

## REFERENCE SERVICE POLICY

Hamburg Public Library will maintain a reference collection at the "Basic Plus" level as defined by Berks County Library System guidelines.

It offers reference services to everyone served by the library. They are available to our patrons whenever the library is open. Staff members will receive the training necessary to allow them to utilize the library's reference resources and to make referrals to other libraries and/or sources of desired information including the Internet.

Questions from children and young adults will receive the same courtesy and respect as those of older library customers. Staff will not answer homework questions, but will aid the child in his/her search for them, so that he/she has the pleasure of discovering the correct answers.

Direct public services such as reference queries will receive priority over other library duties. Reference questions will be handled in the order received, whether by in-house users or by telephone. In the matter of conflict of simultaneous questions, the in-house patron will receive precedence and the caller will have his/her call returned within the hour.

In answering reference questions, the source will always be cited and when relevant, also the copyright date of the source. When needed, the staff will assist customers in Internet queries.

Generally, reference services are limited to questions that can be answered in five to ten minutes. Telephone requests are appropriate for short concise, factual queries.

Legal and medical information will be given verbatim with sources to callers. Under no circumstances will the library staff offer legal advice, interpretation, or medical opinions. Callers will be referred to their physicians or lawyers for questions requiring interpretation or advice. The library offers current tax forms as a service to the public. Staff is not tax specialists and will not answer specific tax questions.

Reference services are free-of-charge except for photocopying, for which there is a 10 cent per page charge

All reference inquiries are kept confidential between the patron and staff. No records are kept that link a person to a reference query.

Those questions to which we cannot find an answer or to which we do not have the needed resources to answer, may, with the patron's permission, be referred to other libraries or appropriate sources for information.

Reviewed and passed September 13, 2011