

DORA LIBRARY
Confidentiality of Library Patron Records

The Coastline libraries protect the confidentiality of library patron records under Oregon State Law, ORS 192.355 [23]. This statute exempts libraries from disclosure of “the records of a library, including circulation records, showing use of specific library material by a named person or consisting of the name of a library patron together with the address or telephone number, or both, of the patron.”

Libraries have the responsibility to protect each individual borrower’s right to privacy with respect to:

- Registration records (information required in order to become eligible to borrow books and other materials)
- Circulation records (information which identifies particular materials borrowed by a patron)
- Interlibrary Loan records
- Database search records
- Reference interview records
- Use of facilities, programs or services records

Such records are to be revealed only in the following instances:

- When patron gives written permission
- When necessary for the reasonable operations of the library such as borrowing materials from another library at the patron’s request
- When required by a court of law

While search warrants or court orders have always been required to obtain library records, the passage of the USA Patriot Act and increased surveillance and investigative activity by the FBI have renewed American libraries’ concerns for patron privacy. A search warrant or court order is still required to obtain records but the USA Patriot Act makes it much easier for the government to obtain both.

Sources for further Information:

The Coastline libraries’ [Privacy Statement relating to the USA Patriot Act.](#)

Code of Ethics of the American Library Association

ALA Policy on Confidentiality of Library Records

ALA Policy Concerning Confidentiality of Personally Identifiable Information about Library Users