



HENNEPIN COUNTY LIBRARY TRESPASS ANALYSIS

Trespass: Removal from a library that spans from a one day ban up to a year issued by a security guard or police and under the threat of arrest and prosecution.

We reviewed 9 of 41 libraries' trespass data from 2022 and several months of data from the downtown library from the same year, 289 trespasses in total, and first hand reports from patrons and staff. The trespass data has been hard to access and is highly redacted. These are only snippets of what is happening--we know there are staff doing incredible work AND the patterns we see are troubling.

You can see the reports this analysis comes from at librarypatronsunion.com

01

TRESPASS DOESN'T CREATE SAFETY

Much of what people are trespassed for aren't causing harm to others, but may indicate the need for support or a change in policy including trespass based on sleeping, eating, cursing, and personal hygiene. Many reports don't indicate disruptive behavior before guards or staff inserted themselves. For incidents that are about community safety, trespass doesn't prevent incidents, it can only be used after the fact, it may act as a temporary bandaid, but does not offer ongoing safety to patrons and staff. At Minneapolis Central there were 388 trespasses in 2022 and 213 people returned to the library during their period of trespass, making them vulnerable to arrest and prosecution.



02

BATHROOMS ARE SURVEILLED

33 incidents started in bathrooms, many as "wellness checks." We have questions about the goals of security wellness checks, is it for the health and safety of patrons or is it to punish? There are multitudes of reasons that patrons may be in the bathroom for longer periods of time, and counting down the time outside the stall or door, bringing multiple guards into the bathroom, and yelling or blocking the door are escalations not "wellness checks."



03

TRESPASSED ARE ISSUED WITHOUT EVIDENCE

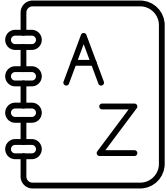
Trespasses are often issued on the basis of suspicion, not evidence, and are at the discretion of the guards. Patrons have been trespassed for unusual sounds, strange smells, for "suspicious activity", and staring. There is very little opportunity for staff or patrons who believe trespass to be unfair to contest. Staff and patrons have been denied the policy or rationale when patrons are trespassed and we have seen evidence of security management fabricating details of incidents to library staff and management.





04

LANGUAGE IS DEHUMANIZING, SUBJECTIVE AND INCONCLUSIVE



"Unwanted person" is an official category in these reports. Many reports refer to patrons as "trespassers" "subjects" and "suspects." Lots of very subjective language like "suspicious" activity, "verbally abusive", "offensive", "vulgar", "taunting." It's our understanding that supervisors should be reading and signing off on reports--but there are reports miscoded, contain very inconclusive narratives, some only 2-3 words and lacking important details like what was said and what strategies were used. This is in addition to the unnecessary redaction of these reports, which removes racial, age, and trespass length data.

05

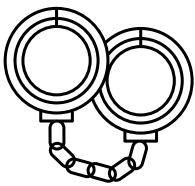
UNHOUSED PATRONS ARE IMPACTED

SAFE SPACES
for EVERYONE

In 2019 Fox 9 investigators analyzed Hennepin County Library trespass reports and found that many of the reports involved people who identified themselves as homeless or who did not have a permanent address. Due to the quality of data we received we can't pull additional numbers to illustrate how unhoused patrons are treated, but have witnessed and heard stories that indicate that homeless patrons are deeply impacted and possibly targeted by trespass.

07

INTERVENTIONS ARE VASTLY PUNITIVE



These reports again have limited information and the narratives are of varying detail. The interventions we saw were that cops were called, patrons were surveilled on cameras, additional security presence, following patrons and use of escalatory behavior. A couple reports indicated an offering of resources and a couple reminders of the rules.

08

BIPOC PATRONS ARE DISPORPORTIONALLY IMPACTED



Reports, including racial data, are highly redacted. According to data from the library, in reports that included race, 72% of patrons trespass from the downtown library were BIPOC in 2022.

HENNEPIN COUNTY LIBRARY

TRESPASS

STORIES FROM THE REPORTS



Patron was shoved out the door and trespassed for being on the phone, cursing, and not leaving fast enough after close.



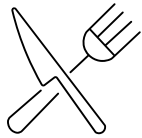
Police told security to call police right away so they could issue a trespass if a patron with a history of calling 911 with false reports were to return to the library.

Police were called and a trespass issued to a patron whose only violation was **eating chips** at the library.



A patron was trespassed for putting thing that weren't books in the book drop. They felt they were helping staff. This was identified as "**significant disruption**"

A BIPOC youth patron was trespassed because the guard heard "**suspicious noises**" when the youth was in the bathroom.



A group of teens were eating in the children's area, they were approached and immediately trespassed.

A Black teen was threatened trespass for wearing a ski mask, based on rarely invoked law created to fight the KKK.



A Black unhoused library patron ended up being arrested at the library, the incident started because staff didn't want her sitting on the floor.

A Black woman was trespassed and arrested for standing quietly in the same spot for over an hour, and not responding to a guard's questions.



The officer told a patron post-trespass he was not allowed at the library, the patron responded that he would return because **he liked it there**. The guard warned him he **could be arrested**. He asked **where he was supposed to go**.

