



# NORTH LAKE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT CIRCULATION POLICY

## **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:**

The purpose of the North Lake County Public Library District's Circulation Policy is to facilitate the public's access to the information and materials available to them, while protecting and overseeing the library's collection.

## **SCOPE:**

The Circulation Policy encompasses explanations and procedures for being an active member of the Montana Shared Catalog and the Partner Libraries, for circulating materials, obtaining interlibrary loan materials, addressing special needs and situations, and other ongoing functions that allow the Library to best serve its patrons.

## **CODE OF ETHICS:**

Please refer to the Code of Ethics of the American Library Association (Appendix I).

## **MONTANA SHARED CATALOG:**

The Montana Shared Catalog (MSC) is a cooperative project involving more than 177 libraries located in 99 Montana communities. Public, school, academic, and special libraries have pooled their resources together to purchase a robust library automation system. Currently the MSC uses the SirsiDynix Corporation's Symphony<sup>®</sup> product. Each member of the MSC pays an annual fee. In November 2000 the library Board of Trustees decided to become a part of the MSC and signed a contract in March 2002. North Lake County Public Library was a founding member of this innovative project.

## **MSC – PARTNERS RESOURCE SHARING GROUP:**

The Partners sharing group is a consortium of libraries within the MSC. Each Partner library opens its collections to the cardholders of all Partner libraries. Within the consortium, a Partner library cardholder in one community can reserve and check out items from a neighboring community or from a library several hundred miles away. Cardholders have access to many more materials, and to more diverse collections, than any one library could offer. These materials can be shared more expediently than with the traditional interlibrary loan system. A Partner library card can be used at any participating library. Materials may be returned and fines and fees paid at any participating library. The library joined this collaboration in January 2005. The Partner group's best practices are shaped by library staff across the system, and managed by bylaws, an Executive Committee, bi-monthly meetings, and the MSC Partners Resource Sharing Group Policies and Procedures Manual.

## **ELECTRONIC CIRCULATION SERVICES:**

The library's electronic circulation system records all circulation transactions, including checkouts, discharges, holds, patron information, renewals, and fines. Enterprise<sup>®</sup> by SirsiDynix

is the electronic interface that allows users to search the Montana Shared Catalog, whether or not they hold a library card. Those who sign-up for personal accounts by using their assigned library card number and PIN are able to electronically check his or her library record to review what materials are out and when they are due, find out if fines are owed, renew items, and place or remove holds. The Blue Cloud mobile app also allows electronic access to a patron's account.

### **CHECKOUT PERIODS:**

Checkout periods are in keeping with the Montana Partner Libraries Policies and Procedures (Appendix II). If there are holds, then items may not be renewed.

**Books:** 28-day checkout with the option of up to two renewals

**New Books:** 14-day checkout with the option of up to two renewals

**Audiobooks:** 28-day checkout with the option of up to two renewals

**Music CDs:** 14-day checkout with the option of up to two renewals

**DVDs/Blu-Rays:** 14-day checkout with the option of up to two renewals

**Periodicals:** 14-day checkout with the option of up to two renewals

**Hotspots:** 14-day checkout with the option of up to two renewals; only one hotspot checked out on a card at a time

**Equipment:** This includes such items as life jackets, tablets, LeapPads, projectors, NASA backpacks, etc. Checkout periods vary, there is no option to renew; most of these items may not be placed on hold and may only be checked out by an adult. Some items have a \$20 fee for use. A complete list with checkout periods and fees is available at the Circulation Desk.

**Uncatalogued Paperbacks and Puzzles:** Paperback books that have not been added to the catalog and jigsaw puzzles are borrowed on the honor system. These are checked out as ephemeral items, meaning they do not have a due date.

**Nintendo Switch Controllers and Headsets:** The Library offers a Nintendo Switch gaming system in the teen area. Youth ages 12 to 18 are allowed to check out controllers and headsets for two hours per day to be used only with the library's Switch. A library card is required and the account must be in good standing. If others are waiting, a 30 minute time limit will be imposed to allow for fair use. Patrons may reserve the controllers again for a maximum of two hours of play per day.

There is no grace period, nor is there a limit to how many items may be checked out, with the exceptions listed above. Materials marked with a "Reference" sticker and those in the locked Montana case may not be checked out. This applies to archived materials, as well. The Library Director, at her discretion, may make exceptions to this practice if a patron has a compelling reason.

### **RENEWALS:**

Renewal options are listed above. Renewals may be done by coming into or contacting the library, or by the patron through the mobile app, or the online catalog website. Exceptions to renewal limits are made occasionally by library staff dependent on conditions, such as illness or weather.

### **HOLDS:**

A patron may place a hold on items that they wish to reserve as long as the items are available for hold within the Partners library group. Holds may be placed by coming into or contacting the library, or by the patron through the mobile app or online catalog website. When a reserved item arrives, the patron is contacted following confidentiality guidelines by telephone, automatic email notice or automatic text (if patron is signed up to receive electronic notices). A patron may pick up an item for another person only if written permission is on file for the cardholder. In lieu of their library card, patrons may use photo ID to checkout materials they have placed on hold for themselves. Holds must be picked up using the library card that the hold was placed on. Items will be held for 7 days awaiting pickup before being returned to the lending library or shelf.

### **INTERLIBRARY LOAN:**

The library offers interlibrary loan (ILL) services, thereby providing its patrons with access to materials owned by libraries worldwide. It is committed to fulfilling both its borrowing and lending roles on behalf of individual patrons and other libraries. ILL services are an essential means of offering maximum accessibility to the widest range of materials possible. The Library follows the Montana Interlibrary Sharing Protocols (2009 revised, see Appendix III), the National Interlibrary Loan Code for the United States (2015 revised, see appendix IV), and to comply with Copyright Law, Title 17 U.S. Code and other applicable licensing and resource sharing agreements. The purpose of the above protocols is to bring order, equity, and efficiency to interlibrary sharing. The library uses OCLC WorldShare to facilitate ILLs.

**ILL Borrowing:** Interlibrary loan borrowers must have a library card in good standing. Requests may be made in person, by telephone or by email. There is a \$3.00 per item charge to help defray the costs of postage, due when the item is received. The Library assumes the balance of the actual charge. Each patron is allowed to have no more than five items checked out at one time. Exceptions may be made by the Library Director or designee on a case-by-case basis. Library staff will check that the item is not available to borrow from a Partner library before proceeding with a request. Occasionally the lending library charges fees to borrow an item; these fees are passed on to the patron with their permission. If the patron chooses not to pay a fee, the item will not be requested. Patrons will be notified when an item they have requested arrives. If an item is marked for “in-library use only,” the library will make every effort to comply with the request. Checkout periods for ILL items is three to four weeks (depending on the lending library) based upon the date the item is received. The patron is responsible for returning the item on time and in good physical condition. Library staff must submit renewal requests to the lending library, therefore patrons must request a renewal no less than five days before an item is due. Renewals are at the discretion of the lending library. Patrons are also responsible for overdue fines and/or replacement costs. Fines are \$1.00 per day, per item. The lending library determines replacement costs and the patron will be invoiced by the North Lake County Public Library.

**ILL Lending:** Items loaned from the collection include books, audiovisuals, and other designated materials, including photocopies of periodical articles. As a general rule, the library

does not lend reference materials, rare books, newspapers, or unpublished documents. There are no lending charges to the borrowing library and no limit to the number of items that can be requested. The loan period is four weeks from the date sent. One renewal per item is allowed, unless the item has holds on it. The borrowing library is charged for lost items with the replacement cost plus a \$2.00 processing fee and \$1.00 barcode fee.

**DISCHARGES:**

Staff members discharge (check-in) materials as they are returned to the library. Items are inspected for damage and missing pieces at that time. If an item is missing, staff will contact the patron to request return of the missing item. Items missing pieces will not be checked in until all parts are received. After one month, item will be marked as lost and patron will be billed. Damaged materials will either be sent back to the lending library and the patron will await notification of billing, or if the item belongs to this library, the patron will be invoiced. Materials are cleaned, repaired if necessary, and then shelved or routed.

**BOOK DROP:**

A book drop is provided outside of the main entrance to the Library as well as in the entryway. The book drop is emptied periodically throughout the day.

**OVERDUES AND FINES:**

The library does not charge daily fines on most library materials including books, movies, audiobooks, music CDs and magazines whether owned by this library or a Partner library. Materials checked out at a fine-tuning Partner library will incur late fees. Overdue fines are charged on interlibrary loan materials, hotspots and other equipment. Library users who accumulate \$10.00 or more in fines or fees are blocked and may not place holds, check out materials, or use the public computers until the amount is paid under \$10.00.

Patrons may receive overdue notices via email or text if they are signed up to receive electronic notices. Items that are 30 days overdue will be assumed lost and a final notice is mailed listing the replacement cost and fees due. A \$1.00 administrative fee will be assessed when a notice is mailed. The patron's library card will be blocked at this time for future checkouts and computer use. If the materials are returned, the replacement charges will be cleared from the patron's account, however the administrative fee will still be owed. Fees are charged to offset the costs of replacing or repairing lost and damaged items. If the library staff determines that a damaged item can be repaired, a supply cost of \$2.00 will be charged. For items that have been damaged beyond repair or that have been lost, the charge is the replacement cost of the item plus a \$3.00 processing fee. Refunds are not available for lost materials that are returned or found after a patron paid for replacement, as per Partners policy. An identical or better copy of an item may be used in lieu of the replacement cost. The \$3.00 processing fee will still apply.

**Hotspots:** Due to the nature and popularity of the hotspot program, fines and checkout restrictions are necessary. Hotspots incur a \$1 per day fine when overdue. Patrons will be contacted and hotspots will be turned off. Any patron who does not return a hotspot within 3

days of its due date will lose checkout privileges for hotspots for 30 days from the date of return on the first offense, 60 days on the second offense, 90 days on the third offense, etc. and all fines must be paid before a hotspot may be checked out again. After 7 days overdue the hotspot will be marked Assumed-Lost, the patron billed for the hotspot and checkout privileges lost for 6 months from the date of return on the first offense, 12 months on the second, etc. Extenuating circumstances will be reviewed by the library director or designee, and fines and restrictions may be lifted. USB charging cables, wall charger units or cases incur a \$10 fee for replacement in the case of loss or damage.

**POLICY REVIEW AND UPDATE:**

It is the responsibility of the library's Board of Trustees, Library Director, and staff to review and update this policy. The policy will be reviewed every four years.

This policy was revised by the North Lake County Public Library District Board of Trustees on **May 28, 2024.**

Signed:

Allen Bone, Chair  
Abbi Dooley, Library Director