

The Corporation of the Town of Orangeville

Report to Library Board



To: Chair and Members of the Board
From: Darla Fraser, Chief Executive Officer
Date: February 26, 2025
Report #: 25-04
Subject: Review of Safety and Security Measures

Recommendation

That Report 25-04 Review of Safety and Security Measures be received.

Purpose

This report is intended to provide the board with a comprehensive view of current safety and security measures at the library. It identifies gaps in these measures and offers a work plan for future enhancements, drawing on the guidance provided in the Canadian Urban Libraries Council (CULC)/CBUC toolkit). The toolkit serves as a strategic framework for bolstering library safety, ensuring we are prepared for evolving challenges.

Background

The Orangeville Public Library Board is deeply committed and jointly responsible to ensuring the safety of its patrons and staff, while fostering an environment of mutual respect: respect for oneself, respect for others, and taking responsibility for one's actions, as outlined in the Rzone Policy. No form of violence or vandalism is acceptable on its properties, or in its facilities.

Communities across Canada are grappling with significant challenges, such as accessing affordable housing and obtaining necessary mental health and addiction services, alongside recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic impacts. These challenges manifest in various settings, including public transit, community centres, local businesses, and notably, public libraries. Such environments often exhibit inappropriate behaviours (see figure 3), affecting users and staff alike—especially vulnerable groups such as children and the elderly—when libraries are perceived as unsafe spaces.

Our Current Practices

Based on the following foundational assumptions, the library maintains its open-door

policy to all individuals, while ensuring a pleasant and secure environment for community access:

- Libraries welcome all individuals and aim for everyone to feel valued and respected.
- Our rules are applied equally, humanely, and courteously.
- Daily interactions offer new beginnings; past behaviors shouldn't predetermine current assumptions, barring extreme situations.
- Customers have rights to their library use style, provided it does not infringe on others' rights.
- Behaviours are not inherently problematic; interventions should follow thorough assessments of actual issues.

Policy Implementation and Adaptation

The library board officially adopted the town's Rzone Policy in October 2012, with variances addressing the appeal procedures for library bans. The Library Board will hear appeals against the bans imposed by the Chief Executive Officer, refining the process for local context and effective implementation. Minor edits, such as title adjustments, support these adaptations.

Locally, the library has experienced a reduction in incident frequency, attributable to the proactive efforts of council, and town staff with the library board and staff, alongside valuable partnerships with local service providers. Initiatives like the partnership with the Food Bank alleviate downtown hunger through accessible, protein-rich vending machine options. Additionally, the "Choices Shelter" service expansion offers daily access in freezing temperatures (figure 2), while the Recreation and Events division's "[Respect Your Rec](#)" campaign promotes positive community interactions and their warming centres in both (Tony Rose and Alder Rec) provide additional support to our vulnerable population.

Figure 1: Respect Your Rec Campaign 2025

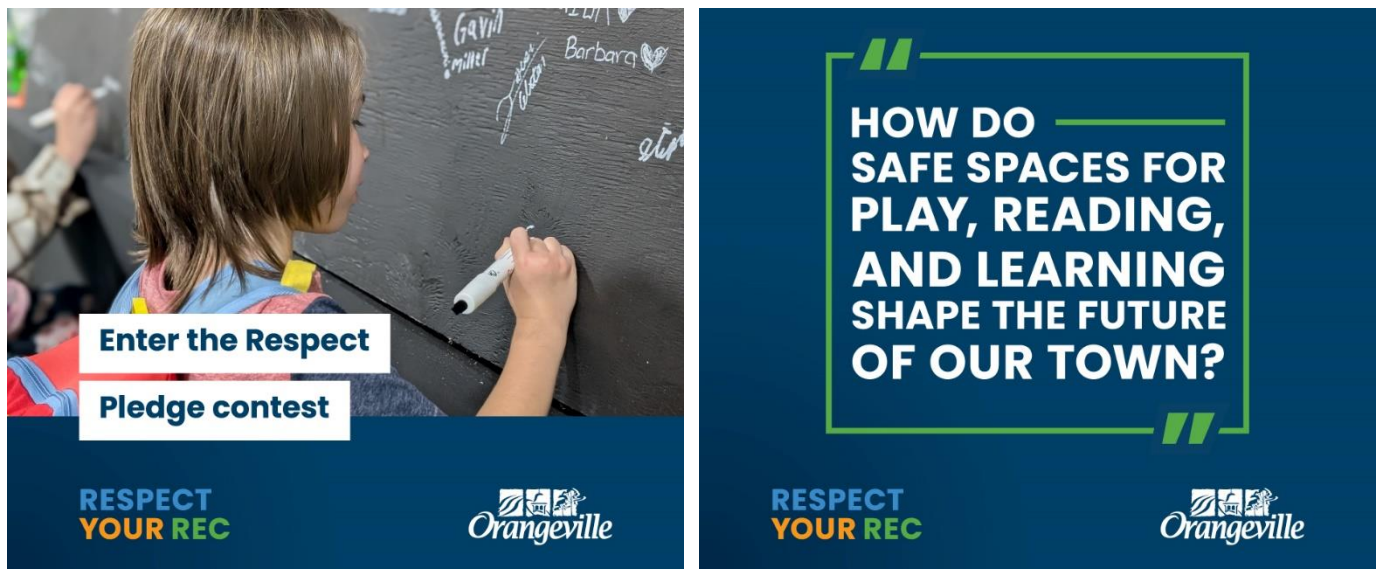
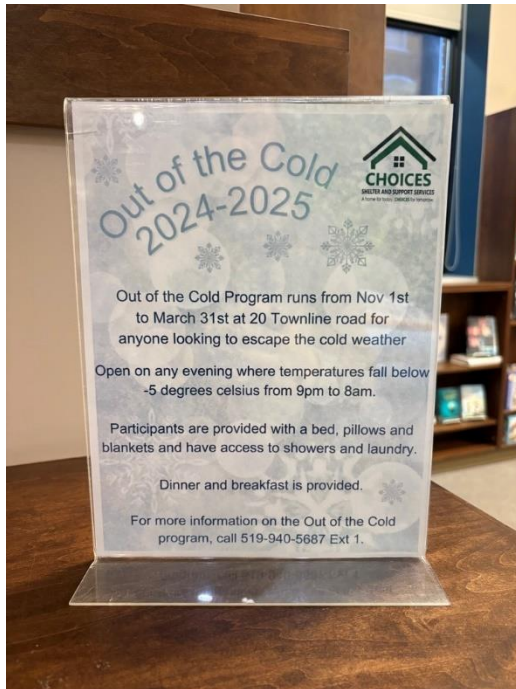


Figure 2: Out of the Cold 2024-2025 program poster



Incident Dynamics

Although the frequency of incidents may have decreased, an increase in their intensity and threat level, exemplified by threats of assault and violence, is concerning. In 2024, despite appearing as a small fraction of overall interactions, nine reported incidents and eight police walk-throughs were logged. Such instances significantly affect both staff perceptions of safety and public views of libraries as welcoming spaces. While the year began with regular police walk-throughs, this presence diminished in later months, marking a variance in enforcement consistency.

Figure 3: Inappropriate behaviours as defined in the Rzone Policy

As defined in the Rzone:

Inappropriate behaviours include but are not limited to the following:

- *Aggressive or intimidating approaches to another individual*
- *Attempts to goad or incite anger in others*
- *Throwing of articles in a deliberate or aggressive manner*
- *Physical striking of another individual*
- *Theft of property*
- *Possession of weapons*
- *Illegal consumption of alcohol or drugs*
- *Contravention of Town by-laws, policies, or procedures*
- *Vandalism: the deliberate destruction, damage or defacing of property owned or leased through the Town*

About the Toolkit

Name: [CULC/CBUC Safety and Security Toolkit](#)

Author: Canadian Urban Libraries Council

Release Date: February 2024

What the Toolkit is:

The intention of the Toolkit is to provide a collection of ideas and lessons learned, i.e., content relevant to most public libraries.

As with all toolkits in this sector, it is important to note:

- All libraries operate within their own context, and any use of this toolkit must consider a library's particular governance context, whether provincial, territorial, regional, or municipal, and reflect the needs of the communities the library serves.
- In that spirit, this Toolkit is intended to serve as a catalyst for ideas and is not in any way intended to be prescriptive or imply that every library needs to implement everything in the Toolkit. Each library needs to select solutions that make sense for their system and the community(ies) they serve.
- Lastly, nothing in this document constitutes legal advice. All information that is not the copyrighted material of another party may be adapted and shared for non-commercial purposes; attribution to CULC/CBUC and/or the contributing library(is) is appreciated.

What it is not:

This Toolkit is not a recommendation that all libraries implement everything included here, rather it is intended as a source of ideas and learning to inform the work that libraries will do that make sense for their system and the community(ies) they serve.

Sections in the Toolkit focus on:

1. Patron Expectations
2. Suspensions & Other Consequences
3. Safety and Security Tools & Strategies
4. Space Design
5. Health & Wellness
6. Training & Professional Development
7. Community Resources & Initiatives
8. Incident Tracking & Reporting
9. Recruitment
10. Legal Considerations
11. Advocacy

Table 1 provides a snapshot of Orangeville's current framework. For each section in the table, you will find a description, Orangeville's current situation/framework, and any identified gaps along with action plans to address gaps.




Additional information is provided starting on page 8 for five sections (identified with an ). Finally, the corresponding action items are referenced in the last column of table 1 with a full listing provided in table 2.

Table 1 - Orangeville Library’s current framework, identified gaps and action plan to address shortcomings

<p>1. Patron Expectations – are set in the guidelines, policies, and rules of the library. These guidelines should also outline what the consequences are when expectations are not met. As well as a process to appeal suspensions</p>			
Current Framework	Identified Gaps	Action Plan	Action
Behavioral expectations set by Rules of Conduct & Rzone Policy; involves staff training.	Inconsistent enforcement and lack of specific response guidelines.	Develop a violation consequences chart and integrate trauma-informed approaches. Specify police contact scenarios.	1.1 1.2 1.3 1.4
<p>2. Suspensions & Other Consequences – provides guidance on how to respond when patron expectations are not met.</p>			
Current Framework	Identified Gaps	Action Plan	Action
Progressive consequences as per Rzone Policy.	Investigate trauma-informed responses and social context considerations for suspensions.	Train staff to tailor suspension approaches based on behavioral contexts, incorporating trauma-informed practices.	2.1
<p>3. Safety and Security Tools & Strategies – are used to prepare for, prevent and respond to incidents.</p>			
Current Framework	Identified Gaps	Action Plan	Action
Proactive security measures, panic buttons, security fobs, two-way radios, Take 30. 	Gaps in incident procedures and outdated emergency plans.	Develop lockdown and storm procedures, update medical emergency and bomb threat plans.	3.1 3.2 3.3
<p>4. Space Design – ways in which the physical design of library spaces can influence safety and security</p>			
Current Framework	Identified Gaps	Action Plan	Action
Security-focused design in Mill Street renovations; strategic use of furniture and security cameras.	Installation of security equipment and optimizing space for security.	Finalize installation of safety tools, e.g., mirrors at Alder and emergency buttons near washrooms.	4.1
<p>5. Health & Wellness – for staff – focus on employees. Develop and provide for wellness and employee assistance programs to support staff</p>			
Current Framework	Identified Gaps	Action Plan	Action
Employee Assistance Program, trauma informed leadership training, ad hoc incident debriefing and regular health updates. 	Lack of formalized response and debriefing processes.	Develop a crisis response checklist and incorporate debriefing sessions post-incident.	5.1 5.2




6. Training & Professional Development – core resources that support safety and security efforts in libraries. Develop and provide for wellness and employee assistance programs to support staff			
Current Framework	Identified Gaps	Action Plan	Action
Onboarding includes orientation on safety and security; de-escalation training, mental health first aid. 	Refresh needed for cash handling safety and handling difficult customers.	Implement trauma-informed service training and conduct refresher sessions for staff.	6.1 6.2
7. Community Resources & Initiatives – support social development. Relationships between libraries and other organizations in community to mutually support each other's mandates.			
Current Framework	Identified Gaps	Action Plan	Action
Maintain collaborations for shelter support, food programs, and youth initiatives.	Continual update and engagement with evolving community services.	Regularly update and verify the list of community resources to ensure effective referrals and support paths.	7.1
8. Incident Tracking & Reporting			
Current Framework	Identified Gaps	Action Plan	Action
Initial paper-based system; monthly reports provided to the Chief Executive Officer.	Cumbersome reporting process, lacking streamlined digital alternatives.	Transition to a digital incident reporting form and obtain approval for streamlined process.	8.1
9. Recruitment – guidance on hiring. The skills, competencies, and attributes that library staff possess have a direct impact on their ability to successfully navigate, respond to, and react and respond to safety and security situation			
Current Framework	Identified Gaps	Action Plan	Action
Competency-based interviews focused on safety and security skills. 	Alignment of library competencies with town standards needed.	Reconcile library-specific competencies with town-wide standards to elevate safety and security focus.	9.1
10. Legal Considerations – are woven through multiple parts of the library journey			
Current Framework	Identified Gaps	Action Plan	Action
Guidelines for information disclosure, children's safety, and trespassing policies. 	Occasional non-compliance with suspension terms by certain patrons.	Reinforce liaison with law enforcement on privacy and trespassing regulations and communicate these protocols clearly with library patrons and staff.	10.1
11. Advocacy – a collective opportunity. CULC/CBUC members are asking that federal, provincial, and municipal governments understand the specific challenges facing libraries.			
Current Framework	Identified Gaps	Action Plan	Action
Engagements with Police Services Board, Respect Your Rec campaigns.	Need for consolidated messaging and wider recognition of library challenges.	Leverage toolkit key messages for advocacy campaigns and further local authority partnerships on shared challenges.	11.1

Table 2 - Action item number and description

Action Item Number and Description		Responsibility	Timeline
1.1	Develop a violation consequences chart to standardize responses.	Public Services	2025 Q3
1.2	Specify scenarios that require police contact to ensure consistent handling.	Public Services	2025 Q3
1.3	Provide staff training focusing on fair and consistent enforcement of policies.	Public Services	2025 Q3
1.4	Detail the Rzone Report and Communication Procedure, including key steps like 911 calls, warnings, Immediate Temporary Ban (ITB), and the R-Zone ban procedures.	Public Services	2025 Q3
2.1	Integrate trauma-informed approaches; train staff on tailoring responses to behavioral and social contexts, including comprehensive trauma-informed service training.	Public Services	2025 Q2
3.1	Develop comprehensive lockdown procedures for scenarios like shelter-in-place, active shooters, hold-ups, and robberies.	Public Services	2025 Q3
3.2	Update procedures for storm closures and power outages to ensure safety and continuity.	Public Services	2025Q2
3.3	Establish detailed procedures for bomb threats and chemical releases.	Public Services	2025 Q3
4.1	Finalize the installation of additional safety tools, such as installing mirrors at the Alder location.	Admin/Facilities	2025 Q3
5.1	Develop a crisis response checklist based on best practices from the Crisis and Trauma Resource Institute.	Public Services	2025 Q3
5.2	Create debriefing questions following incidents, informed by practices from other libraries.	Public Services	2025 Q3
6.1	Provide updated cash handling safety training.	Public Services	2026 Q1
6.2	Arrange for staff training on handling difficult customers to enhance interaction skills.	Public Services	2025 Q4
7.1	Stay updated on community resources and programs to support patron referrals and services.	Public Services	ongoing
8.1	Modernize the incident tracking and reporting process from the current paper-based system to a digital format for efficiency.	Public Services	Work with TOSSI
9.1	Reconcile library staff competencies with Town corporate competencies to ensure alignment and effectiveness.	CEO, HR	2025 Q3
10.1	Build relationship with the Police Services Board to foster collaborative safety efforts.	Board	
11.1	Utilize key messages from the media relations campaign for effective communication and advocacy.	Everyone	

***Additional Information – Current Framework**

Section 3 – Safety and Security Tools & Strategies

Proactively prevent security issues through the built environment	Security Audit - panic button at both locations, security fob to prevent public access to staff-only areas, two-way radios to ensure continuous communication
Incident Prevention	Take 30 - mitigate/reduce risk factors by regularly moving around the building to monitor patrons
Assessing risk	Town is developing a hazard identification registry
Create incident procedures and reporting protocols	OPL has procedure for managing, reporting on, and documenting incidents - allows to identify and track patterns of incidents and responses for learning
Develop a safety manual and/or emergency plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire procedure, fire drill (2024), designated outside meeting area for both locations, first aid training • Communication during an emergency - staff have code word • Elevator procedure (2024) – breakdown • Child protection - Children in the Library policy outlines duty to report • Working Alone procedure • Tools to manage customers at the service desk: Comment and concern forms – we take all concerns seriously – filling out form can calm someone down; business cards for leadership

Section 5 – Health & Wellness

- Employee Family Assistance Program, provided by Humanacare - presentation with handout at June 2023 GLAD Day - includes stress management
- Corporate CAO updates all include Health and Wellness opportunities – links to programs, resources and courses available
- Health and safety updates for staff - email and GLAD Days, monthly Safety Talks
- The Public Services Librarian attended a Trauma Informed Leadership course in September 2024
- Debrief for staff responding to high intensity incidents
- Respectful and Welcoming Workplace (2022)

Section 6 – Training & Professional Development

- Safety and security in the libraries
- Ryan Dowd's Librarian's Guide on how to work with individuals experiencing homelessness
- Workplace Violence and Harassment Policy
- De-escalation skills
- Mental Health First Aid
- Dimensions of Neurodiversity

Section 7 – Community Resources & Initiatives

- Maintain list of community services to support vulnerable individuals - library role in referral and community connection
- Shelter and homelessness support - County of Dufferin - red card
- Food programs - Food Bank partnership- vending machine
- Youth programs - Choices, DCAFs

Section 9 – Recruitment - Training for new staff – Onboarding

Security Training

- 1 Security and Emergency Policy - includes Working Alone
- 2 Rules of Conduct & Rzone Policy
- 3 Rzone brochure - 3 Rs, criteria - and the Rzone incident reporting form
- 4 Rzone Report and Communication procedure - steps: 911, warning, Immediate Temporary Ban, Rzone ban
- 5 Panic Button locations
- 6 Take 30
- 7 Police walk-throughs
- 8 Children in the Library Policy
- 9 Working Alone procedure (Town - new)
- 10 Setting Alarm - Mill and Alder

Emergencies

- 1 Accidents - Employee and Third-Party Injury form
- 2 Emergency Transportation - Taxi Procedure
- 3 Critical injury kit
- 4 Fire exits, drills and safe meeting place
- 5 First Aid kits and First Aid training - includes AED
- 6 Human Spills kit - clean-up
- 7 Emergency buttons in washrooms
- 8 Mill vs. Alder - protocol for handling incidents

Section 10 – Legal Considerations

- Privacy / Freedom of information and Disclosure
- Ontario Human Rights Code
- Trespassing - suspended customers do not always abide by the terms of their suspension
- Children in the Library policy - in the case of a missing child or a child in danger, information will be shared with the enforcement agency requesting the information, through the CEO or designate.
- Trespass to Property Act - Letter of Trespass provided at the time of suspension - "if you enter the premises, it will be considered trespassing, and we will request you leave immediately. If required, we will involve the police to enforce this trespass notice."
- Town's Video Surveillance policy (June 2024) - policy applies to all video surveillance systems located on all Town properties. Law Enforcement agencies must submit their request for access to video surveillance in writing via email,

correspondence or in person to the Clerk, unless there are reasonable and probable grounds to believe that the circumstances pose an immediate threat to the health or safety of an individual or others."

Conclusion

The staff's review and audit of the current safety and security measures, as guided by the toolkit, reflect positively on our existing framework. Our strategies are functioning effectively, and ongoing investment in staff training will equip us with the necessary tools and strategies to enhance safety for everyone. The eighteen action items identified will significantly engage the Public Services team and are being integrated into a work plan for 2025-2026.

Strategic Alignment

Strategic Direction: Connect

Objective A: Champion inclusivity and promote community cultural expression.

Financial Impact

The budgetary impact will be minimal as most of the work requires staff time, the cost of mirrors and additional cameras are part of the capital project for modernization.

Prepared and respectfully submitted by,

Darla Fraser,
Chief Executive Officer