organizations who have expertise in serving vulnerable residents.

Because the safety of our employees and patrons is SPL's main priority, we ask employees to call the police and not confront a patron who is engaging in behaviour that could pose a threat to public safety. Police response times are generally very quick, but sometimes their arrival may on occasion be delayed based on the demand for police services at any given time.

Some of our security measures are:

- In the past two years, SPL has more than doubled the security budget.
- Patrons in violation of the Safe Use & Code of Conduct Bylaw are not allowed to remain in the library.
- We've updated our patron-banning procedures and employees have received training on most recent the security strategy.
- There are security guards assigned to FMCL at all times. There are two guards assigned to FMCL from 10 am to 3 pm, and three guards assigned from 3 pm to 10 pm. They do routine checks covering the entire building; however, the compartmentalized layout of the facility does present security challenges.

- SPL also uses video surveillance in public areas at FMCL, including the washroom/foyer area on the lower level.
- We've updated our patron-incident database to ensure more accurate reporting. This database is monitored in real-time by the leadership team to determine what, if any additional measures may be required. This information helps us ensure we deploy security-related resources where they're most needed.
- Employees are receiving PREPARE training—a crisis-prevention training program designed for public places that help them diffuse confrontational situations. Nearly all public service employees at FMCL have already completed this training.
- All of the managers at FMCL have Naloxone administration training that could help save lives in the event of a drug overdose in the library.
- SPL is hiring two full-time social workers to connect people with support services. Employing social workers has been a successful strategy used by other urban library systems in Canada.
- We work closely with the Saskatoon City Police, community support workers, and other community organizations such as The Lighthouse to assist SPL in addressing these complex issues.
- We are collaborating with other stakeholders in the community who are working homelessness including the Saskatoon Poverty Reduction Partnership, the Saskatoon Housing Initiatives Partnerships' Cold Weather Strategy, and the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission.

As a public space in downtown Saskatoon, we are not immune to the multifaceted social issues at play in our city. We strive to ensure our spaces are as safe and welcoming for everyone. We are asking patrons for their assistance should they witness illegal activities within our facilities to let employees, security or police know.