Stacks Maintenance Basics

What Is Stacks Maintenance?
Put simply, this task involves organizing our collections according to a standard organizational system.

What are “the stacks”? The book collections in the buildings are collectively referred to as “the stacks.” At the University Library, the stacks are located on the second and third floors, with a few collections also on the first floor and basement level.

We will discuss this further, but first we need to cover the basics.

Overview
While working in the stacks, always maintain a professional attitude. Stacks maintenance can be repetitious, but the quality of your work directly affects how efficiently our users can access our materials.

Think of it like this: A doctor comes to the library for important information about a possible diagnosis for their patient. If you were the patient, would you want your doctor to get the information they need sooner or later?

Procedures to Follow
You must check in with the supervisor on duty at the beginning of every hour, whether you have finished your current task or not. You can return to the circulation desk or use MS Teams to reach out to your supervisor.

If you notice issues in the stacks while shelving, let staff know so we can fix them — don’t stop what you are doing to fix them yourself. Take a photo or record important information and report it to the supervisor on duty via MS Teams or when you return from your task.

Some shelving issues you may observe while in the stacks are:
- Books that have toppled over due to missing bookends
- Shelves that are completely out of call number order and need fixing
- Overflowing book bins
- Leaks, spills, power outages/lights out
- Bugs and other critters

Use the “see something, say something” approach when witnessing questionable behavior by patrons.

Prioritize getting yourself to safety, checking in with your supervisor, and reporting these issues to the appropriate people with a sense of urgency. Sometimes it will be staff, and sometimes it will be UPD and then staff, in dangerous situations. Please be aware that you can contact UPD (518-442-3131) directly at any time if you feel that you need to. Save this number to your phone!

Please avoid and report:
- Disputes between patrons
- Patrons displaying loud or questionable behavior
- Patrons displaying inappropriate/obscene behavior
- Patrons who are smoking/vaping
- Fires, weapons, or other unsafe conditions
- Water leaks or building damage
- Questionable packages

Customer Service Expectations
- In the Quiet and Silent Zones, try not to disturb studying patrons.
- Address patrons using gender-neutral language: use “patron,” “you,” “them,” or their chosen name, if you know it.
- Do not have loud conversations with coworkers, and tell your friends you will catch up with them after work.

Work Ethic and Attire
Earbuds/headphones may be used while working in the stacks, provided they do not interfere with your work or disturb patrons. These may be used for audio only — do not watch videos while working. Be responsible, and put your earbuds/devices away if you find that they are distracting you from your work.
- Do not take phone calls or use FaceTime – if it's an emergency, tell your supervisor, go to a break room, and sign out of your time sheet.
- Maneuver trucks as quietly as possible.

Occasionally, you will be approached by patrons who have questions while you are working in the stacks. (ex: “Where are the restrooms?” or “Can you help me find this book?”) Assisting the patron is always our top priority; finishing your task can wait!

Assist the patron if you know the answer to the question.

- If you do not know how to answer a question (or if you are unsure of the answer) refer the patron to the circulation desk so staff may assist them correctly. It's okay! Nobody knows everything.
- Tell the supervisor on duty that you assisted a patron so they know why your task took longer than expected or why less work got done.

If a patron needs your assistance, fully remove your earbuds/headphones, turn audio off, and put your device away. The patron always gets your undivided attention.

When you return from the stacks, headphones must be removed from your ears. Staff need your undivided attention as well, and you won't hear us if you have your earbuds in.

Wear appropriate footwear – sneakers or other close-toed shoes (not sandals or flip-flops). Falling books really hurt! If inappropriate footwear is being worn, students may be sent home to change into more appropriate shoes.

To preserve our collections, do not eat while working in the stacks. You may have a beverage with a covered lid, but be careful not to spill it.