

PARLIN-INGERSOLL PUBLIC LIBRARY

CIRCULATION POLICY GUIDELINES

A.) Introduction

Library staff members are empowered to use their own best judgment at all times when applying most circulation policy guidelines. Except in the case of confidentiality and residency policies, which are both codified in law, library staff members may exercise prudence and discretion in the application of the following guidelines. As a general rule, staff should also consistently follow all policy guidelines concerning the collection of charges for unreturned materials. Other guidelines may be modified when appropriate in cases involving extenuating or unusual circumstances.

Staff should remember that all customer service interactions are not "black and white" and staff should avoid developing a "rules is rules" culture. We cannot document an appropriate response to each situation that might arise in dealing with a customer.

A. 1.) Primary Service Area

The Parlin-Ingersoll Public Library was established and continues to operate under the legal provisions of the Illinois Local Public Library Act. Legally, the library is primarily "for the use of the residents and taxpayers of the city" of Canton "subject to such reasonable rules and regulations as the library board may adopt in order to render the use of the library of the greatest benefit to the greatest number of such residents and taxpayers" (75 ILCS 5/1-3) Additionally, the library board has adopted policies permitting the use of the library to individuals residing outside the municipal boundaries of the City of Canton. (See B.3 and B.4)

A. 2.) Public Service Philosophy

The Parlin-Ingersoll Public Library is a public service organization. The library strives to be responsive to customer needs and requests. All staff members are expected to exhibit a high level of public service orientation as evidenced both in their aptitude and attitude towards all types of customer service. Staff should approach all public interactions in a courteous, friendly, helpful, responsive, confident, tactful and unbiased fashion.

A. 3.) Customer Responsibility

It is the ultimate responsibility of customers to return library materials on time and to follow all library policies. Grace periods, overdue notifications and other procedures are courtesies extended by the library. These procedures will change over time.

B.) Registration Policies

The following residency eligibility guidelines are consistent with current state laws, state agency policies, legal interpretations and the library's mission. They should be enforced consistently. Any questions concerning the eligibility of an applicant for a library card may always be referred to the Director or other authorized staff.

B. 1.) City of Canton Residents: Adults

Individuals residing within the City of Canton municipality are eligible for a Parlin-Ingersoll Public Library card. Applicants must present **both** of the following types of documents in order to receive a library card.

Proof-of-identification (one of following):

A proof-of-identification document is needed to establish the applicant's identity. Only four forms of identification will satisfy this requirement:

- An unexpired driver's license;
- An current State of Illinois identification card, with photograph;
- A FOID (Firearm Owner's Identification) card
- A current passport.

These documents are only used to verify the identity of the applicant, since license renewals don't always reflect the license holders current address and passports and FOID cards are issued for a ten year period. Therefore, addresses are often out-of-date.

Proof-of-residence (one of following):

New applicants must present staff with an acceptable proof-of-residence also. **This document must be dated within the last two months** to ensure current residency status. This proof-of-residence should be in the applicant's name, except in the case of married couples with the same last name, in which case the proof-of-residence may be in the spouse's name. As a general rule, acceptable documents are limited to the following.

- Utility bill (e.g. water, power, cable, phone)
- Bank statement
- Billing or correspondence from a local, state or federal governmental agency (e.g. public aid, health department, schools, Medicaid, etc.)
- Pay stub with current address on it
- Rent receipt/lease
- Car insurance card dated within 6 months

If customers claim they do all their business online, they can always print out a copy of their bank statement or utility bill, with address, for our review. Letters addressed to the applicant by a private individual or commercial solicitation are not acceptable proofs-of-residence. Gun

cards are not accepted because, while they have an applicant's address, they are issued for ten year periods. Therefore, the address may not be current.

B. 2.) City of Canton Residents: Juveniles

Juvenile applications will be processed under the following guidelines:

- ◆ **Juveniles, Age 3 through Grade 4:** Applicant must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. If registration has been arranged in advance with the schools, the application will require the signature of a parent or legal guardian as well. Adults must present appropriate identification and meet appropriate residency criteria (see Section B.1) when registering their children for cards. A parent must initial their child's signature or sign for a child who is not capable of signing their own name. Employees should check each parent's record for outstanding fines before issuing their children a card.
- ◆ **Juveniles, Grade 5 through Grade 12:** Applicants may register at the library if a parent or guardian is not present. If possible, they must present a student I.D. or driver's license to show proof-of-identity. Since juvenile applicants will not normally possess identification, staff should generally verify their parent's address in our computer system, City Directory, telephone directory or elsewhere. The last name of the parent should match the last name of the juvenile applicant in whatever source is used. If a juvenile's address cannot be verified in an appropriate manner, the applicant will be required to return with their parent, unless an employee can attest to the applicant's parents and residence.

B. 3.) Canton School District Residents

The Board of Trustees interprets the intent of the library's endowment to serve individuals residing in the immediate area beyond the city of Canton boundaries. The library will issue non-resident cards to Canton School District residents who do not already live in another library district. In accordance with the Illinois Administrative Rules, the Board will devote Charles D. Ingersoll Trust funds to cover the non-resident fees for these patrons based on a General Mathematical Formula suggested by the Illinois State Library.

These individuals will be required to furnish the same proof-of-identity and proof-of-residence documents outlined above. Staff should follow the same registration and verification procedures provided in Section B. 1 and Section B. 2.

Non-resident cards will be stamped "Non-Resident" and will be valid for one year. Non-resident cards may be used at other libraries, who are participating in the non-resident reciprocal borrowing program. A list of these libraries is available at <http://www.librarylearning.info/rsdirectory/>.

B. 4.) Reciprocal Borrowers from Other Public Library Districts:

Individuals residing from outside the City of Canton or Canton School District boundaries may borrow materials from the Parlin-Ingersoll Public Library on a reciprocal basis by using

their home library card, under state law and state agency guidelines. Applicants from outside Canton who live in an area which taxes for library service must first obtain a card from their home library and the following to our library:

- **Proof-of Identity:** Same as above (See B. 1.).
- **Proof-of-Residence:** Same as above (See B. 1.).
- **Local Library Card:** An unexpired library card issued by the applicant's home library. This library card should display the card's expiration date in order to be considered valid. If no expiration date is present, staff may verify currency by calling the home library if it is open at the time of application.

The driver's license need not have the individual's most current address, but the proof-of-residence must be within the jurisdictional boundaries of the library that has issued the applicant a card.

If a juvenile is not old enough to have his or her own driver's license, a parent or legal guardian must accompany the juvenile. This accompanying parent/guardian must provide staff with all the above.

B. 5.) Non-Resident Cards

The Board of Trustees interprets the intent of the library's endowment to serve individuals residing in the immediate area beyond the city of Canton boundaries. The library will issue non-resident cards to Canton School District residents who do not already live in another library district. In accordance with the Illinois Administrative Rules, the Board will devote Charles D. Ingersoll Trust funds to cover the non-resident fees for these patrons based on a General Mathematical Formula suggested by the Illinois State Library.

Individuals outside Canton School District, who do not reside in another public library district, may be eligible to purchase a non-resident library card from a public library participating in the non-resident card program, per state law. The library will honor any non-resident cards from other Illinois libraries for reciprocal borrowing.

B. 6.) Temporary Cards and Residences

The library does not issue library cards to individuals who are living in Canton on a temporary basis, defined herein as less than one year, but more than three months, such as seasonal residents, who do not own real property within our service area, foreign exchange students or family members living with another family member.

Applicants residing with Canton residents for a brief period of time should arrange to have their hosts check out materials for them or make arrangements, approved by the Director, to use their host's card on a limited, restrictive basis. In addition, these individuals are always free to use materials and resources at the library, but they are not be eligible to receive a card.

Library cards are available only to individuals who have established residence in the community. Cards are not normally issued to individuals living in facilities that are meant to be temporary by design, such as motels, motor homes, tents, missions and shelters.

Individuals from these types of facilities are free to use materials or resources within the library, but are not eligible to receive a card.

B. 7.) Property Owners

Nonresidents may receive a Parlin-Ingersoll Public Library non-resident library card if they as “an individual or as a partner, principal stockholder, or other joint owner owns taxable property or is a senior administrative officer of a firm, business, or other corporation owning taxable property within the city” (75 ILCS 5/4-7, Sec. 12). This policy is pursuant to state law. Only one card may be issued per each business or parcel of taxable property. For example, if there are two co-owners of a local business, only one may be issued a card. Staff should refer all applications of this nature to the Director. Applicants for this type of card are required to present their most recent property tax bill to the Director for review and approval. This provision should not be confused with individuals who reside outside of Canton, but merely work in Canton.

B. 8.) Teacher's Card

Classroom teachers, Grades K-12, qualify for a Teacher's Card at the library. When applying for a Teacher's Card, applicants must meet the following registration criteria:

- City of Canton or Canton School District residents who qualify for a Parlin-Ingersoll Public Library card (Section B. 2. and B. 4.).
- Individuals who teach in Canton School District #66 and present a valid library card from another public library.

The library reserves the right to restrict any and all teacher's collections in order to maintain fair and equitable access of the collection for the general public. See Appendix D for details.

B. 9.) Dunfermline-Area Residents

Dunfermline-area residents reside within two independent taxing districts: the Canton School District and the Lewistown Public Library District. For the purposes of library card distribution, their home library is the Lewistown library, to which they pay tax support. These residents qualify for a reciprocal borrower's card under the provisions in Section B. 4.

B. 10.) Spoon River College Students

Spoon River College students may access the library by obtaining a public library card or non-resident card from their home library.

B. 11.) Reciprocal Borrowing Privileges

Individuals possessing a Parlin-Ingersoll Public Library card have reciprocal borrowing

privileges with other public libraries within ILLINET and RAILS library system. The State Library, RAILS, and IHLS library systems have general policies governing reciprocal borrowing. Within these policies, individual libraries may adopt varying policies and procedures that apply to reciprocal borrowing. The reciprocal borrower is responsible for knowing and following the policies and procedures of the public library from which they are borrowing materials.

B. 12.) First-Time Use

After an applicant has been successfully registered, they will be permitted to check out up to three items initially, but no more than one non-print item.

C.) Loan Policy Guidelines

The following loan guidelines have been established by the Board of Trustees, with the advice of the Director and library staff. In most instances, these policies should be followed strictly, in order to maintain consistent enforcement between customers. However, experienced staff members, generally those classified as Library Assistant I or higher, may use their own discretion when applying most guidelines. Circulation policies are reviewed by the library Board and staff on a regular basis. The Director may make unilateral changes to procedural elements within this policy, in response to operational needs. The Director will bring these changes to the attention of the Board in a timely fashion.

Compassion, tact, understanding and sensitivity to individual needs should be shown to all patrons making requests which conflict with our guidelines, especially when employees feel they cannot grant these requests. The following guidelines are provided to assist staff in interpreting the extent of flexibility that can be applied to given rules and regulations.

C. 1.) Loan Periods

The loan periods established for various types of materials are outlined in [Appendix B](#). As a general rule, loan periods will not be extended, except in the case of customers in good standing at the library, who need extensions to accommodate legitimate extenuating circumstances (e.g. educational use, travel, etc.). In responding to extenuating circumstances, experienced employees are authorized to extend the length of the initial loan period.

Occasionally, the Director and other authorized personnel may establish different loan periods in order to address unique needs. For example, some high-interest materials may be given abbreviated loan periods in response to customer demand.

C. 2.) Materials Limits

Materials limit guidelines are listed in [Appendix C](#). The limits placed on the number of items a person can check out at one time should always be observed for all individuals. The only major exception to established circulation limits applies to teacher's collections.

The purpose of placing limits on the number of items customers may check out at one time is to ensure equal access to materials in which there is a limited availability. The library will monitor public comments, collection growth and circulation trends, to determine whether loan limits for various item types need to be increased, decreased or maintained.

C 3.) Renewal Periods

Renewal period guidelines are provided in Appendix B. As a general rule, **material may be renewed automatically twice only with the exception of dvds, which can be renewed once.** In the case of reserves, the person who has placed a hold on the item will be given priority over the person seeking a renewal. In cases where an item is overdue, and a person renews the item, any overdue charge, if applicable, will be assessed and recorded automatically during the renewal process.

C. 4.) Reserves

Reserves may be placed on all materials. Requests to reserve materials may be placed over the telephone, the Internet or in person. Reserve requests will be handled on a first-come, first-served basis. Reserves will be held at the circulation desk for seven days after the mailer or email notice is sent.

D.) Overdue Materials

The purpose of levying charges for overdue materials is to insure equal access of library materials to the entire community by encouraging the prompt return of circulating materials. While it is important to follow established overdue collection procedures, our primary role is to promote library use and secure the return of circulating materials. Therefore, the Director and other authorized library staff have the flexibility to adjust or waive overdue charges for customers in good standing. All customers are responsible for returning their materials to the library on time and they may be held responsible for any overdue charges incurred under their card number. Customers are responsible for notifying the library about any address and telephone number changes and for notifying the library about lost cards.

D. 1.) Grace Periods

Grace period guidelines are listed in Appendix B. The Director may alter grace periods at any time without Board approval in order to improve return rates. Closed days are not included in the grace period.

D. 2.) Notification Procedures

Overdue notices will be sent on the following schedule:

- First overdue notice will be sent five days after the initial due date.
- Second overdue notice will be sent seven days after the first notice.
- A bill will be sent nineteen days after the initial due date.

- At the Director's discretion, a certified letter may be sent if there is no response to the first three notices.
- At the Director's discretion, accounts over \$50 may be referred to a collection agency.
- At the Board's discretion, large accounts may be turned over to appropriate law enforcement agencies.

D. 3.) Overdue Charge Policies

Overdue charges will be calculated according to guidelines established in Appendix A. Additional collection fees may be assessed at the discretion of the Director depending on the materials involved, staff time expended in attempts to collect the material and so forth.

D. 4.) Borrowing Privilege Restrictions

- **Two Items Overdue:** Generally, staff may not check out any materials to people who have two or more overdue items. Authorized staff may use their own discretion to override this provision and check out materials to customers in good standing at the library, as long as those materials have not been overdue an excessive length of time. Customers should also be given the option of renewing this material.
- **Under \$10.00 in Overdue Charges:** If a person owes less than \$10.00 in fines, staff may check out items to the individual once only by overriding the block. In this case, they will be allowed to check out no more than a few items. A message to this effect will be placed in the patron's record. After the first override, the individual must pay off the entire fine before using the library. No "running balance" will be maintained.
- **\$10.00 or More in Overdue Charges:** Staff should not check out any materials, or permit the use of any library service, to individuals with unpaid overdue charges exceeding \$10.00, until the charge is paid in full. While individuals may make intermittent payments towards their account at any time, they will not be allowed to check out any more materials or use any other library service (e.g. the Internet) until the fine is paid in full. Any exceptions can only be made by the Circulation Manager or Director.
- **Overdue Charge Calculation:** All overdue charges are calculated automatically when items are checked in. As a general rule, overdue charges will be reduced and/or waived only in response to extenuating circumstances, requiring compassion and understanding (i.e. illness, death in the family, etc.), but not in response to unsubstantiated complaints.
- **Processing Fees:** Processing fees will be waived for all overdue items that are returned before they are withdrawn from the collection.
- **Older Overdue Charges:** When purging library registration records, the library may delete smaller overdue charges from the system that are three or more years old.

- **Time Limit Policy:** Generally, the library will not waive or reduce any overdue charges, if the customer has not contacted the library with a concern within one month of the initial due date of the items in question. The customer's contact must be documented in their registration record in order to be considered valid.

E.) Lost and Damaged Materials

Patrons will be held responsible for the cost for any materials lost or excessively damaged while in that person's custody. Illinois statutes hold that failure to return borrowed library materials or actions resulting in the damage of library materials while in a person's custody is punishable by law. A City of Canton ordinance establishes the failure to return borrowed library materials as a misdemeanor and details appropriate legal remedies.

Damaged materials represent items which library staff members determine can no longer be used by other customers. Library staff members will determine which materials are considered too damaged to continue circulating, in consultation with the Director or other authorized personnel.

Only the Director, or authorized staff, may waive, in part or in full, charges incurred by customers for lost, non-returned or damaged materials, under guidelines established herein. Customers with non-returned or damaged materials on their circulation record will not be allowed to utilize any library services until the missing material is returned or until the assessed charges and fees are paid in full.

Appropriate replacement charges for unreturned or damaged materials will be determined by the following guidelines.

E. 1.) Unreturned & Damaged Materials

- **Replacement Cost:** The customer will pay the list price as recorded in the bibliographic record for all unreturned and damaged materials.
- **Processing Fee:** In addition, a processing fee will be charged for any unreturned or damaged items, which are withdrawn from the library's catalog. The processing fee will not be waived. Processing fee represents the approximate average cost of preparing each unique item type for circulation, not counting staff time. Processing costs include cataloging fees, protective covers and cases, barcodes, security strips and so forth.
- **Time Limit:** If a patron with unreturned or damaged materials has not contacted the library concerning these materials before they are withdrawn, as verified by staff note, replacement charges and other fees will not normally be waived or reduced.
- **Refunds:** If a customer returns an item they have paid for, and this item is still listed in the library catalog, library staff may refund the actual amount collected (both replacement

cost and processing fee), minus any overdue charge that is posted on Polaris. **The library will not issue refunds for lost material returned after it has been withdrawn from the collection** (that is, when the item's unique barcode has been removed from the system) for more than one month.

- **Replacement Copies:** The library will not normally accept a replacement copy in lieu of the replacement charge. In rare circumstances, the library will accept a replacement copy from a patron if the item has not already been withdrawn from the collection. In this case, the item must be unused and have an identical ISBN number to the item that was lost or damaged. The Circulation Manager, Accounts Manager, or Director have the final approval of any replacements, and replacements must be received within one month. A processing fees and the maximum overdue charge, if applicable, will be assessed in all these cases.
- **Exceptions for Damaged Materials:** As a general rule, customers will not normally be charged for certain types of damage, unless there is a pattern of incidents occurring with any one customer for any of these situations, as specified by library employees on the patron's record. Such items include scratches on CD or DVD disks that represent normal wear and tear; cracked CD jewel cases; and so forth.

F.) Loss of Library Use Privileges

At the discretion of the Director, people who consistently violate any library policy guidelines (e.g. taking materials from the library without authorization, violating behavior codes, etc.) may be subject to the loss of library use privileges for up to six months, depending on the severity of the incidences. The Board of Trustees may impose more extensive restrictions, as applicable.

G.) Library Cards

Non-Transferability: Individuals are required to obtain and use their own card. Library cards are non-transferable. Individuals may not use another person's library card. This includes members of the same family. This policy protects the library cardholder from unauthorized or illegal use of a library card. Staff members should check the driver's license of any person asking to, or suspected of, using another person's card. While unsanctioned or illegal use of another person's library card is difficult to detect, staff should make every effort to insure that patrons are using only those cards which have been issued in their name. This also prevents individuals from circumventing fines owed on their own account.

If a customer attempts to use the card of a family member who is not present, staff should request that these people register themselves for library service and obtain their own cards. Staff can authorize exceptions to this rule, which will primarily involve a family member(s) obtaining materials for an incapacitated relative, who must give the library verbal permission to do so.

H.) Confidentiality of Patron Records

The Illinois Library Records Confidentiality Act states, "*The registration and circulation records of a library are confidential information. Except pursuant to a court order, no person shall publish or make any information contained in such records available to the public.*" These records include any personal information contained in the patron record.

Unless the individual is requesting information concerning his/her own records, any request for any registration or circulation information should be denied and the incident should be reported to the Director. This includes such questions as "Who checked out this book?" and "What books does this person currently have checked out."

Requests for the circulation records of immediate family members should be handled with tact and discretion, under established informal guidelines. Only the Director or duly authorized staff member should respond to requests or court orders for the release of confidential information.

Any staff member who publicly violates the confidentiality of patron registration records, patron circulation records or reference inquiries may be subject to appropriate discipline, depending on the severity of the situation.

Names, but not addresses, telephone numbers and other personal information of Board and staff members may be released under established Freedom of Information Act guidelines.

I.) Household or Family Blocks

If any one member of a household or family accumulates an excessive overdue charge (i.e. over \$20.00), or fails to return one or more items, or fails to pay replacement charges for non-returned or damaged materials, the library use privileges of all other immediate family members or individuals sharing the same residence may be suspended, until the overdue or replacement charges have been paid or until the missing materials have been returned. Only the Director, in conference with authorized staff, can determine whether temporary family blocks are necessary in order to resolve the problem and to prevent individuals from circumventing their financial obligations to the library by using the library cards of family members. Parents are responsible for the financial liabilities of their children.

J.) Lost Cards

Customers are encouraged to use their library cards at all times in order to most efficiently utilize staff time and in order to provide maximum protection against the improper and unauthorized use of library cards. A customer must pay \$3.00 in order to purchase a replacement card for a lost card. If a customer forgets their card three or more times in a one-year period, staff members may request that the customer purchase a replacement card.

K.) Miscellaneous Charges

Charges may be levied for miscellaneous supplies and services connected with the circulation of library materials. See Appendix E.

L.) Juvenile Access

In general, the library supports the principle of unrestricted access to all library materials for children, as evidenced in Board approval of the Library Bill of Rights. However, certain loan restrictions may vary between adult, young adult and juvenile cards. For example, at the current time, children under the age seventeen may not check out dvds. Once a young person turns 17, an individual is registered as an adult patron.

Parents are responsible for monitoring the materials checked out by their children. Library staff will not deny access to any part of the collection based on the age of the customer, beyond enforcement of current written loan policies and restrictions. A Limited Access Juvenile Card is available upon request.

M.) Unscheduled Closings

The library will automatically extend the checkout period for dvds by one day for every day the library experiences an unscheduled closing, due to inclement weather or other unforeseen reasons. Additionally, this will apply whenever the library opens later or closes earlier than scheduled. Loan periods will not be extended for any other type of material, unless the partial or full day closings exceed three days consecutively. This is because all other items have substantial built-in grace periods.

N.) Restricted Access Collection

All print material shelved behind the circulation desk constitutes a Restricted Access collection. Customers must sign for the material and customers must use the material near the circulation desk. Violations of this policy may result in loss of library privileges for the person.

O.) Newspaper Collection

All daily newspapers are available for use by customers in the library only.

P.) Insects

Customers introducing insects of any kind (e.g. cockroaches, bedbugs, worms, lice, etc.) into the building when returning materials or using library facilities may have their borrowing privileges suspended for an indefinite period of time or until the problem is corrected. Damages may be assessed for materials that can no longer be circulated.

Q.) Staff and Board Library Privileges

Current staff and board members and their immediate family (spouses and children whose permanent address is still with their parents) will be coded to not be charged overdue fines. Excessive abuse of this privilege may result in a revocation of this benefit. Retired staff and retired board members and their spouses will also be given this benefit. Everyone will be responsible for lost or damaged material costs.

Any current staff member who does not reside in an area served by a public library will be eligible for a Parlin-Ingersoll Public Library non-resident card with the fee being covered by the endowment funds of the Charles D. Ingersoll Trust. This is considered part of their compensation/benefit package.