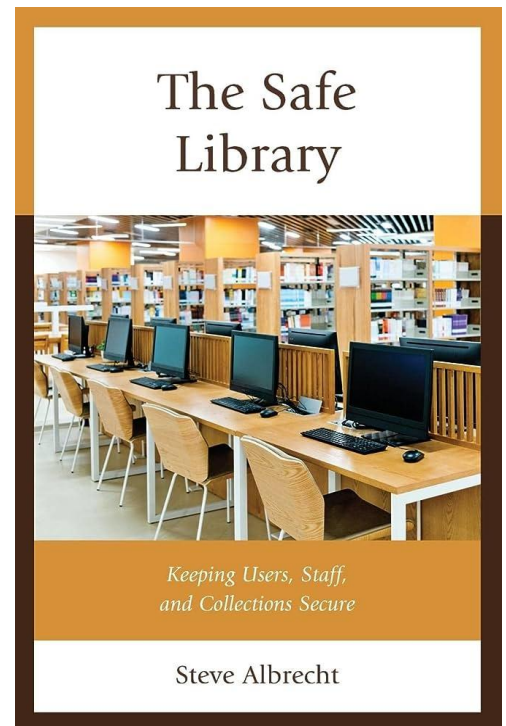


## 20 LIBRARY SERVICE, SAFETY, AND SECURITY GUIDELINES

1. **Take care of yourself first;** then take care of each other; then take care of the patrons. It may be *just another day* for you, but it may be *a very important service day* for the patron.
2. **Enforce your code of conduct** firmly, fairly, consistently, legally, assertively, patiently, empathically, and reasonably (known as “The Essential Eight”).
3. **Protect yourself** – Manage your stress and anger by slow, deep, and controlled breathing; work smart and get help when you need it; and quit taking it personally (QTIP) – they aren’t made at you; they’re mad at the situation.
4. **Use your intuition.** If you see something, say something. Tell your boss, co-workers, or the police / sheriff. Don’t wait for things to escalate or talk yourself out of what you’ve seen.
5. **Read people’s facial expressions and body language** quickly and accurately. Watch your tone and body language for condescension.
6. **Crucial conversations** - remember many conversations can turn “crucial” in the library: high stakes, strong emotions, differing opinions. Recognize when they do and use good talking and service skills.
7. **Be a professional witness** and provide accurate information to your boss and first responders. Help prepare a Security Incident Report for those events that qualify for it.
8. **Introduce yourself** – Explain why you’re there – Ask for compliance.
9. **GREAT** tool: Greet the patron with eye contact; Reassure you’re there to help; Explain what you will do; Act accordingly; Thank the patron.
10. **LEAPS** Verbal Judo tool: Listen; Empathize; Ask more open-ended questions than closed ones; Paraphrase what you heard; Seek solutions that will satisfy the patron and stay within your policies.



11. **Be careful** around alcohol and stimulant drug users. They can be erratic.
12. **Stay in “condition yellow”** (safety and security awareness mode) when you’re face-to-face, or over the counter. Don’t assume because they were cooperative before they can’t be uncooperative now.
13. **Use space and distance**, proxemic barriers, and venting and validation. Use the *assertive whisper* and *physical movement* to move patrons to a quieter area. If necessary, change the ratios of confrontation, by bringing over a colleague or a boss.
14. **Set boundaries** over the telephone. If they curse at you, warn them and if it happens again, hang up. Document the exact words they used.
15. **Stop saying, “Calm down!”** Use other phrases that allow venting and validation to show empathy. If it feels right, offer to sit with the patron, if you can, and/or offer to shake hands. These can lower the emotional temperature.
16. **Call 911.** We’re all in charge of safety and security here, not just the Police. You don’t have to confront bad people doing or getting ready to do bad things; just call 911 or 9-911 when it appears necessary.
17. **Use “secret service hands”** around potentially violent people. Use code words to send your co-workers to call 9-1-1 from a safe place immediately.
18. **Run – Hide – Fight:** remember the three elements of the well-known video. Evacuate far away from the building, and not to a staging area. Shelter in place in a room you can lock or barricade. Protect yourself as best as you can. Do a 15-minute run-hide drill at least once per year.
19. **Have the COURAGE** to tell your library leaders when you need help with any safety or security issue. You can make a difference.

Thank you for being a library professional!

An electronic version of this handout is available at [www.TheSafeLibrary.com](http://www.TheSafeLibrary.com) and can be distributed freely. For customized copies of this handout email [admin@thesafelibrary.com](mailto:admin@thesafelibrary.com). Order the book from Amazon [here](#).

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