

**CANADIAN COURTHOUSE AND
LAW SOCIETY LIBRARY STANDARDS**

**Prepared by the
Courthouse and Law Society Library Management Group
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Preface

The Courthouse and Law Society Library Management Group is an ad hoc group of members of the Canadian Association of Law Libraries, which began meeting in the early 1980's to discuss, among other issues, the first draft of standards for Canadian courthouse libraries.

Mr. Shih-Sheng Hu drafted the first set of standards for Canadian courthouse libraries. The result of the first draft led to the first national meeting of the National Conference of Chief Librarians of Canadian Courthouse Libraries. Several subsequent drafts were also prepared by Mr. Shih-Sheng Hu. Mr. Hu contributed a chapter in *Law libraries in Canada* entitled "Development of library standards, with special emphasis on the Canadian courthouse and law society libraries"¹, which provides the historical development of library standards in several types of libraries in Canada, and in particular the courthouse libraries. The national group ratified the standards in 1986.

In the early 1990's, the group decided it was time to revise the standards. This seemed to coincide with more library restraint measures across the country and all libraries were justifying their collections and their very existence. While the revision process began, the CD-ROM revolution in the Canadian legal publishing industry had begun. The standards needed updating to account for several changes over the years.

With permission, many concepts and items were taken from the American Association of Law Libraries standards and the British and Irish Association of Law Libraries standards. Through a long process of analysis and revision, the group came to a consensus at a meeting in November 1997. Minor changes occurred in May 1998 and a final draft was circulated for final approval. Arrangements were made for editing and translation.

There are two major changes to the standards as they were accepted in 1986. The first has to do with the impact of technology and the explosion of electronic materials available or accessible in every law library. The second has to do with the description of collections. The group agreed that describing collections according to classes across the country was not a practical comparison and could not be done. Law libraries face perpetual restraint, as prices continue to rise, the production of legal materials grows exponentially, and the financial support for law libraries shrinks year after year. Quantitative standards are required but these must be determined in the atmosphere of resource sharing amongst our libraries. It was agreed that recommendations for collection development are most beneficial in the standards and that a listing of titles that should exist in certain classes of libraries can no longer be applicable, especially since two lists, one for English titles and one for French titles, would be needed.

There are essentially four main forms of governance for Canadian courthouse libraries:

¹ Joan N. Fraser, ed., *Law Libraries in Canada : essays to honour Diana M. Priestly* (Toronto : Carswell, 1988), p. 135.

- a) Law Society-based libraries or Bar Association-based libraries
- b) Government-based libraries
- c) Separate entity systems i.e. not-for-profit societies
- d) federal court libraries.

Despite the different forms of governance and the varying percentages in their source funding, courthouse libraries share at least two common denominators:

- a) usually they are located in a courthouse or in close proximity to the court,
- b) they provide legal information to the members of the practicing Bar and judiciary, and in most cases, to members of the public.²

Individual court libraries across the country vary greatly because libraries are established on the principle of serving the needs of their immediate clientele, taking into consideration several factors to provide excellence in library service. National standards for courthouse libraries can only help to serve the demand for effective library services from the legal community.

“A standard is a means to an end. It is designed to achieve a given objective or goal.”³ The standards were developed to act as a working document and to provide guidelines for support and justification of courthouse and law society libraries, their services and collections. Standards are constantly changing, and revisions will be needed, as the development of law libraries proceeds into the next millennium. The Courthouse and Law Society Library Management Group intends to review the standards document every two years.

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² Concept borrowed from Mr. Hu’s article, with permission.

³ *Ibid.*

Acknowledgments

Library managers from the main courthouse or law society libraries in each jurisdiction across Canada participate in the Courthouse and Law Society Library Management Group. The informality of the group and its focus on the discussion of current issues have allowed the free exchange of ideas.

The following are known contributors to the Standards since the revisions began in the 1990's.

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Finally, the contributions of Shih-Sheng Hu should not be forgotten.

We hope these Standards help Canadian courthouse and law society libraries solicit the support to achieve their goals of excellence in the provision of law library service.

Thank you.

CANADIAN COURTHOUSE AND LAW SOCIETY LIBRARY STANDARDS

Preamble

The law library is essential to the administration of justice in all jurisdictions. The quality of its legal services will be dependant upon the quality of its law library.

Legal information is the lifeblood of the legal system. The health of that system depends very heavily on the quality and accessibility of the information by which it is served. Any part of the system that is not adequately supplied is apt to fail in meeting the needs of those whom it is intended to serve.⁴

Access to legal information is vital to the effective operation of the Canadian judicial system. Canadian courthouse libraries provide access to legal information resources for all citizens, either through direct access to those resources, or through judges and lawyers who rely on those resources.

These standards are intended to be used only by Canadian courthouse and law society libraries which service the needs of practising lawyers, judges, court officers and others who are directly involved in the process of the administration of justice. These standards should act as guidelines to ensure that Canadian courthouse libraries maintain collections, staff and services of the highest quality.

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Canadian Legal Information Centre, *Legal information access ideals*. ([Ottawa] , 1992), p. 11-12.

I. Management

- A. The mandate and authority(ies) by which the courthouse library or library system operates must be clearly written and reviewed on a regular basis.
(Commentary: organizational chart, written agreement, bylaw, etc.)
- B. The goals and objectives of the courthouse library or library system and their relationship to the goals and objectives of the parent organization, if applicable, must be clearly written and reviewed on a regular basis.
- C. The courthouse library or library system must be managed by a full-time qualified librarian.
(Commentary: It is recommended that the library manager has an M.L.S. or equivalent degree, with previous management and supervisory experience. Extensive experience within a law library is essential, with detailed knowledge of all aspects of library operations, familiarity with current information technology as it pertains to library systems.)
1. The chief librarian should be recognized as part of the management team of the library's governance body and should participate in policy making which affects library operations. The chief librarian should meet on a regular basis with his or her superiors to be advised of policy directions.
 2. From its inception, planning that concerns the courthouse library or library system in any or all of the following areas must be directed by the chief librarian:
 - a. management of library operations
 - b. budget preparation and revenue generation
 - c. growth and development of the collection, including bibliographic and physical control for facilitating access
 - d. recruitment and development of personnel to assist users, service the collection and perform all administrative functions required of the library or library system
 - e. development and staffing of satellite libraries
 - f. planning and development of physical facilities
 - g. planning and development of computer facilities
 - h. participation in library and other information networks
- D. The chief librarian should be kept fully informed of the policies and procedures of the court system in which the library resides.

- E. Courthouse libraries should participate in cooperative activities with neighbouring libraries and regional networks. Examples of activities that might be of benefit include sharing of resources, union lists, interlibrary loans, cooperative acquisitions, and shared cataloguing.
- F. Policies and procedures for the operation of the library should be kept current and be made available to staff, funders, and library users.
- G. The library should submit an annual report to its governing body. The report should be prepared by the chief librarian.

II. Budget

A. Qualitative standards

1. The budget of a courthouse library or courthouse library system must be separate and adequate to ensure not only a sufficient number of qualified staff to maintain an acceptable level of library service, but also to provide a complete, up-to-date collection, including non-print materials, electronic formats, and online databases. Provision for new acquisitions, services, and staff must be identified to meet changing demands.
2. The budget must include for the provision of adequate and continually upgraded computer equipment.
3. The budget is to be prepared, presented and managed by the chief librarian. The budget request should be supported and defended by the governing body.

B. Quantitative **Error! Bookmark not defined.** standard for core library collections

1. Each library or library system should develop quantitative budget standards for its library or libraries. These standards should include, but not be limited to:

Collection: - monographs
 - serials
 - electronic formats
 - audiovisual
 - binding

Staff - salaries
 - benefits
 - staff development and training

Operations - maintenance of existing services and facilities
 - online services and bibliographic utilities
 - branch supervision
 - new initiatives or services
 - supplies, equipment, furniture, shelving, computers
 - publication costs

Revenues - if included in the budget and used to offset operational and/or salary costs

2. Norms for these standards as percentages of the total budget are:

Collection 30-40%

Staff 50-70%

Operations 0-20%

III. Personnel

- A. The courthouse library or library system must be adequately staffed by competent well-trained personnel to guarantee high quality library service in a timely fashion to its users. Ongoing training and development must be provided.
- B. Courthouse libraries and library systems should adopt position classification schemes. Salary scales should be set by comparison with the most appropriate categories in similar library organizations and parity maintained between similar professional positions within the parent organization. Job descriptions should be prepared for all staff and should be reviewed regularly. Periodic performance appraisals should be carried out for all staff.
- C. Personnel policies and practices should be written and made available to all personnel.
- D. Personnel should be encouraged to participate in local and national professional associations. The library budget should include funds to support job-related professional activities such as attendance at conferences and relevant continuing education opportunities.
- E. The chief librarian should attend national Courthouse and Law Society Library Management Group meetings.

IV. Physical Plant and Facilities

(Commentary: The cooperation of the parent organization's Public Works Department in correcting or maintaining the facilities is crucial to the safe and adequate use of the courthouse library)

- A. The courthouse library must be located in the courthouse, easily accessible from courtrooms and freely accessible to all users. There should be a single entrance/exit to the library, and all other entrances should be minimized. If the library is open after normal business hours, a separate outside entrance should be provided. Any other entrances should be lockable to prevent unauthorized entrance and exit, with the exception of fire exits.
2. The access system and procedure for after hours use must be established by a method which does not conflict with building security procedures. Access to a washroom after hours must be provided without compromising security procedures.
- C. Courthouse libraries must provide an environment conducive to the various kinds of work performed in the library. The amount of space, the quality of light and air are recognized as important factors in the creation of an atmosphere which is both comfortable for the patrons and staff of the library and for the preservation of the collection. Areas designated for computer training should be located so other users of the library performing research are not disturbed.
- D. Courthouse libraries must provide space adequate for the effective provision of:
 1. reader services, including provision of a reference/circulation desk or area
 2. study areas with adequate seating capacity which is capable of accommodating the use of print and electronic formats
 3. photocopiers, microform, and audiovisual devices
 4. storage of the collection, including electronic formats
 5. adequate staff space for the provision of all services, including staff work stations and a technical services area which should be separate from the collection and patron areas
 6. disabled persons' access
 7. security, in relation to after hours access; security of personal and library property; and security of library staff.
- E. Staff Offices and Work Areas

1. Each library staff position requires a work station away from the public service areas. Staff work stations and the technical services areas should be separate from the collection and patron areas, with adequate environmental conditions and should be properly vented.
2. Locked, private office space is essential.
3. The technical services area should contain a sink for book repairs and maintenance.
4. The shipping/receiving area should be located near the entrance. It should be secure to enable proper identification of new materials.

F. Noise

The library should be constructed and designed to minimize noise and provide proper acoustics. A high quality durable carpet with a durable under pad should be laid to prevent noise and to prevent leg and foot injuries to staff. The thickness of the carpet must not impede the movement of book trucks and equipment on wheels.

G. Collection Housing

1. Proper library shelving with adjustable shelves is required. All shelving over 5 (five) feet high must be secured to walls and/or ceilings for safety.
2. Shelving should be arranged in a manner that allows easy access to the collection. There should also be enough shelving for adequate growth of the collection in print, electronic, and other formats.
3. The book stacks should be designed to be free of water and drain pipes, with protection from leaks or seepage from any source.
4. Aisles in stacks accessible to the public and to mobility impaired individuals should be between 36" and 42" wide. Aisles in closed storage areas can be between 24" and 30" wide.

H. Facilities should be provided for the storage of non-print and fragile materials under adequately protective conditions.

- I. Adequate provisions should be made for the installation and use of computer terminals, compact disks, modems, microform readers and reader-printers, photocopiers, fax machines, audiovisual equipment, and any other devices needed to provide library services.

J. Floor loading

1. There are special structural requirements for a courthouse library. Floors must be reinforced to the following minimal levels:
 - a. 70-75 lbs per square foot for office areas
 - b. 150-200 lbs per square foot for library stacks with full-height shelving
 - c. 200-300 lbs per square foot for compact shelving
 - d. 170 lbs per square foot for microform cabinets.

K. Lighting and Electrical

1. Courthouse libraries must provide lighting which is appropriate and comfortable for the purpose for which it is used. Indirect lighting should be maintained due to the number of machines and video display terminals in use.
2. Stack lighting should run perpendicular to shelving ranges.
3. The relative amount of light (intensity) needed for each of the tasks performed in the library shall be determined in accordance with the standards described in Appendix A.
4. There should be provision for the distribution of power and telecommunications data throughout the library, and electrical outlets at frequent intervals.
5. All library lights should be controllable by library staff. If the library is not staffed after normal business hours, a separate switch for the stack area should be available which is outside the library staff area.
6. The electrical wiring of the library shall be designed to permit localized lighting.
7. The nature and amount of light (both natural and artificial) entering the library should be controlled so as to reduce glare and reflection and to prevent the deterioration of materials. Furthermore, the floors, walls and table tops in the library should be light in colour to reduce the amount of contrast with the pages of a book, and surfaces should be dull and opaque to lessen reflection.
8. Emergency lighting should be provided in sufficient quantity to allow users and staff to exit safely from any part of the library.

L. Air Quality

1. The courthouse library should have a good quality ventilation system which distributes fresh air frequently throughout the building at the proper volume and temperature from

a proper distance and at a suitable noise level. The library should have ventilation that may be controlled separately from the rest of the building.

2. In order to sustain the materials, the temperature should be 20° C or 65° F, plus or minus degrees.
3. The humidity level should be controlled in the stacks, in general storage areas and in rare book rooms. Humidity should be at 45%, plus or minus 5%.

M. Disaster Preparedness

The courthouse library or library system should have adequate disaster preparedness policies and procedures. These policies should be compatible with those of the parent organization to ensure priorities are shared in case such a disaster occurs.

N. Smoke Alarms, Fire Alarms and Sprinklers

1. The courthouse library should have properly installed and inspected smoke alarms and heat-activated sprinklers.
2. Fire alarms and exits should be clearly marked and escape plans should be conspicuously posted.

V. Services

- A. An organized collection in which a library user can locate materials is considered an essential service.
- B. Library services and policies should be developed to serve the needs of the library users. The library's mandate and goals statements should identify the levels of information service provided to its different user groups.
- C. Library services should be examined and evaluated regularly. Changes to services should be made as technology and users' needs change.
- D. Library services must be supported by adequate and trained staff to ensure high quality service.
- E. The library should develop written policies to ensure that the information and assistance provided to its users are appropriate to the situation. This should include service to off-site and remote users as well as to users in the library.

(Commentary: Providing an information service to members of the public is much different than providing information to members of the legal profession. The reference policy should specify how reference questions posed by members of the public should be handled at the reference desk. Special services for remote users may be needed, and can be evaluated by each library system. Off-site assistance may vary from assistance received by on-site or remote users.)

- F. Copyright policies should be developed and copyright notices ought to be placed prominently beside photocopiers, fax machines, and computer printers to protect the library against liability for copyright infringement.
- G. Written standards should be developed for the library system and all the courthouse libraries it administers and should include a description of the service, principles on the quality of service to expect, delivery targets, costs associated with the provision of the services, and complaint or redress mechanisms.
- H. Library policies concerning user access and loan of print and non-print legal information should be formulated and advertised to inform users of the extent and availability of the library's resources. The library should prepare policies for preparing and accessing electronic materials created by the parent body to load onto the Internet or similar online services.

(Commentary: Policies specifying loan periods by type of publication exist in many libraries. While electronic materials may not circulate but reside on a network, it is important to inform users when those materials are unavailable due to network backups or scheduled maintenance. Many organizations are loading documents they have created, including judgments. Policies are needed to determine who loads what

where and who is entitled to access. Archiving this type of data may also become an issue and should form part of the policy.)

- I. Library services include an educational component. In keeping with this mandate, and as the reliance on electronic resources increases, the library needs access to computer facilities in order to provide effective electronic training for the library's users and staff.
- J. The courthouse library should enter into agreements with other libraries. Users should be informed about the collections and services of other libraries, the availability of interlibrary loan, and other services to which the user might have access that may assist in answering an enquiry.
- K. The courthouse library should have a clear public relations policy that outlines how library services are to be promoted.
- L. Maps, signs, library guides, and other tools to assist users in finding their way about the library should be provided.
- M. Library policies concerning patron access to online information should be formulated and posted at terminal locations.

VI. Technical Services

A. Acquisitions

1. Written policies for collection development, including criteria for the selection and discarding of materials and the acceptance and disposition of gifts, should be formulated by the chief librarian in consultation with staff and users. The policies should include materials in all formats.
2. All materials not updated by the publishers' schedules should be clearly marked. Sets should be complete, where possible. Multiple copies should be available where heavy usage requires them. All superseded material stored in the library should be clearly indicated as such and should be retained only if it continues to serve as a useful source of information for users of the library.
3. The library should have available the selection tools appropriate to its needs.
4. The library should acquire and provide access to information in the best alternative non-print format, including microforms, audiovisual materials, and electronic materials such as online databases, compact disks, and electronic data files available on computer networks, in addition to print materials.

B. Cataloguing

1. There should be a union catalogue of each courthouse library or library system's holdings that permits identification of items, regardless of format or location by author, title, and subject.
2. The catalogue shall be in a format that can be consulted by a number of users concurrently.
3. The collection should be catalogued and classified in a system that makes it possible to retrieve the desired material quickly and easily by both the user and the staff. National standards for bibliographic records should serve as guidelines.
4. Library materials shall be arranged to provide maximum accessibility to all users. Certain categories of materials may be segregated by form for convenience.
5. The courthouse library or library system should also maintain a holdings (inventory) file and any other files, such as authority files, necessary to maintain bibliographic control over the collection.
6. Library catalogues and other files should be generated in machine-readable formats. Whenever possible, existing paper catalogues and files should be converted to

electronic ones.

7. Regular updating of the catalogue is essential if it is to be of maximum use to both readers and staff. The editing of the catalogue should include discarding obsolete entries, consolidating entries, checking that cross-references are effective and checking location marks.
8. Materials placed in storage facilities must be readily accessible to users upon request.

C. Collection Maintenance

1. The library's collections should be maintained in good physical condition. This requires regular shelving and shelf reading, as well as repair and rebinding of damaged items.
2. The courthouse library or library system should establish a preservation program.
3. Serial publications received in unbound form, except those of temporary value, should be either bound, or stored in a durable and accessible non-print format on an ongoing basis.
4. Those print materials replaced by CD-ROM resources held by the library should be appropriately marked.
5. Weeding of the collection should be done regularly and superseded material of no value to the library should be discarded.

VII. Statistics

(Commentary: Statistics are a useful mechanism to support the library's budget and to justify staff and services. All library staff must be aware of the importance of recording library statistics and understand exactly what is being measured by the courthouse library.)

- A. Libraries should keep statistics in a uniform/consistent manner in order to ensure valid data for comparison or maintenance of standards. Each library system is responsible for deciding what statistics it will collect, how they are reported, and what is possible to share with other library systems. Time-frames for maintaining historical statistics can be determined by the courthouse library or library system.
- B. Statistics should be kept on all major client services, and on all revenues generated from client services.
- C. Statistics should be reported in the library's annual report.
- D. Written definitions should be prepared to describe the statistics being kept and the definitions should be communicated with library staff in order to collect data consistently.

VIII. Collection Development

(Commentary: The following are guidelines for court libraries and systems for writing collection development standards and policies within their institution, taking into consideration the many factors involved in providing a relevant, dynamic collection of materials in various formats to service the court library's main clientele.)

- A. Collection development standards must be developed to provide the library administration and/or its governing body guidance in evaluating its existing collection or in building a new collection.
- B. The number of legal practitioners shall not be the sole factor for determining the level and content of a library collection. Other factors which must be considered are as follows:
 - 1. availability of and distance from other legal resources in the region such as a law school library
 - 2. demographic trend and population size
 - 3. nature of the local industry and the business of the court
 - 4. funding sources
 - 5. technological support from regional and/or provincial legal resource centres
 - 6. availability of materials in electronic formats and the ability to use those formats.
- C. Classes of Libraries
 - 1. For the purposes of collection development, the court library system in each jurisdiction should develop its own class structure of libraries.
- D. Content of Collection
 - 1. The following may be used to develop the collections for an individual courthouse library:
 - a. The library should provide access to a collection of useful and relevant titles selected from standard recommended sources and including a range of bibliographic tools.
 - b. All courthouse libraries should provide access to a selection of secondary materials relating to Canadian law such as loose leaf or supplemented works, digests and encyclopaedia, current awareness services and newsletters, recent textbooks, reports, government publications, journals, continuing legal education materials,

law reform materials, and general reference texts.

- c. Each library should provide access to a selection of series of primary materials and journals relating to any special topics or jurisdictions of particular interest to its clientele.
- d. Access to a collection of serials should be readily available and back runs should be maintained, regardless of format, the depth and breadth of which are maintained in relation to users' needs.

E. Format of Material

1. The collections of the court library should be held in the format, or combination of formats, that best serves the needs of its users and the administration of justice in that jurisdiction/region/area.
2. It is for the court librarian to determine within the general framework of these standards, what mix of formats - paper, remote online databases, in-house databases (CD-ROMS), microforms - to select.
3. Material in frequent use should not be in microform.
4. The format of material chosen by a courthouse library will depend on several factors, which include but are not excluded to the following:
 - a. degree of computerization in the library and its governing body
 - b. the physical attributes of a particular electronic version, ie, whether stand-alone or network versions are available, the operating system, the availability of archival disks, whether the item may be purchased outright or if licensing only is possible, whether it is compatible with the courthouse library's computer situation
 - c. the quality of the electronic product and its ability to improve legal research
 - d. the availability of similar materials online and the accessibility by the courthouse library's user population
 - e. the availability of equivalent print materials in the courthouse library
 - f. remote access for the branch or satellite libraries and the user population
 - g. cost of the item and/or its licenses.

APPENDIX A

Lighting Levels

The principle source of recommended lighting levels is the Illuminating Engineering Society (IES) Lighting Handbook. Illuminance levels are given in lux and as such are intended as target values with minor deviations (+/- 15%) expected. These target values also represent maintained values. In all cases the recommendations in this table are based on the assumption that the lighting will be properly designed to take into account the visual characteristics of the task.

Lighting Level Adjustment

The light levels in the table are based on the assumptions that the workers' age (average) is under 40, the speed and/or accuracy of the task is not critical, and the reflectance of the task background is above 30%.

Task Lighting

The table lists light levels for specific tasks as well as location. In the cases where this task lighting level is very high, it is often impracticable and wasteful to light the entire room to the recommended value. The general lighting level for areas where tasks are regularly performed may be reduced, but not below a minimum of 200 lux. Supplementary lighting should then be used in combination with the general lighting to achieve proper illumination of the given task.

<u>Activity, Building Area or Task</u>	<u>Lighting Level (lux)</u>
Building exteriors	
Building surrounds	10
Entrances	
Active (Pedestrian and/or conveyance)	50
Inactive (locked, infrequent use)	10
Conference rooms	300
Classrooms	750
Garages	
Parking only	55
Library stacks	
Book stacks (vertical 30 in. Above floor)	
Active stacks	300
Inactive stacks	75

Offices	
General	300
Lobbies, lounges and reception areas	150
Mail sorting	750
Off-set printing and duplicating area	300
Video display terminals (may need to shield or reorient task)	75
Reading	
Copied tasks	
Microfiche reader	75
Photocopier	300
Handwritten tasks	300
Printed tasks	
8 and 10 point typeface	300
Telephone books	750
Typed originals	300
Stairways	150
Washrooms	150

Commentary: based on Design Standards & Guidelines for New Public Buildings 10/95, Public Works and Services, GNWT.