

HARRIS COUNTY ROBERT W. HAINSWORTH LAW LIBRARY RULES

SECTION 1. AUTHORITY

The Commissioners Court of Harris County, Texas, adopted these Rules. These Rules are authorized by section 323.024 of the Texas Local Government Code.

SECTION 2. ADMINISTRATION

Commissioners Court designates the Law Library staff and the investigators of the Harris County Attorney's Office, along with the Harris County Sheriff, Harris County Constable Precinct 1, and their respective deputies, to enforce these Rules, and authorizes other peace officers to assist with their enforcement.

SECTION 3. SCOPE AND PURPOSE

The Law Library is intended for use by persons engaged in law-related research. The purpose of these Rules is to ensure that Law Library patrons are provided a pleasant atmosphere which facilitates the performance of legal research.

SECTION 4. SERVICES

- 4.1 Intent to utilize resources.** Patrons shall be engaged in activities associated with the use of a public law library while in the Law Library. Patrons not engaged in reading, studying, or using Law Library materials may be required to leave the Law Library.
- 4.2 Computer research.** The Law Library provides computers to aid patrons in their legal research. Use of the computers to play games, view pornography, or for other non-law related uses is not allowed and may lead to the patron being asked to leave or restricted from using the computers.
- 4.3 Equipment.** Patrons shall not attempt to make repairs to Law Library computers or equipment. Patrons should instead ask staff for assistance.
- 4.4 Disruption of reference services.** Patrons shall not harass Law Library staff or behave in a manner which may be reasonably expected to disrupt Law Library services.

SECTION 5. ENVIRONMENT

- 5.1 Disruptive behavior.** Patrons shall respect the rights of other patrons. Patrons shall not harass or annoy other patrons, or otherwise behave in a manner which may be reasonably expected to disturb others.
- 5.2 Theft and vandalism.** Patrons shall not write in, damage, remove pages, or mark on Law Library books or other Law Library property.

If Library staff/security has reasonable individualized suspicion that a Law Library customer is attempting to exit the Law Library with Law Library materials that have not been checked out, the customer may be questioned and may be asked to open any item of sufficient size to contain Law Library materials for inspection. Theft of Law Library materials is a serious offense and may

result in permanent exclusion from all Law Library facilities, resources and services, and/or arrest.

- 5.3 **Noise.** To avoid disturbing other Law Library patrons, patrons shall observe silence except when requesting assistance from the reference desk staff. Noise and loud or profane language will not be tolerated. Patrons who need to converse must do so quietly so as not to disturb others.
- 5.4 **Solicitation.** Selling and solicitation are prohibited in the Law Library.
- 5.5 **Sleeping.** Sleeping is prohibited in the Law Library.
- 5.6 **Eating.** Eating is prohibited in the Law Library. Beverages in covered, spill-proof containers are permitted except in the computer area.
- 5.7 **Children.** Unattended children are not allowed in the Law Library. In the event that a child is left unattended, Law Library staff shall notify law enforcement. Any adult who brings a child into the Law Library must supervise and monitor the child's behavior at all times.
- 5.8 **Cell Phones.** Because ring tones can be loud, patrons' cell phones should be set to "vibrate" or turned off. Any calls should be made outside the Law Library as telephone conversations may disrupt the concentration of other patrons. Patrons who receive a cell phone call should step outside the Law Library to hold the conversation.
- 5.9 **Laptop computers.** Laptops may be plugged in to draw AC power. The volume on all laptops must be set to "mute."
- 5.10 **Baggage.** Patrons' personal belongings should fit neatly under the table and may not take up so much space as to deny other patrons a seating opportunity at the same table. Suitcases, bedrolls, and blankets are not permitted in the Law Library.
- 5.11 **Hygiene.** Any patron, as well as the personal belongings of any patron, emanating an odor (including cologne and perfume), biological material, or other substance constituting a nuisance to other patrons may be asked to leave the Law Library until the situation can be corrected.
- 5.12 **Smoking.** Smoking is prohibited in the Law Library.
- 5.13 **Animals.** Animals, other than animals assisting persons with disabilities, are prohibited in the Law Library.
- 5.14 **Restrooms.** Patrons shall not bathe, shave, or wash clothes in the Law Library restrooms. Patrons shall not take library materials into the restrooms.
- 5.15 **Clothes.** Appropriate clothing, including shirts and shoes, shall be worn by patrons at all times in the Law Library.
- 5.16 **Filming and Photography.** The Law Library is designated as a place for legal research and writing, and allows members of the public to engage in confidential and legally privileged activities, including creation of legal work product. Accordingly, filming, recording, and photography without permission are prohibited in the Law Library.

SECTION 6. APPLICATION AND ENFORCEMENT

Any violation of these Rules may result in the responsible patron being asked to leave the Law Library until such time as the patron, in the reasonable opinion of Law Library staff, is able to demonstrate an ability and willingness to comply with these Rules. The Law Library staff and the investigators of the Harris County Attorney's Office, along with the Harris County Sheriff, Harris County Constable Precinct 1, and their respective deputies, and other peace officers shall be authorized to remove any patron who violates any of these Rules from the Law Library.

SECTION 7. SEVERABILITY

The provisions of these Rules are severable. If any word, phrase, clause, sentence, section, provision, or part of these Rules should be held invalid or unconstitutional, it shall not affect the validity of the remaining provisions, and it is hereby declared to be the intent of Commissioners Court that these Rules would have been adopted as to the remaining portions, regardless of the invalidity of any part.

SECTION 8. AMENDMENTS

These Rules may be amended at any time at the discretion of Commissioners Court.

SECTION 9. POSTING

These Rules shall be conspicuously posted at or near the entrance to the Law Library and on the Law Library's website.

SECTION 10. EFFECTIVE DATE

These Rules shall become effective January 1, 2024.

ORDER OF COMMISSIONERS COURT

The Commissioners Court of Harris County, Texas, met in regular session at its regular term at the Harris County Administration Building in the City of Houston, Texas, on December 19, 2023, with all members present except none

A quorum was present. Among other business, the following was transacted:

ORDER AMENDING THE HARRIS COUNTY ROBERT W. HAINSWORTH LAW LIBRARY RULES UNDER 323.024 OF THE TEXAS LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE

Commissioner Garcia introduced an order and made a motion that the same be adopted. Commissioner Ellis seconded the motion for adoption of the order. The motion, carrying with it the adoption of the order, prevailed by the following vote:

Table with 4 columns: Name, Yes, No, Abstain. Rows include Judge Lina Hidalgo, Comm. Rodney Ellis, Comm. Adrian Garcia, Comm. Tom S. Ramsey P.E., and Comm. Lesley Briones.

The County Judge thereupon announced that the motion had duly and lawfully carried and that the order had been duly and lawfully adopted. The adopted order follows:

RECITALS:

Commissioners Court adopted rules for the Harris County Robert W. Hainsworth Law Library ("Law Library") on July 24, 2012. In the last decade, Law Library services and usage patterns have changed. Such changes necessitate revision of the Law Library Rules.

Pursuant to section 323.024 of the Texas Local Government Code, Commissioners Court is authorized to adopt rules for the Law Library.

NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT ORDERED BY THE COMMISSIONERS COURT OF HARRIS COUNTY, TEXAS THAT:

Section 1: The recitals set forth in this Order are true and correct.

Section 2: The attached Harris County Robert W. Hainsworth Law Library Rules are adopted to be effective January 1, 2024.

Section 3: All Harris County officials and employees are authorized to do any and all things necessary or convenient to accomplish the purpose of this Order.

Presented to Commissioners Court

December 19, 2023

Approve: G/E