



Material Reconsideration Procedure

The Eastern Shore Public Library (ESPL) will maintain a process for ensuring requests for reconsideration of library materials are handled in an attentive and consistent manner. Any library user has the right to request reconsideration of library materials and resources. A Request for Reconsideration of Library Material form is available at each library location and on the ESPL website.

ESPL supports the American Library Association's Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read, Free Access to Libraries for Minors, and Freedom to View Statement. The reconsideration process begins with a discussion between the patron and the Library Director or Collection Development Manager, allowing the reader to explain objections to the material and the Library Director or Collection Development Manager to explain the library's collection development practices and to answer any questions.

The following steps will be used when an individual feels that further action is necessary to address concerns about a library resource. For the duration of this process, the material in question will remain in circulation in the library collection.

1. A concerned patron who is dissatisfied with earlier informal discussions will be referred to the related section of the library's website that includes the library's Mission Statement, Collection Development Policy, Request for Reconsideration of Library Material Form, and the Library Bill of Rights.
2. Patrons are required to complete and submit the official Request for Reconsideration of Library Material Form to the Library Director via mail. Only requests from Accomack or Northampton County residents will be considered. Proof of residency may be required.
3. The director will form a reconsideration committee of three professional ESPL staff or librarians from Accomack or Northampton County (employed or retired) with expertise in the area. The committee will review the reconsideration form and the material in question, to consider whether its selection follows the criteria stated in the collection policy.
4. The personal identification of each reconsideration committee member should remain anonymous to protect the objectivity of the deliberation.
5. The reconsideration committee meeting may be closed depending on state law and local practice. While public comments may be useful, these comments should be directed to the library director or library board.
6. The committee's recommendation is to be an objective evaluation of the material within the scope of ESPL's Collection Development Policy.

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7. The committee's report, presenting both majority and minority opinions, should be presented to the library director, with a recommendation to retain the material in its original location, to relocate the material, or to remove the material. The report may differ depending on the type of resource that is being challenged.
8. Within 30 days of receipt of the patron's Request for Reconsideration Form, the director will make a decision utilizing the recommendations of the reconsideration committee and send a letter to the concerned person who requested the reconsideration, stating the reasons for the decision. The director will also send a copy of the letter with the committee's report and the original Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials form to the library board.
9. If the appellant is not satisfied with the decision, a written appeal may be submitted within 10 business days to the Board of Trustees.
10. If the board plans to address the appeal at their board meeting, the appellant will be notified of when and where the meeting will be held.
11. The appellant may provide written documentation and may make statements. The Board of Trustees may then ask questions, provide comments, and conduct a discussion. ESPL Board meetings are public, but spectators may not participate in the discussion, only the appellant. The Board of Trustees reserves the right to limit the length of public comments.
12. A quorum of library trustees will make a decision about the item by considering the Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials, the ESPL's Collection Development Policy, and the recommendations of the Reconsideration Committee. The board will communicate their decision in writing to the appellant within forty-five days.
13. The decision of the board is final.
14. In the event that a Material Reconsideration Form is filed on an item that has been previously reviewed by the Reconsideration Committee, as a result of an earlier filing, the Library Director may at his/her discretion, decline to convene another committee and may reply with a copy of the previous finding attached to a cover letter explaining the circumstances.
15. If the Board of Trustees has heard an appeal of a decision of the Library Director and the reconsideration committee concerning an item, and rendered a decision thereon, the Board may at its discretion decline to hear another appeal on the same item, and may reply with a letter explaining the circumstances.

Material Reconsideration Committee Guidelines

Under the best professional standards, the Library Director asks those charged with reviewing a challenged book or other resource to set aside their personal beliefs and evaluate the work in light of the objective standards outlined in the ESPL's Collection Development Policy. Listed below are some best practices for Reconsideration Committee members:

- The committee's recommendation is to be an objective evaluation of the material within the scope of the ESPL's Collection Development Policy.
- Bear in mind the principles of the freedom to read and base your decision on these broad principles rather than in defense of individual materials. Based in the First Amendment, the freedom to read is essential to our democracy.
- Read or view all materials referred to you including the full text of the material in question, available reviews, and notices of awards, if applicable.
- Review the library mission statement, materials selection and reconsideration policies, and professional guides such as the Intellectual Freedom Manual.
- The general acceptance of the materials should be checked by consulting standard evaluation aids and ESPL's Collection Development Policy.
- Challenged materials will not be removed from the collection while under reconsideration.
- Passages or parts of the work in question should not be pulled out of context. The values and faults should be weighed against each other and the opinions based on the materials as a whole.
- The committee's report, presenting both majority and minority opinions, should be presented to the Library Director, with a recommendation to retain the material in its original location, to relocate the material, or to remove the material. The report may differ depending on the type of resource that is being challenged.
- If the vote of the committee has no majority, the appellant's request will go to the library board for consideration.
- Within 30 days of receipt of the patron's Request for Reconsideration Form, the Library Director will make a decision utilizing the recommendations of the reconsideration committee and send a letter to the concerned person who requested the reconsideration, stating the reasons for the decision. The director will also send a copy of the letter with the committee's report and the original Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials form to the library board.

Sample Reconsideration Committee Report

Title _____

Author/Producer _____

Has every member of the committee read the material entirely? If not, why?

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Resources consulted: (include policies, articles, reviews etc.)

Reconsideration committee recommends:

Justification and comments: (include majority and minority positions)

Signatures of Reconsideration Committee Members:

Date:

Note: This report is forwarded to:
