

Safety Policy

This policy is in effect as of 5/10/2023. Readercon's Safety Committee (safecom) and Conference Committee (concom) will annually review the policy and amend it as needed. "We" and "Readercon" refer to the members of Readercon's committees and corporation.

Readercon's primary concern is the safety of our attendees, and we appreciate the assistance of all of our attendees in creating and sustaining a culture of safety at Readercon.

General Policies

- Cell phones must be set to silent or vibrate mode in programming areas.
- No smoking in programming areas or the Bookshop, by state law and hotel policy. Smoking is permitted on the hotel patio, but please do not smoke under awnings or overhangs.
- No eating or drinking in the Bookshop.
- No animals in conference areas with the exception of service animals.
- No weapons in conference areas.
- All individuals between the age of 15 and 18 need a Teen membership to attend Readercon.
- All children under the age of 15 attend Readercon for free, but must stay in the company of their guardian(s) or other adults approved by their guardian(s) whenever in conference areas.
- Any disruptive or inappropriate behavior may lead to being asked to leave the conference.
- Readercon reserves the right to revoke membership *at any time for any reason*. No refunds will be given.
- Readercon reserves the right to refuse membership.

Policies for Addressing Reported Code of Conduct Violations

Each report will be handled in accordance with the policies and procedures effective at the time the report is received, taking into account the Readercon Code of Conduct that was in effect at the time the incident took place.

Who can report a problem?

Anyone who was directly affected by or witnessed a Code of Conduct violation during Readercon or while volunteering between events can file a report, and is encouraged to do so.

What sort of problem can I report?

You can report any behavior or pattern of behavior that violates our Code of Conduct. If you feel someone's behavior is dangerous or harmful to you or others, if someone's behavior makes you feel afraid or very uncomfortable, or if someone is actively making it difficult for you or others to enjoy or fully participate in the conference, we would like to know about it.

Who can I make a report about?

You can make a report about anyone whose behavior causes you concern. We will give all reports equal consideration. Our handling of reports will not be influenced by factors such as the social status or conference role of anyone involved in the situation.

When can I report a problem?

You can report a problem at any time; however, we request that reporting take place as soon as possible during or after an incident, especially if you believe that someone may be causing problems for multiple people at the conference. Reports will be taken seriously and handled appropriately regardless of when they are made.

How do I report a problem?

At the conference, approach any concom member (identified by a red badge stripe) or speak with a staffer at the Info Desk or Consuite. You can also call (617) 544-0966 at any time during the conference, day or night, and your call will be taken by someone trained in handling reports of problematic behavior. The phone number is also printed on the back of your badge. After the conference, email safety@readercon.org.

What will happen if I make a report?

The following is a brief summary. See our [Procedures for Addressing Reported Violations of the Code of Conduct](#) for detailed information.

If you make a report at the conference, two responders will offer you the use of a designated quiet space, explain in detail what the possible outcomes are and what will be asked of you, listen to your report, and interview other people (witnesses and/or the person the report is about) as necessary. They will then bring all collected information to the Safety Chair(s), who will decide what immediate action needs to be taken, if any. After the conference, the report and any actions taken will be reviewed by a working group that will include the Safety Chair(s) as well as both responders. This working group will determine whether long-term action also needs to be taken. You will be informed of any action that Readercon takes in connection with your report.

If you make a report after the conference, the Safety Chair(s) will receive your report and assign two responders to you. The responders will explain in detail what the possible outcomes are and what will be asked of you, read your report, and interview other people (witnesses

and/or the person the report is about) as necessary. They will then bring all collected information to the Safety Chair(s), who will convene a working group that will include both responders. This working group will determine what action needs to be taken, if any. You will be informed of any action that Readercon takes in connection with your report.

What will Readercon do in response to my report?

Readercon will always prioritize the safety of all our attendees over a single person's desire to attend or participate in Readercon. To this end, Readercon reserves the right to:

- request that someone who is causing problems change their behavior.
- revoke access to some or all conference spaces, without refund.
- revoke conference membership, without refund.
- involve hotel security.
- involve local law enforcement via hotel security.
- deny membership for a period of one or more years, or permanently.
- choose not to take action.
- make a public statement regarding actions that Readercon takes in response to a report.

If Readercon makes a public statement regarding actions taken in response to a report, the statement will safeguard confidentiality as much as possible. Readercon will inform all parties involved in the report about the statement, and will provide them with links to the statement on the Readercon website and/or any relevant posts to social media.

If we believe someone needs to be immediately removed from the premises for the safety of our attendees, Readercon may enlist the assistance of hotel security and local law enforcement.

If we believe someone is in need of immediate medical attention, Readercon may call for an ambulance.

If a person under 18 makes or is the subject of a report, we will take any steps necessary to ensure the safety of that person and other attendees, but will not take other action until that person's parent or guardian (as listed on their Readercon membership materials) is present - unless the person under 18 is making a report against their parent or guardian, or their parent or guardian is alleged to have mistreated them, in which case we may notify the Massachusetts Department of Children & Families and/or ask hotel security to involve law enforcement. While involvement in Readercon does not legally require anyone to report allegations of child abuse or harm, some Readercon staff and attendees are mandated reporters in their professional lives. We all take such allegations extremely seriously.

Readercon's representatives will follow this policy and [our procedures](#) with the safety of all the conference's attendees in mind, which may require us to take certain actions without the consent of the person making the report. We will do our very best to balance the needs of all involved parties and the needs of the conference when they conflict.

What won't happen if I make a report?

We will not reveal your identity or the substance of your report unless it is absolutely necessary to obtain information about the incident or take action related to the incident. See [our procedures](#) for a detailed explanation of our confidentiality policy.

We will not take any sort of retaliatory action against you for reporting or not reporting a problem.

We will not provide mediation or intermediary communication services.

While we will always err on the side of safety and treat all reports as true, we will not assume that a report being made automatically means that action needs to be taken.

We will not respond to general requests for a list of all parties whose memberships have been revoked or denied. However, if anyone inquires as to whether a particular person's membership has been revoked or denied, Readercon will provide that information. We will not keep any kind of list or database of such requests, or consider a membership status request tantamount to a report.

What will happen if someone says I caused a problem?

If someone tells us that you have violated the Code of Conduct, two conference representatives will ask to speak with you about it in a designated quiet space.

If you decline to be interviewed, we may ask you to leave the conference. If, after speaking with you, we believe that you have violated the Code of Conduct, we may ask you to change your behavior or leave the convention, or take other actions. We will not take action until we've spoken with you and anyone else involved and done our best to get a clear picture of what happened. See the document titled [Readercon Procedures for Addressing Reported Violations of the Code of Conduct](#) for detailed information.

If we believe that no violation occurred, you are welcome to go about the conference as usual. We will not attempt to mediate or carry messages between you and the person who made the report.

If someone deliberately makes a false report about you, we will take appropriate action in response.