



Weapons Policy

Georgia Senate Bill 319, commonly referred to as the Georgia Constitutional Carry Act, significantly changed Georgia weapons law. It went into effect on April 12, 2022.

Legal weapons are allowed to be carried by a lawful weapons carrier in or on Augusta-Richmond County Public Library System property. Legal weapons must be in the possession of the lawful weapons carrier at all times. The legal weapon(s) must remain on the person at all times. Weapons may not be pointed, brandished, aimed, or used without legal justification

Weapons are defined, by law, as knife blades longer than 12", handguns, knuckles, nun chuck, stun guns, switchblades, bats, clubs, tasers, etc. Long guns are not included in the weapons category.

Per Georgia Code § 16-11-137 library staff, library representatives, or law enforcement representatives are not allowed to ask a patron if they are a lawful weapons carrier.

If an employee finds an unattended weapon in or on library property, notify the marshal on duty or call the Richmond County Sheriff's Department. Place a staff member to watch the weapon until a law enforcement representative arrives. Do not take possession of the weapon(s).

If a patron does not adhere to the Patron Behavior Policy staff should alert the marshal on duty, or call the Richmond County Sheriff's Department. If staff have witnessed a patron possess a weapon, relay this information to the law enforcement representative.

Law enforcement may detain and question an armed person if there is "reasonable suspicion that the person has been acting in a reckless or disorderly fashion or it is witnessed firsthand."

At this time, using signage to ban weapons and armed patrons is not legal at any Library

Weapons may not be carried in vehicles belonging to the Augusta-Richmond County Public Library System per the Augusta-Richmond County Policy and Procedures Manual Section 1000.106.

This bill and other portions of The Official Code of Georgia Annotated guide library policy regarding weapons.

How to Deal With Someone Threatening You with a Weapon

In general, how you respond to these situations will be dictated by the specific circumstances of the encounter. If you find yourself in this situation, remain calm and CALL 911 as soon as

possible. People must remain calm and think clearly. No one can predict what actions are most appropriate for every situation that might occur. This procedure is merely a framework; you will need to adjust accordingly, depending on the exact circumstances you are facing.

Here are the steps:

1. Your safety is most important. Quickly look around and find a safe place to go. This could be a busy place with lots of people or a place you can hide.
2. Stay calm. Avoid making eye contact or talking to the person threatening you. Keep neutral body language and run or back away quickly.
3. Call 911 for immediate help
4. Stall for the time until help arrives or you can try to escape.
5. Keep talking, but follow the instructions from the assailant who has the weapon. Let them know that you are cooperating.
6. Do not try to grab the weapon.
7. Watch for a possible chance to escape to a safe area.
8. Do not be a hero and risk harm to yourself or others
9. Do not verbally or physically challenge the assailant.
10. Make no sudden moves. If you need to move, tell the assailant.
11. Do not resist.
12. As soon as the assailant leaves and you feel safe, close the Library and call 911. Do not allow anyone to leave or enter the Library until the police arrive and assure your safety.

Tips:

1. Be prepared to give the assailant your cash, wallet, or jewelry. It is not worth the risk. Your life is more valuable than material possessions, which can be replaced.
2. If the shooter opens fire, attempt to take cover behind heavy furniture or any other heavy obstacle. If there is nothing close, simply drop to the floor and remain quiet and still.
3. Try to remember the assailant's appearance and clothing, but do so carefully, without staring.
4. Keep doors, cash registers, and safes locked at all times. If a thief thinks they will have difficulty stealing money from the branch, maybe they will move on to another easier target.
5. After the confrontation, immediately call 911. Notifying the police quickly will increase the chance of apprehending the suspect and preventing future victims. Call the Library Director or designee following the call to the police.