New Smoking Regulations for Libraries Now in Effect

CLRC (Central Library Resources Council) shared information recently on the new Non-Smoking Law effective June 29, 2019 and affecting public and association libraries.

This new law is part of Section 1339-o of New York’s Public Heath Law. The amended law requires:

- That smoking is not permitted within 100 feet of the entrances, exits or outdoor areas of public and association libraries. Libraries are required to post signage at each door of the building regardless of whether it serves as an exit or entrance.

- Libraries are required to inform individuals violating the law but are not required to enforce the law.

- Persons in violation of this law may be subject to a civil penalty up to $2,000.

The items below are taken from an issue of the “Ask a Lawyer” service CLRC provides to members. Important points to consider are:

1. New signage will notify patrons and the general public of the new regulations.

2. For some libraries, the 100 feet parameter might conflict with commercial properties near the library, or areas where smokers congregate while enjoying a cigarette. Communicating with nearby property owners can help them understand the source of the new regulation.

3. This could be a chance to update our libraries’ policies on smoking to include the new 100-foot distance requirement and the library’s commitment to work with “impacted neighbors” and encourage compliance with this law.

LTA suggests you put this topic on an upcoming board meeting agenda. No doubt, your library directors are already working on compliance.
Digital Literacy

Technology plays a large role in our daily lives. Most of us don’t notice anymore the use of touch screens when we place an order at McDonald’s or how easy it can be to use an ATM to do our banking. Our purchases are scanned, EZPass lets us travel through toll booths quickly, and our mobile devices remind us of our appointments.

While most of us, me included, can get the hang of using our cellphones and tablets because they seem more intimate and intuitive, there is still a large gap among the population in knowing how to use a desktop or laptop computer. I see it every day in the career center where I work.

For half of each workday, I provide help in a resource center that contains two dozen computers. The machines are available primarily for job search and career exploration. At least one third of the customers who come to that center are looking for work and have never applied for a job online. They are nervous, frustrated, and have never used a computer, and so are limited in opportunities. Another third may not be afraid and might have touched a keyboard, but do not know how to search and maneuver on-line. Creating a Username and Password is a foreign concept. Age is not necessarily a defining characteristic of these folks. A lack of digital literacy is prevalent in all age groups.

The second half of my workday has me teaching basic computer usage to customers in week long classes. I have adults who are beginners and younger people who know how to use their cell phone. Neither group has the digital skills they need in today’s world. By the end of the week, they feel more comfortable, and may even start to like using the computers, but their path to meaningful employment, and general use of today’s technology is still a bumpy road.

Our libraries play an important part in helping patrons learn the digital skills necessary in the 21st century. I know how popular our one-on-one sessions at my library are. I’ve asked for help myself from our staff. It is important for library trustees to support staff efforts in developing programs that help our patrons bridge that digital divide. We must connect with legislators and urge them to introduce legislation that will fund national, state, and local activities to help our population improve their skills.

Our libraries are the best resource for many people in our communities. I know your library may need building improvements and more materials. However, making digital literacy a priority is important. The devices are not going away.

Remember this line from the first Star Wars movie: “Help me, Obi-Wan Kanobi. You’re my only hope.” In many ways, our libraries are the source of hope for our patrons.
A New Partnership for Library Trustees
Association of New York

Over the past year, the board of directors of LTA of New York has been clarifying the many points of maintaining LTA in fine working order. This has involved getting procedures and account information into a more understandable format, as well as recovering from the change in administrative support. Updating the organization website and considering updates to social media have been part of the picture. All of us on the board now have a better understanding of the day-to-day operation of an organization like LTA.

In the past, it was not in the scope of a director to be quite so hands on. However, since LTA has grown so much over the past decade, solid administrative support has become essential to provide members with the services and support developed during that time. Costs of providing the member benefits have also grown over time.

After a thorough review of where LTA is positioned today, the LTA Board of Directors voted at the June 2019 planning meeting, to pursue becoming a section of the New York Library Association (NYLA). We are hoping this melding with our sister organization results in the administrative support and economies of scale that the larger organization can offer, without LTA losing its identity.

Library Trustees Association of New York is still the only member organization chartered in New York State to represent library trustees. As a section of NYLA, LTA will continue to produce the quarterly newsletter, The Trustee, as well as regional workshops and our Trustee Institutes, and other initiatives. We value the membership of all our library trustees, libraries, and library systems, and hope that you will continue to connect with LTA if the proposed alignment is approved.

Part of NYLA’s requirement is that they, NYLA, circulate a petition to NYLA members regarding the possibility of Library Trustees Association of New York becoming a section of NYLA. NYLA members will receive a ballot that allows members to vote on the proposition. While we value the response of any NYLA members, we encourage library trustees who receive the ballot to please vote. Whether yea or nay, your vote matters.

Your LTA board of directors looks forward to the future as the organization that recognizes, advocates, and educates library trustees in New York State.

Library Trustees Association of New York welcomes Three New Board Members

The Board of Directors is delighted to welcome three new members to our board. With three members completing the maximum of 3 three-year terms in December, efforts to bring on new directors was a crucial project in 2019.

The new members are:

Suzanne Stockman from Fairport, NY Serves on the Fairport Public Library, Monroe County Library System and is returning to the LTA board.

Catherine Budman is a trustee on the board of Liverpool Public Library, which is in the Onondaga County Public Library System.

Margaret Shapiro trustee from Crandall Public Library in Glens Falls. A former NJ library board president and former president of the NJ Library Trustee Association

Each new member brings a wealth of experience in her library and library system. The board looks forward to their input of fresh ideas and perspectives on all of LTA’s services and activities.

President’s Memo by Adria Ripka, Board President

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Each new member brings a wealth of experience in her library and library system. The board looks forward to their input of fresh ideas and perspectives on all of LTA’s services and activities.
The New York State Election Law has been amended. This amended statute now requires that employers provide employees with three (3) hours of paid time off on the day of an election to vote. The employer can mandate that this time be taken at the beginning or end of the work day, unless otherwise agreed to by the employer. This change does not apply to school district elections but applies to all other federal, state, and local elections and primaries. School District elections are generally governed by the Education Law, and not the Election Law. The Election Law explicitly applies only to federal, state, county, city, town, and village elections. Therefore, the requirement on employers to provide three (3) hours off without loss of pay does not apply to school district elections and budget votes, which typically occur in May. School District elections are generally governed by the Education Law, and not the Election Law. The Election Law explicitly applies only to federal, state, county, city, town, and village elections. Therefore, the requirement on employers to provide three (3) hours off without loss of pay does not apply to school district elections and budget votes, which typically occur in May. Election Law § 3-110 previously required employers to allow employees to take up to two (2) hours of paid time off to vote in an election, but only if the employee did not have a four-hour block within which to vote from the opening of the polls until the start of their workday, or from the end of their workday until the close of the polls. The amendment to Election Law § 3-110 passed as part of the 2019 New York State Budget, and is awaiting signature from Governor Cuomo to become effective though it is expected he will sign it soon. This amendment eliminates the exemption for employees who have sufficient time (four-hour block) to vote before or after work, and increases the amount of time to vote without loss of pay from two (2) hours to three (3) hours. The new law states that “a registered voter may, without loss of pay for up to three hours, take off so much working time as will enable him or her to vote at any election.” Thus, it no longer matters if the employee has time before or after work to vote. For an employee to avail themselves of this provision for time off without loss of pay, they must be a registered voter and the employee must notify the employer not less than two (2) days prior to the day of the election that he or she requires time off to vote in accordance with the provisions of this section. Any employee who misses time from work on the day of an election who has not requested at least two (2) days prior to have that time off without loss of pay, shall be treated in accordance with the employer’s normal attendance policies.
The core mission of your LTA revolves around education, recognition, and advocacy. To that purpose, we have been updating and upgrading our website in a couple of key ways. The roll-out of these changes is happening now, and we’d love to get your feedback about what we are doing right or wrong or what new ways your LTA can serve the trustee community.

The biggest addition to the site is our trustee boot camp. There have been conversations at the state level for years to mandate library trustee training, and we want to get ahead of the curve in being a provider of that education. To that end, we are building an online course for everything you need to know to fulfill the role you chose and were chosen to do. Modeled after the structure of the Trustee Handbook by Jerry Nichols and Rebekkah Smith Aldrich (available as a PDF download from the LibraryTrustees.org), we are using proven online learning techniques to create a soup-to-nuts, minimally painful learning experience to get any new trustee up to speed as fast as possible, while also filling in any gaps a trustee may have been unable to fill on their own.

In addition, we will finally be getting our Policy Database up and running again. We have heard from trustees and others inside and outside of our state that they value that resource, and we are making sure that it continues in a way that future-proofs its existence, while also maintaining its freshness and usability. However, we will need your help to populate the database with the most current and compliant policies available. If you would like to contribute some of your library’s policies, email them to me at drgern@gmail.com or send me a link to them on your website, and I will enter them into the database.

But, that low bar is not where we’re planning to stop. There are so many great contributors in the library community that have so many great ideas, we plan to bring them to you. We are rolling out webinars, interviews, articles, and other documents that will help you take your library to the level your patrons deserve.

In the recognition arena, we are rolling out a wider effort to highlight the outstanding efforts of trustees around the state. In a vein similar to our Velma K Moore award, we will be showcasing the work of the best among us in order to challenge the rest of us to step up our games.

In the advocacy arena, we have set up a page for you to update your list of trustees and their addresses in order not only to make sure you continue to receive our popular newsletter, but also so we can contact you if we feel the weight of the trustee community needs to weigh in on a matter of great urgency. Our voices are louder together.

Lastly, we would like to thank the person mainly responsible for the updated, fresh, professional, and mobile-friendly look of the site. Betsy Emery has and will continue to do a wonderful job of aiding our efforts to aid yours.
NEWS
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 13, 2019

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LAUREN MOORE APPOINTED AS STATE LIBRARIAN

Deputy Commissioner of Cultural Education Mark Schaming today announced that the Board of Regents and Commissioner of Education MaryEllen Elia have appointed Lauren Moore as the Assistant Commissioner for Libraries and New York State Librarian. Ms. Moore will lead the operations of the New York State Library and serve as the primary representative of the New York State Library and for libraries across the state. She will assume her new responsibilities on August 1.

The New York State Library provides access to information and library services through its Research Library and the Division of Library Development. Ms. Moore will have oversight responsibility for a $12 million operating budget, 100 employees, over 20 million collection items and nearly $140 million in State and federal aid to libraries.

One of the largest research libraries in North America, the New York State Library’s Research Library is over 200 years old. The Library’s holdings include a significant manuscript and rare book collection, as well as holdings in a wide variety of formats, including paper, microform, digital and electronic materials. It is also a Federal Depository and Patent Library; has the responsibility for the acquisition, distribution and maintenance of New York State documents; and is a regional library for the blind and visually impaired in New York’s 55 upstate counties.

The Division of Library Development provides leadership and technical assistance to New York’s 73 library systems through a comprehensive program of State aid for nearly 7,000 public, school, academic and special library services. Staff experts work with librarians, trustees, school administrators, public officials and local leaders to solve problems and find new ways of making library services and resources available to their community. Library Development administers more than $140 million in State and federal aid to New York’s libraries and helps them to take full advantage of federal, state and other funding programs.

Ms. Moore has served in various leadership positions at public libraries and library systems throughout her career. Most recently, she has served as the Executive Director of the Pioneer Library System where she leads the development of 42 small and rural libraries in Ontario, Wayne, Wyoming and Livingston Counties by coordinating shared services. She previously served as the Assistant Director of the Pioneer Library System and the Deputy Director of the Southern Tier Library System. Ms. Moore has also served in leadership positions for various library professional organizations as well as for local, regional and statewide community service groups, including most recently, The New York State Complete Count Commission. The Commission was created to inform and help direct the State’s efforts in the upcoming 2020 Census.

Ms. Moore earned her Master of Library and Information Sciences degree from the University of Pittsburgh. She also holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Rutgers University.
New Minimum Standards for Public and Association Libraries – Part 2

SO, WHAT EXACTLY ARE THE MINIMUM STANDARDS?

The New York State Board of Regents sets standards for public and association libraries under Education Law, Section 254. Registration (Regulations of the Commissioner of Education Section 90.1), which is certified by the State Education Department, means that a chartered (incorporated) library meets the minimum standards (Regulations of the Commissioner of Education Section 90.2) for its size and is thereby qualified to receive and expend state and local public funds. Libraries are registered following Regents incorporation by charter. Once registered, each library provides an annual assurance that minimum standards are met through their annual report to the New York State Library. Questions? Please contact your library system director.

Building on an article published in the last issue of Trustee, Part 2 provides additional information for library boards about the updated minimum standards for public and association libraries. All public and association libraries in New York State are required to comply with the updated standards by January 1, 2021.

While minimum Standards 1-5 as listed below are not brand-new requirements, there are some new aspects. First, each of these standards must be addressed in the context of the library’s long range plan. Second, each of these standards now require that the Library’s bylaws, long range plan, annual report to the community, written polices and annual budget be shared both in print and online with the library’s community (see new Standard 11 below):

By January 1, 2021 all public and association libraries are required to have and to share online with their communities:

1. Written bylaws of the board of trustees; reviewed and re-approved at least every five years. *Also see standard 11.

2. A community-based, board-approved, written long range plan of service developed by the board and staff. *Also see standard 11.

3. A board-approved written annual report to the community on the library’s progress in meeting its mission, goals and objectives. *Also see standard 11.

4. Written policies for the operation of the library, reviewed at least every five years. *Also see standard 11.

5. An annual, board-approved budget designed to address community needs as defined in the long range plan. *Also see standard 11.

Here is the wording for Standard 11:

11: Each library... provides access to current library information in print and online, facilitating the understanding of library services, operations and governance; information provided online shall include the standards referenced in paragraphs one through five of this subdivision (standards 1 through 5).

If your library is not already posting these important documents online via the Library’s website or some other mechanism, help is available! The State Library and the Public Library System Directors Organization (PULISDO) recently refreshed the publication Helpful Information for Meeting Minimum Public Library Standards. It is now available on the State Library’s website at http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/helpful/index.html. This is recommended reading for all library boards and library directors/managers.

Library systems are also providing training and technical assistance to help all member libraries achieve compliance well before January 1, 2021. Questions? Check with your system director for more information.
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TRUSTEE is published four times a year for $10.00 annually per subscriber. Subscription is a benefit of paid membership; cost of the subscription is covered by membership dues. Periodical class postage is paid at Albany, NY and an additional mailing office.
USPS#010-872, ISSN: 1085-3170. Volume XXXII, Issue No. 3, Summer 2019