

**The Lycoming  
County Library  
System Circulation  
Policies**

## **The Lycoming County Library System Circulation Policies**

Customers of the Lycoming County Library System expect a positive customer experience every time they use the services and facilities of the Lycoming County Library System. This includes uniform circulation policies and procedures. While each library has its own service area all cardholders are encouraged to use the resources of every library in the county. In order to maximize the public's investment in library materials and for the convenience of the public the Library System provides delivery service five days a week so that materials held in all member libraries can be delivered to and returned to the library which is most convenient for the customer to use.

The procedures outlined below have been developed and approved by the System Board. Many procedures will remain under local control, varying with the specific situation of each library system member.

### **Issuing a Library Card**

#### **Policies**

Library cards are free to all residents of Lycoming County and through the Access PA program to all citizens of Pennsylvania. Persons who attend school, own property or are employed in Lycoming County are eligible for a free library card. Through the Access PA program users from other areas outside of the county shall have the same privileges as county users. Cards are valid for two years.

Out-of-state cards are available to persons living outside Pennsylvania who do not meet the above criteria for a \$25 annual fee, payable at the time the card is issued. These cards are valid for one year.

Signing a Lycoming County Library System library card application denotes membership acceptance of responsibility for lost or damaged materials.

There is no minimum age for a child to receive a library card. A parent or legal guardian must register a child. A parent or guardian must show proper ID or appropriate photo identification to register a child. A parent or guardian must sign the application for all children under 17. Signing a child's library card application denotes acceptance of responsibility for all fines, lost or damaged materials charged on that card.

Parental Responsibility: Library collections and services are available to all users regardless of age. Parents are strongly encouraged to read to their children and to guide their own children's reading and use of library materials as they deem appropriate. The library does not stand in loco parentis.

A library card or photo identification is required in order to check out materials.

Proper identification must be presented to register.

An applicant for a new card is required to provide proper ID, which includes current local address.

Acceptable ID for a library card:

- a) Photo ID showing current local address, OR
- b) Photo ID and one item from approved list (see below) showing current, local address (if photo ID does not have correct address).

Acceptable ID includes a valid driver's license, a valid passport, a valid voter registration card, state identification card, a utility bill, tax receipt or other piece of mail that shows the user's name and present address. The registering library is responsible for ensuring that a correct address is obtained.

The library reserves the right to request identification from any borrower at the discretion of the Director and designated staff members. Any government-issued valid ID, preferably with photograph and/or signature, is accepted for obtaining library materials that require identification.

Applicants for a card must complete and sign an application form, available at any participating library's circulation desk, if applicable.

Parents or guardians of children under the age of 17 must sign their child's application.

The charge for a replacement card is \$2.

It is a local decision on the part of each participating library whether the card will be given to the user at registration or be mailed.

**PROFILE NAME** - The patron profile determines the user's loan period and fine rates. One of the profiles below will be assigned to each user.

"Profile Name" sets the patron type and controls what kind and how many items can be checked out. We use the following, though there are other options:

Adult	Baby
Bravo	Child
Staff	Teen
Temp	Temp – Teen
Tween	

### **PA Code Section 428. Library Circulation Records**

Records related to the circulation of library materials which contain the names or other personally identifying details regarding the users of the State Library or any local library which is established or maintained under any law of the Commonwealth or the library of any university, college or educational institution chartered by the Commonwealth or the

library of any public school or branch reading room, deposit station or agency operated in connection therewith, shall be confidential and shall not be made available to anyone except by a court order in a criminal proceeding.

### **Temporary Borrowing Privileges**

Temporary cards are issued for a new county resident not able to produce address verification. A temporary card allows patrons to check out two items at a time. (Only two items may be checked out on a temporary card at any given time.)

Temporary cards cannot be renewed

Patrons have three months to provide proper ID at which time they will be switched to a regular card with full library privileges.

A postcard will be mailed to the address. The patron needs to bring the postcard **and** their photo ID back to the library in order to activate the card.

Patrons cannot check out any materials until they bring the postcard back, with photo ID and their card has been activated.

### **Relocation within County**

If a patron moves from one library to another within the system, the home library should be changed in the patron record. Updates to the address, telephone and any other information should be made as well.

### **Check-Out/Renewal**

#### **Policies**

A patron must present a card or appropriate photo ID and be in good standing to borrow materials. A patron's card will be blocked, and no services may be obtained with it if the patron has or owes \$5 or more in unpaid fines and/or fees. Delinquent borrowers who have not reached these limits may still borrow materials.

Each library will determine locally the item limits on a library card.

If a patron forgets their library card, he/she can:

- Return home to retrieve it. Materials may be held for the patron
- Show appropriate photo ID
- Purchase a replacement card for \$2.

Acceptable ID for a library replacement card is:

- a) Photo ID showing current local address, OR
- b) Photo ID and one item from approved list showing current, local address (if photo ID does not have correct address.)

## **User Status**

### **User Blocked**

If a patron's record is blocked due to excessive overdue materials or fines, a "User is Blocked" (it then lists alerts and notes, i.e. "Alerts – Estimated amount owed in bills/fines: \$10.00") message will appear upon attempting a checkout. Selected staff will have the authority to override excess fines.

### **User Barred**

BARRED is a status that is manually set by library staff. It is library system policy that only the library that barred the patron can unbar said patron. If a barred patron presents items for checkout at other than the library that barred him, he should be directed to speak with that library to resolve his status and restore his privileges. Each Library Director or designee shall decide the circumstances under which a patron may be barred. This status should be reserved for serious offenses, such as theft of library materials. An appropriate note should be made in patron's record regarding reason for barring.

### **Proxy HOLDS**

Library staff also have the ability to check out items on hold to an authorized proxy user (often husband or wife), as opposed to the user who originated the hold. The authorized proxy is required to present the originator's card or appropriate photo ID. The authorization for proxy permission should be noted in the patron record in the NOTES field. Because all library records are confidential in nature, library staff must be aware that authorization of the originating user (the person placing the hold) is required for proxy checkout for all persons.

### **Renewals**

Renewal requests may be made in person, by phone or online. Most items can be renewed three times. After items have been renewed 3 times, they must be returned and made available for all library patrons. Certain categories of materials are not eligible for renewal or have different renewal limits. Individual libraries will determine special renewal policies for items.

If a "HOLD" has been placed on an item, it may not be renewed. Selected staff will have the authority to force the renewal in special circumstances. Patrons may renew their items via the My Account feature of the OPAC provided there are no HOLDS on an item.

### **Check-In**

When checking in materials, it is VERY IMPORTANT to watch the screen as each barcode is scanned to be sure the scan is registering and to be aware of on-screen messages and directions. Messages directing the operator to send items to another location or library, or directions for items on hold are visually displayed on the screen at check-in, and audible alerts will assist the operator in noticing important messages.

### **Book-Drop Check-In**

When checking in items from the book-drop each morning, staff should set the Effective Date to reflect yesterday's date. Other dates may be selected if the library has been closed; however, the system will not accept a future date.

### **Fines/Fees**

To encourage the prompt return of materials, the Lycoming County Library System has established a schedule of fines and fees as penalty to those patrons who fails to return materials by their due dates.

Fine Schedule:

Adult items on adult cards: 25¢ per day

Adult items on children's cards: 25¢ per day

Children's items on adult cards: 25¢ per day

Children's items on children's cards: 10¢ a day

DVDs, Videogames and VHS tapes on all cards: \$2.00 per day

The Lycoming County Library System grants a one-day grace period on books only so that books returned one day after the due date do not accrue a fine and so that books returned to any library have a day to be delivered to the owning library. Once the one-day grace period has passed, fines will include the charge for the grace day.

### **Overdue Notices**

Overdue notices are sent as a courtesy from the libraries. Failure to receive notices does not exempt patrons from the responsibility for library materials or overdue fines. Notices are generated and mailed centrally. First and second overdue notices are sent via email to those patrons with email addresses in their user records and by US Mail to those without email addresses. The final overdue notice is always sent via US Mail.

The first overdue notice is generated at 14 days past the due date of an item.

The second overdue notice is sent at 28 days past the due date.

The final notice, which assesses the replacement cost of overdue materials, is sent at 42 past the due date.

### **Paying Fines/Fees**

Library fines may be paid at any participating library. Overdue fines will be retained by the collecting library, regardless of the original lending library. Returned materials which are owned by other system libraries will be promptly returned via the Lycoming County Library System delivery van.

Patrons may pay all or a portion of overdue fines.

### **Lost Items**

A patron may inform staff that an item is “LOST”. The price of the item, plus a locally determined fee, will be assessed to the patron’s card. Lost items may be paid for at any system library. (Payments for lost or damaged materials and processing fees will be returned to the owning library. These payments must be remitted monthly). The price of the item (found in the item record) plus the applicable processing fee will be assessed to the patron’s record upon declaration that the item is Lost.

Some system libraries have contracted for services with collection agencies. A fee for collection agency services may be added to a lost item record, and will be listed with a bill reason of REFERRAL. Referral fees are returned to the referring library. It is advisable to direct patrons whose accounts have been turned over to collections to the referring library, to ensure that all accounts are accurately cleared and fees settled.

### **Recovering Lost Items and Refunding Payment**

If a lost item is found and returned within 1 year of payment, a refund of the paid replacement value will be given. Refund of the processing fee, if any, is a local library decision. The “found” materials should be returned to the owning library. The owning library will determine whether the material is in acceptable condition for return.

### **Claims Returned**

If a user claims to have returned materials that a library still shows as checked out, the material may be marked with a Claims Returned date. Overdue fines stop accruing as of the date entered in the Claims Returned field. A user may have 1 Claims Returned item on his record at any time.

### **Inter-County Library Loan**

If a patron from Library A wishes to borrow an item from Library B, staff from Library A will place a hold on the item, specifying Library A as the pickup location. Library B will receive a report of items on their shelves, which have holds; they will pull those items listed and capture the existing holds. The screen will instruct staff to route the item to Library A to fill a hold, and the item will be put into transit to Library A. When Library A receives the item, it will be scanned and placed on the holds shelf for pickup. Once the item is scanned at the pickup location, a holds notice via email will be generated or staff will be prompted to telephone the user with holds notification.

The Holds report should be processed promptly each morning at each library site. Items listed should be pulled from the shelf, packaged and sent within 24 hours. Borrowed items should be promptly sent back to the owning library.

### **Holds**

Any cataloged materials not currently on the shelf or in the system may be requested by a patron at no charge. The library fills holds for materials in the order in which they are received. Items which are not owned by the Lycoming County Library System will be borrowed from other libraries at the patron’s request when possible. The library reserves

the right to limit the quantity and frequency of individual requests in the interest of equitable service.

Materials will retain the same circulation period regardless of whether the patron is local or from another library. When thinking of inter-county library loans, it is important to remember that a system patron is a patron exactly like your local patron. Inter-county library loans are not ILLs – they are simply circulations like any other. The Lycoming County Library System has ruled that circulations between member libraries must be free of charge to member libraries and to patrons.

Holds may be placed on items in any member library. If a patron presents the on-hold item for checkout before it is retrieved for the requesting patron, the in-house patron with item in hand receives preference; a circulation supervisor will override the hold and check out the item to the in-house patron. The requesting patron will be next in line for the item.

Most patrons may place 50 holds at any given time on their account.

Individual libraries will determine limits or item exclusions for inter-county library loans.

Patrons may place their own holds via the OPAC, and may select their pickup location. The software will refuse holds requests which do not conform to Lycoming County Library System policies. Patrons may choose any pickup location for holds. Items belonging to another member library can be held for patron pickup for 7 business days. If the item is not picked up in those 7 days, it must be returned to the owning library.

The vision of the Lycoming County Library System library card includes as a key component the ability for patrons to see and borrow library materials from all participating public libraries in the county. Our goal is maximum access for all patrons, while realistically addressing the logistics of moving materials around the county. Member libraries have agreed that membership would not relieve libraries of the responsibility for purchasing the materials needed to meet the demands of local patrons.

Patrons whose library cards are expired will not be allowed to place holds until the card privilege is renewed.

### **My Account**

Library users will be given a PIN upon registering for a library card. Policy indicates that PINs may only be given in person upon presentation of appropriate ID. PINs may be obtained via telephone or email provided patron supplies the library barcode number on their card.

Patrons may change password with My Account at any time.