

[Frequently Asked Questions](#) [1]

Do you have a question about what to do during your shift or are you encountering a technical issue? You may find the answer below!

If you don't find the answer to your question, please [contact us](#) [2]. You may also wish to ask your local coordinator.

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Logging In

What should I do before my shift?

See the [Shift Checklist](#) [3].

I've forgotten my LibraryH3lp username / password.

If you've forgotten your LibraryH3lp username, click the Forgot your username? link on the login page. You can also contact your local coordinator. If you've forgotten your password, click the Forgot your password? link on the login page.

If it's urgent and you can't contact your local coordinator, [contact us](#) [2], and we can retrieve your username or reset your password.

I can't login to the AskAway staff website.

If you've forgotten your password, [request a new password](#) [4] from the login page. If your email address isn't recognized, contact your local coordinator who can create an account for you.

Picking up a Patron

What are the best practices for picking up patrons?

- Pick-up patrons as quickly as possible - aim for no more than 60 seconds wait time
- Greet the patron as soon as you pick them up
- Remember that other libraries have different network speeds and may not see new patrons coming in as quickly as you
- Communicate in Campfire if you feel something is wrong

Will patrons see my name when I pick up the call?

In LibraryH3lp, your name will not be displayed to patrons. If you'd like to personalize your greeting, you may wish to create a welcome script that includes your first name.

What information about the patron is available?

You can see the page the patron was on when they initiated the chat session, the queue (institution) they're coming in through, and the time they sent their first message.

During your Shift?

How should I use Campfire?

Use [Campfire](#) [5] to communicate with other service providers during your shift. You should be logged in to Campfire throughout your shift and have your volume turned on so you can hear notifications.

In Campfire, you can say hi to your colleagues, share expertise, learn about and troubleshoot technical problems, facilitate transfers, etc.

I'm the only one logged in or someone is missing. What should I do?

There should always be at least one other person on shift with you. If you find yourself alone or short-staffed, the Admin Centre and your colleagues are here to help.

Working a daytime shift during the week?

1. Check the [Schedule](#) [6]. Which library should be staffing?
2. If you're comfortable, contact the local coordinator and politely ask if someone is able to log on
 - Visit the library's [Policy Page](#) [7] to find contact info for the local coordinator (scroll to bottom)
3. If you're not comfortable contacting the library or you don't get a response from them, [contact the Admin Centre](#) [2] by phone or email
4. If no one is available and the service is overwhelmed, use the [Swamped button](#) [8] to request help from service providers
5. Always let the Admin Centre know if an institution is missing so we can follow-up

Working an evening or weekend shift?

1. Check the [Schedule](#) [6]. Which library should be staffing?
2. Send a quick message to the evenings-weekends@askaway.org [9] mailing list to let them know you're alone or short-staffed
 - We want to avoid broadcasting blame, so please send a message simply saying "I'm currently alone (or someone is missing) on my AskAway shift, is anyone available to help?"
 - If you don't receive a response quickly, move to the next step
3. If no one jumps on to help and it's busy, [give us a call or text](#) [2] (see evenings and weekends emergency contact)
4. If these steps don't work out and you're overwhelmed, send a swamped message to all service providers using the [Swamped button](#) [8]
5. Always let the Admin Centre know if an institution is missing so we can follow-up

For strategies to manage calls while you wait for help to arrive, see the FAQ below "How can I make my shift easier during busy times?"

How can I make my shift easier during busy times?

- Login to LibraryH3lp and Campfire a few minutes early. Offer to take transfers.
- Set-up your workstation in a way that works well for you. Try using two browsers.
- Adjust your personal Preferences in the LibraryH3lp webclient.
- Communicate with your colleagues in Campfire to manage questions.
- Pick up patrons as quickly as you can. You can use the [Begin - Swamped script](#) [10] to manage their expectations.
- Refer, refer, refer! During busy times, you may not have time to give every patron the in-depth help you'd like to.
- See the training handouts [Tips for Handling Multiple Patrons](#) [11] for more strategies!

What is the Swamped button?

The [Swamped Button](#) [8] will automatically create an email addressed to the AskAway service providers mailing list saying that AskAway is swamped.

To send a swamped message, click the button, enter your email address, and press "send." Your email address must be the one you use to login to the AskAway staff website. If you aren't sure which address this is, contact the Admin Centre or your local coordinator.

What should I do when the patron thinks the service provider is from their institution?

There is nothing wrong with letting patrons know that AskAway is staffed by BC and Yukon service providers and that they are talking to someone from a different institution. If they are asking for local information, they may be more patient if they realize the person they are talking to is from another library.

We want to avoid patrons making the assumption that someone from another institution can't help them. If they seem discouraged, assure them you can help them get started and then refer them to someone at their library.

There don't seem to be any questions coming in!

- Check to make sure you have selected all queues under "I'm Staffing."
- Check in Campfire to see if your colleagues on shift are seeing calls come in.
- Check one of the chat boxes on a library's website to make sure they are open and working. If they aren't, contact the [Admin Centre](#) [2] immediately. If they are open, be patient and wait for your first call to arrive.

LibraryH3lp Webclient

I don't hear a sound when a new patron arrives.

Check your volume and check your Preferences in the staffing webclient. Make sure you've selected a Chat sound.

What do the patron status indicators mean?

The patron status indicators show you the current status of your patrons:

- (green) Patron is online
- (black) Patron is offline
- (arrow) This chat is minimized

How can I see who's staffing the service and how many active calls there are?

To see who's staffing a queue and how many active calls there are in that queue, hover over the queue status (e.g. the green circle to the left of the queue name).

What are scripts and how do I create my own?

Scripts are canned messages that you can send to patrons during a chat session. To learn more about the scripts available for you to use and steps to create your own, see the [Scripts page](#) [10].

How do I transfer a patron to another AskAwayer?

Follow these steps to smoothly transfer a patron to another service provider:

1. Ask in Campfire if someone is able to take a transfer.
2. Click the Transfer button in the chat window above the typing area.
3. In the Users drop-down, select the name of the person you're transferring to.
4. Wait until the transfer has gone through and been accepted before you close the chat on your end.

Accessing Resources

How can I quickly find information for an institution I'm not familiar with?

Each library has filled out a template of ready reference information, called a [Policy Page](#) [7], that you can use to find direct links to information on their website.

Can I use resources from my institution to help a patron that isn't from my institution?

No, we are always helping the patrons with resources they have access to, even if we know the perfect resource exists somewhere else. Log into the [Guest Logins](#) [12] page to find out the guest login for your patron's institution.

A Guest Login is not working.

If you notice that another institution's Guest Login is not working, check with your colleagues in Campfire to make sure it's a system-wide issue. If it's not working for anyone, please email the [Admin Centre](#) [2]. If possible, include details (e.g. the institution, which resource(s) didn't work, and a description of what happened).

Privacy

Why can't I ask a patron for their email address to follow-up?

AskAway is anonymous, so we don't ask patrons for personal information (this includes their email address). Instead, you can choose to give a patron your own (professional) contact information, if you would like the patron to follow-up. You're not required to do so though. Another option is to refer the patron to someone at their own library.

Unexpected Patrons

How should I help a patron in crisis?

On rare occasions, service providers may find themselves chatting with a patron in crisis. Crisis calls may contain threats of suicide or indications of abuse. Please see the [Patrons in Crisis](#) [13] page for more information.

A patron needs to contact security.

We recommend that you help the patron find the appropriate contact information and inform them that they will need to make the call themselves for assistance. We cannot call campus security for them. Check out the *Problem - Contact Security* script that will make it easier to quickly deal with situations like noise complaints, smoke and fire alarms, theft, first-aid, and more.

A patron is being rude or abusive.

You don't have to tolerate rude or abusive behavior from patrons. [Scripts](#) [10] are available that can help you communicate this to patrons or bring the call to a close quickly.

How should I respond to a prank call?

With each patron, you should pick them up and use the reference interview to determine if there is a legitimate information need. If you think you are dealing with a prank call, you can use [scripts](#) [10] to bring the call to a close quickly.

Calm, consistent use of the scripts to shut the prankster down and not engaging or taking their comments personally will hopefully bring their calls to a quick end.

When you end a prank call, please apply the Inappropriate / Prank [descriptive tag](#) [14] to the call. This helps the Admin Centre track the number of prank calls.

If a prankster comes to the service repeatedly, please let the [Admin Centre](#) [2] know.

How should I help a patron who is not a post-secondary student?

AskAway's primary mandate is to serve the students, faculty, and staff of BC's post-secondary institutions with their research or course-related questions. These patrons are our priority.

It's up to you whether or not you choose to help unaffiliated patrons. If you feel that helping them will not impact your ability to our primary patrons, and you wish to do so, please go ahead. It's always good to leave any patron with a good feeling about the library. If you are not able to assist an unaffiliated patron with their question, please make an effort to ensure the patron understands that their question is beyond the scope of our service. The [Chat - Refer Public script](#) [10] may be helpful.

Technical Troubleshooting

Any general tips for handling technical issues?

- Chat through technical problems. Let the patron know that there may be delays due to technical difficulties.
- Use [Scripts](#) [10]. The *Problem - Technical* script may be helpful.
- Know when to give up or refer. If you or your patron are becoming frustrated, don't try every possible solution to a tech problem. Try one or two troubleshooting options but then return to what does work: chatting or maybe sending links. If appropriate, send the patron a message such as "Looks like this isn't going to work tonight - I'm going to send you X instead." Or you may refer them to their library or encourage them to come back to AskAway at another time.
- Always follow-up. If a patron disappears, don't just end the session. The transcript isn't complete until you end the session. You may wish to give one or two troubleshooting tips or suggest a few resources. Don't spend too much time on abandoned sessions but always be sure to leave the patron with something they can use.

I was logged out / disconnected from the webclient or my computer crashed

Try logging back in. Your patrons will have disappeared from your webclient but if they send another message, they should be reconnected to the service. If you pick them up, let the patron know that there was a technical delay on your

end and thank them for their patience.

If the problem persists, communicate with your colleagues in Campfire and report the problem to the [Admin Centre](#) [2].

Continue to try refreshing your browser, restarting your computer, and logging out and back in again until your shift is over. If you're unable to logout properly before the end of your shift, contact the [Admin Centre](#) [2] so we can log you out.

I don't see any new patrons coming in, but other service providers see them.

Different libraries may have different network speeds. A service provider may see a new incoming patron before you do. Use Campfire to let other service providers know that you suspect their network speed is faster than yours and ask them to hold back a moment to let you pick up calls. Transferring calls is always an option as well.

My patron is complaining that they keep getting timed out.

You could provide the patron with another URL to a different chat box from their institution (or another one) to restart the session.

Suggest they try a different browser. See LibraryH3lp list of [supported browsers](#) [15]. If they continue to experience problems, refer them to their institution so they leave with something they can use.

I just sent the patron a link and now they've disappeared!

The patron may lose the session if they conduct a search in a database where the chat box is embedded or refresh the results on that page. Send the patron the [Begin - Chat Expand](#) [10] script asking them to pop-out the chat box into a separate window.

If you send the patron a link, it should automatically open in a new browser tab or window. If they disappear and then return, you could ask them to copy and paste the URL and open it in a new window.

Ending the Chat

How can I successfully end a session with a patron?

There are many ways to successfully end the session. Make sure the patron has enough to get started, or that you've made an appropriate referral. Ask if they'd like any additional help with their original question or if they have any other questions before closing. Encourage them to have a transcript of the session sent to their email.

Has your patron stopped communicating? Check-out the patron status indicators to see if they are still connected to the chat. When you see the "Guest is offline" message, this means they have definitely left the session.

I see a black patron status indicator. What should I do?

If you think the patron left the chat accidentally, you can keep the call open. If they return, they will be reconnected directly to you.

If your shift is over and they haven't returned, make sure to end the session. If they return after you've logged out for the day, they'll be reconnected to the queues.

What are tags?

Descriptive tags are applied to chat sessions after the session has ended. They are important for gathering statistics,

tracking technical issues, and show us what kinds of questions are being asked on the service. See the [Descriptive Tags](#) [14] page for a complete list of tags and information on how to use them.

Finishing your Shift

How do I log out properly at the end of my shift?

It's important to log out fully at the end of every shift, otherwise the service may stay open overnight with no one to pick up calls. To log out of the LibraryH3lp webclient fully, click "Logout" from the drop-down in the top right. Before logging out, make sure that you have ended all chat sessions.

I want to finish up one more question at the end of my shift. Can I stay on without picking up other questions?

It's your choice whether you would like to stay to finish up a question after your shift has ended or if you would like to transfer the call to someone else. If you would like to finish up, you can set your status to "Busy" in the top right drop-down. This will allow you to continue with any active sessions but you won't see new calls coming in. When your calls have wrapped up, remember to Logout of the webclient.

How do I close the queues at the end of the night?

The service will close when every service provider has left the queues or logged out of LibraryH3lp.

To hop out of the queues:

- Set your status to "Busy"
 - If everyone sets their status to "Busy" this will close the service
- Wrap-up any unfinished calls and remember to log out of the chat monitor

A colleague is still logged in long after their shift was over or after we've closed. What can I do?

Until everyone has left all the queues, the service will remain open. If someone seems to be logged in past the end of their shift, please check the following:

- Check the [Schedule](#) [6] to see if they have a long shift
- Message them in Campfire and ask them if they forgot to logout
- If they don't respond, try contacting them by phone or email to let them know they're still logged in
- If it's less than 2 hours before closing, [contact the Admin Centre](#) [2]
- If they're still logged in at closing, you don't have to stay online - just be sure to [let the Admin Centre know](#) [2] by phone
 - If it's an evening or weekend or if there isn't a response from the Admin Centre, [call Cristen](#) [2] on her cell phone
 - If you can't reach Cristen, [call Sunni](#) [16] on her cell

Transcripts

Can AskAway transcripts be re-sent, at the patron's request?

No. If a patron asks for a transcript to be re-sent, we unfortunately have no way of verifying the identity of the person asking, so re-sending the transcript violates the patron's privacy.

How do I view my transcripts?

- Login to LibraryH3lp
- Navigate to the Chat History page in the far left navigation menu
- Under Advanced Search, enter your full username in the operator field
- You can also narrow results by date
- Click on the call to bring up the full transcript

Is there any quality control on AskAway sessions?

There is no quality control at the service level, only at the institutional level, if desired.

Reporting Issues

LibraryH3lp: Logout Problems

If you or another service provider is logged in to LibraryH3lp but is unable to logout at closing time, the service will appear to be open to patrons. If you suspect this is happening, let the Admin Centre know immediately:

1. Contact the [Admin Centre](#) [2] - we'll be able to log them out manually
2. If there isn't a response from the Admin Centre, [call Cristen](#) [2] on her cell phone
3. If you can't reach Cristen, [call Sunni](#) [16] on her cell

LibraryH3lp: Technical Issues

If you experience technical problems with LibraryH3lp, please email the [Admin Centre](#) [2] and include as much info as possible (time, date, institution(s), browser and version, operating system, a description of the technical issue, any screenshots, and what was going on just before it happened).

Guest Logins

If you notice that another institution's Guest Login is not working, check with your colleagues in Campfire to make sure it's a system-wide issue. If it's not working for anyone, please email the [Admin Centre](#) [2]. If possible, please include details (e.g. the institution, which resource(s) didn't work, and a description of what happened).

Policy Pages

If you notice a mistake, broken link, or outdated information on your library's [Policy Page](#) [7], please notify your local coordinator.

If you notice it on another library's page, please email the [Admin Centre](#) [2] with the name of the institution and the incorrect information.

Procedures and Policies

If you are unsure about a general policy or procedure, please check the [Service Guidelines](#) [17], contact the [Admin Centre](#) [2], or talk to your local coordinator.

AskAway Website

If you notice a mistake or outdated information on the AskAway website, please [let us know](#) [2]!

Source URL: <https://askaway.org/staff/faq>

Links

- [1] <https://askaway.org/staff/faq>
- [2] <https://askaway.org/staff/contacts>
- [3] <https://askaway.org/staff/shift-checklist>
- [4] <https://askaway.org/users/password>
- [5] <http://askawayps.campfirenow.com/>
- [6] <https://askaway.org/staff/schedule>
- [7] <https://askaway.org/staff/library-policy-pages>
- [8] <https://askaway.org/staff>
- [9] <mailto:evenings-weekends@askaway.org>
- [10] <https://askaway.org/staff/scripts>
- [11] <https://askaway.org/staff/training-materials>
- [12] <https://askaway.org/staff/guest-logins>
- [13] <https://askaway.org/staff/patrons-crisis>
- [14] <https://askaway.org/staff/tags>
- [15] <https://docs.libraryh3lp.com/widget-browsers>
- [16] <https://bceln.ca/about/contact-us>
- [17] <https://askaway.org/staff/service-guidelines>