



Policy Type: Operational	Number: LIB-OP-82	Approved: January 12, 2022
Circulation Policy		Next review: 2026

Purpose

This policy provides the overall principles and framework to facilitate free and equitable access to Library collections and services; and to establish consistent rules and regulations that protect Library collections and services.

Definitions

Circulation is the borrowing of library materials for use outside the library premises.

A **resident** is someone who lives in Huron County, or who supports Huron County through taxes (owns or leases property within the County).

A **loan period** is the total number of days that one can keep a specific item before returning it to the Library.

Reciprocal borrowing is an agreement between two or more library systems which allows library patrons of one library system to freely use the services of another. The patrons of both library systems benefit by being able to use the most convenient location, regardless of municipal boundaries.

Claims returned occurs when a patron claims to have returned an item or items that the automated circulation system shows as being checked out to that patron.

A patron’s membership is considered **active** as long as the membership period (one year for a contract or non-resident membership and two years for all others) has not expired. Expired memberships are not counted for statistical purposes.

A patron in **good standing** has a current membership, has no outstanding lost or damaged items and owes no fines or fees.

Policy

1. Membership

1.1. **Resident.** Library membership is free for residents of Huron County.

1.1.1. All applicants for a library membership must provide sufficient identification. One piece of photo identification is sufficient if it includes current, accurate address information; otherwise at least two pieces of

identification are required and at least one must include current address information.

1.1.2. A resident library membership lasts two years and must be renewed after two years.

1.1.3. Young children may be registered by their parents and may have their own library cards. Parents of children under 16 are responsible for their children's fines. Children aged 16 and older may register alone and are responsible for their own borrowing and fines.

1.2. **Reciprocal.** The Huron County Library has reciprocal borrowing agreements with neighbouring libraries such as Bruce County Library, Lambton County Library, Middlesex County Library, Wellington County Library, members of the Perth County Information Network (PCIN), and Region of Waterloo Library.

1.2.1. Members in good standing of these libraries can receive a free Huron County Library membership and library card by presenting their home library card in addition to their identification documents. Reciprocal memberships must be renewed every 2 years.

1.3. **Contract.** Residents of municipalities with which the Board has a contract to provide library service will receive membership by providing proof of residence with their identification documents.

1.3.1. Membership is renewed annually while the contract is in effect.

1.4. **Employee of the County of Huron.** An employee of the County of Huron, who does not fit into any of the above eligibility categories, may still receive free library membership by providing proof of employment in addition to their personal identification documents.

1.4.1. Membership is for 2 years and proof of continuing employment with the County of Huron must be provided.

1.5. **Non-Resident.** An applicant for membership that does not fit into any of the above categories, is subject to a non-resident fee for a one-year membership, as established by the Library Board.

1.5.1. The membership fee is due each year upon renewal.

1.5.2. The membership is a per-household fee. All members of the household may receive a library card.

1.6. **Institutional Memberships.** The Library does not issue library cards to institutions.

1.6.1. An employee of a Huron County institution (such as a School, Day Care, County Department) may have a library membership to borrow materials for work purposes only. The address for the membership should be that of the institution/employer.

1.6.2. The card will be issued in the name of the individual, who is responsible for all materials borrowed, including any fines or fees.

- 1.6.3. An individual with an institutional membership will have a separate membership and library card for personal borrowing.

2. Library Card

- 2.1. In order to borrow library materials and access certain library services, a valid, current library membership and library card is required.
- 2.2. Patrons must provide their library card in order to borrow materials.
- 2.3. The cardholder is responsible for all items borrowed with his/her card. This card is not transferable to others. A card holder cannot avoid fines by using a card from a family member or friend.
- 2.4. It is the responsibility of the cardholder to inform the library of changes in address, phone and email.
- 2.5. If a card is lost or stolen the library should be notified right away. Once the library is notified, the cardholder will not be responsible for further card transactions.
- 2.6. Borrowing privileges, and other services that require a valid library card, will be blocked if the cardholder's fees and fines reach the maximum fine amount established by the Library Board.
- 2.7. As a courtesy, patrons with email addresses, will receive an email notice to alert them before their membership expires.

3. Replacement of Library Card

Initial library cards and replacements for worn-out library cards will be issued free of charge. A replacement fee will be charged to replace lost or stolen cards.

4. Privacy of records

- 4.1. The Library respects the privacy of individuals and will safeguard their personal information. Personal information is collected only for the purpose of providing library service.
 - 4.1.1. Address information is collected to enable the library to contact patrons for library purposes (Example: overdue notices, inform patrons of services or programs of interest).
 - 4.1.2. Information is collected to allow special services to specific groups (Example: age information to monitor when parent/guardian is no longer responsible for fines/fees).
 - 4.1.3. Some information is used for statistical purposes for the evaluation and planning of library services (Example: municipality and age).
- 4.2. Information in the account will not be given out to anyone except the cardholder.
- 4.3. Persons phoning or emailing the library for information (Example: forgotten passwords, information on their account) will be asked to prove their identity before receiving information.
- 4.4. Library staff will not discuss the reading tastes, or items borrowed by library patrons with third parties. Parents of minor children, (under 16 years of age) may receive information so that they may search for lost items or pay fines/fees on behalf of their children.

- 4.5. Borrowing history may be retained if desired and authorized by a patron. Patrons can turn this feature on or off in their on-line accounts.
- 4.6. Library membership and circulation records will be used in accordance with *Privacy, Access to Information and Electronic messages under CASL Policy (LIB-OP-60)*

5. **Purging of Records**

Inactive patron records will be deleted after five years unless there are unpaid fines or fees attached to the account.

6. **Borrowing Materials**

- 6.1. Using materials within the library or borrowing materials for home use is free of charge.
- 6.2. Items received via interlibrary loan from other libraries, are also loaned free of charge.
- 6.3. The library will endeavor to provide patrons with access to all items in the collection through their local branch, regardless of the location of the item.

7. **Borrowing Restrictions**

Although the majority of items are available for loan, some items may be restricted to use within the library. Restrictions may be temporary to meet a temporary need.

Reasons may include (but are not restricted to):

- 7.1. To ensure a wide range of basic information is always available for in-library study (current encyclopedia);
- 7.2. Demand is brief and limited (current magazines and newspapers);
- 7.3. Items are rare, fragile or irreplaceable (some local histories);
- 7.4. Materials require special equipment for use (microfilm);
- 7.5. Licensing agreements or copyright.

8. **Loan Period**

A loan period is established to enable fair access to the library's resources by all patrons.

- 8.1. The usual loan period for most items is 3 weeks.
- 8.2. Loan periods may be reduced for popular materials or special formats.
- 8.3. Two renewals are allowed unless someone else is waiting for the material.
 - 8.3.1. The renewal period is the same as the loan period.
- 8.4. The loan period of books borrowed from other library systems will be three weeks or less depending on the length of time given by the lending library. No extensions will be allowed without the prior consent of the owning library.
- 8.5. A Branch Manager may place temporary restrictions on the number of items borrowed or restrict loan period for high demand items when this is the only way to meet a sudden or unexpected demand with the existing collection. (Example: numerous students requiring specific research items for a school project.) **See Appendix A. for schedule of loan periods.**

9. **Overdue Fines**

9.1. Huron County no longer charges overdue fines on the majority of materials. To encourage the prompt use and return of library materials, patron accounts will be blocked once they reach a specified threshold. It is the responsibility of the cardholder to ensure that items are returned or renewed when due. The library provides the patron with due date information at checkout. After hour returns are available through book drops. Items may be renewed in person, by phone, email or on-line.

10. **Lost and Damaged Items**

10.1. Damage does not include the cumulative wear and tear that occurs through normal use. When an item is lost or damaged beyond use while borrowed by a patron, the cardholder is responsible to:

- (a) Reimburse the library price listed in the item record (list price at time of purchase);
- (b) If a part of an item is damaged or lost, making the entire item unusable, the cardholder is responsible for the cost of the entire item;
- (c) If the item damaged or lost is an individual item in a kit, a case or container or other part of a multi-piece item, and it can be replaced, the cardholder will be responsible only for the price of the individual piece;
- (d) If no price appears in the item record, staff may establish the fine by looking at other copies in the system, the amount listed on the item or by contacting the Administration Office for assistance.

10.2. If a lost item is found before the fine is processed, the payment may be returned to the patron. If the item is found after the fine has been processed, the payment is not refunded as the administrative, processing and replacement costs have already been incurred.

10.3. An item deemed by Library staff to be damaged beyond use for the library collection may be given to the patron provided they have paid the full list price and the item has been properly discarded and removed from the database. This process may take several days.

10.4. If a patron produces a new item, exactly the same as the one damaged or lost, it may be accepted but a processing fee will be charged. A used item will not be accepted in lieu of a fine. A substitution will not be accepted for an interlibrary loan item.

10.5. If an item is lightly damaged and still useable, branch staff may charge a small fine based on their assessment of the extent of the damage. Date of damage will be noted in the item to ensure that future borrowers are not charged for this damage. If a case or container is damaged, and the contents are fine, the patron will only be charged for a new case/container.

See Appendix B for fine/fee schedule.

11. **Overdue notices**

11.1. As a courtesy, the Library will provide an email reminder to patrons with email accounts before an item is due.

11.2. As a courtesy, the Library will make a reasonable attempt to contact patrons about overdue materials via email or phone, on-line and, as a last resort, by mail. Whether or not these attempts are successful, the fine is owed.

12. Adjusting or forgiving fines/fees

12.1. If fines/fees are charged erroneously, staff will cancel the fines.

12.2. Branch Managers may use their judgment to forgive or reduce fines/fees for special or unusual circumstances. Example: Patron in hospital, inclement weather, or financial distress.

13. Borrowing Restrictions

13.1. Once a patron's account exceeds a specified threshold, as established by the Library Board, has owed for lost or damaged materials for more than 30 days or has five or more unresolved "Claims returned" items, the patron's borrowing privileges will be suspended until the outstanding issues are resolved.

13.2. Patrons with outstanding fees and fines may not borrow interlibrary loan materials or renew their library membership.

14. Failure to pick up Interlibrary loan

Ontario libraries commit significant resources to find, process and transport items through interlibrary loan. When patrons fail to pick up these items, it is a considerable waste of library resources as well as negatively impacting services to other patrons waiting for these items.

16.1 A fine will be charged for failure to pick up requested interlibrary loan items.

Citations

Ontario. Public Libraries Act, R.S.O. 1990, s. 23 & 37, R.R.O. 1990, 976.

Ontario. Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.56.

Date comes into Effect

This policy replaces any previous circulation and collection use policies and comes into effect on January 12, 2022.

Related Documents

Huron County Library. Privacy, Access to Information and Electronic messages under CASL Policy (LIB-OP-60)

Appendix A

Loan Schedule

Most items: 3 weeks (21 days)

Best sellers in high demand: If the number of holds exceeds a limit set in the software, the circulation system will automatically reduce the loan period to two weeks.

Renewals: 2 renewals (equal to the loan period) are allowed on most items unless on hold for another patron.

Interlibrary Loan Items: Items borrowed from other library systems, will be loaned for 3 weeks (21 days) or less, depending on the date the item is due back in the lending library. Renewals are not allowed without the prior consent of the loaning library. Patrons with any outstanding fees or fines may not borrow interlibrary loan materials.

Appendix B

Fine Schedule

	Daily	Maximum
Interlibrary Loan	\$1.00	\$10.00

Borrowing privileges suspended when item reaches 21 days overdue

Other Fines & Fees

Damaged or lost items	Fine will equal the price of the item listed in the item record.
Cases or containers only	Contact the Administration office for a cost-recovery price.
Minor damage	\$2.00 Item is still usable. (barcode removed, cover needs to be replaced, crayon scribbles)
Lost Interlibrary Loan item	Cost of item as invoiced by the lending library. May include administration fees.
Processing fee (added to cost of new replacement item)	\$5.00
Failure to pick up requests	\$2.00 per interlibrary loan item
Replacement library card	\$2.00
Non-Resident Membership	\$70.00 per household per year