



# **Circulation Policies And Procedures**

# Circulation Policies and Procedures

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### **General Policy: All SAILS Libraries agree to follow standard network procedures.**

These procedures include:

- Processing Holds
- In transit Missing Procedures
- Claimed returned procedures for items belonging to other libraries
- Processing Lost Book Payments for items belonging to other libraries
- Patron registration data entry requirements
- Damaged item processing
- Renewal policies for items belonging to another library.

## Policy – Loan Periods and Fine Rates

Any library can set its own loan policies and fine rates for materials loaned from their library. Items are loaned according to the lending library policies not the owning library policy.

### Procedure

A library circulation map entry defines loan rules and is a combination of library item, item type, and patron profile.

- Each library may request that SAILS modify and add to its circulation map.
- If a library wants to begin using an item type has not been used before, contact SAILS so that the appropriate entry in the circ map can be created.
- Libraries may use any location or item category1 in the system. New home locations and item categories will be created by SAILS at the request of the library.

### Policy – Fine Payment, Lost Items Billing and Processing

- Patrons may pay for overdue fines at any member library. The library collecting the fine may keep the fine.
- Libraries may choose when to set items to Lost and how they want to bill the patron.
- Libraries must comply with network policies regarding how to process payments for lost books belonging to another library.

### Procedure

- Payments for fines are to be accepted and kept at any library.
- Fine payments do not need to be sent to the owning library.
- Cash should never be sent through delivery.
- Patrons are not required to go to the item's owning library to pay for a lost item. Patrons may pay for lost items at the library where they borrowed the material although payment can be accepted at any SAILS public library.
- Libraries may receive payment for lost books owned by another library but must not record the payment on the patron's record. They MUST ENTER a note in the patron record with the date, amount paid, and barcode of the item. Once a patron has paid the fine the library may enter an override to checkout to the patron.
- *Exception – Public Libraries may accept and record payments for lost items belonging to K-12 members. Payment should then be forwarded to the owning library. If the library is unable to record the payment because it uses daily cash transactions to balance a cash draw email [support@sailsinc.org](mailto:support@sailsinc.org) and request that SAILS record the payment as SAILS.*
- Patrons who want to clear their record immediately may have the option of using the Credit Card payment option in Enterprise. This will clear the patron's record immediately and the owning library will receive payment through SAILS. This option is only available for participating libraries.

### Policy – Billing for Damaged Items

The owning library may determine that an item that had borrowed by a patron from another library is too damaged for further use.

#### Procedure

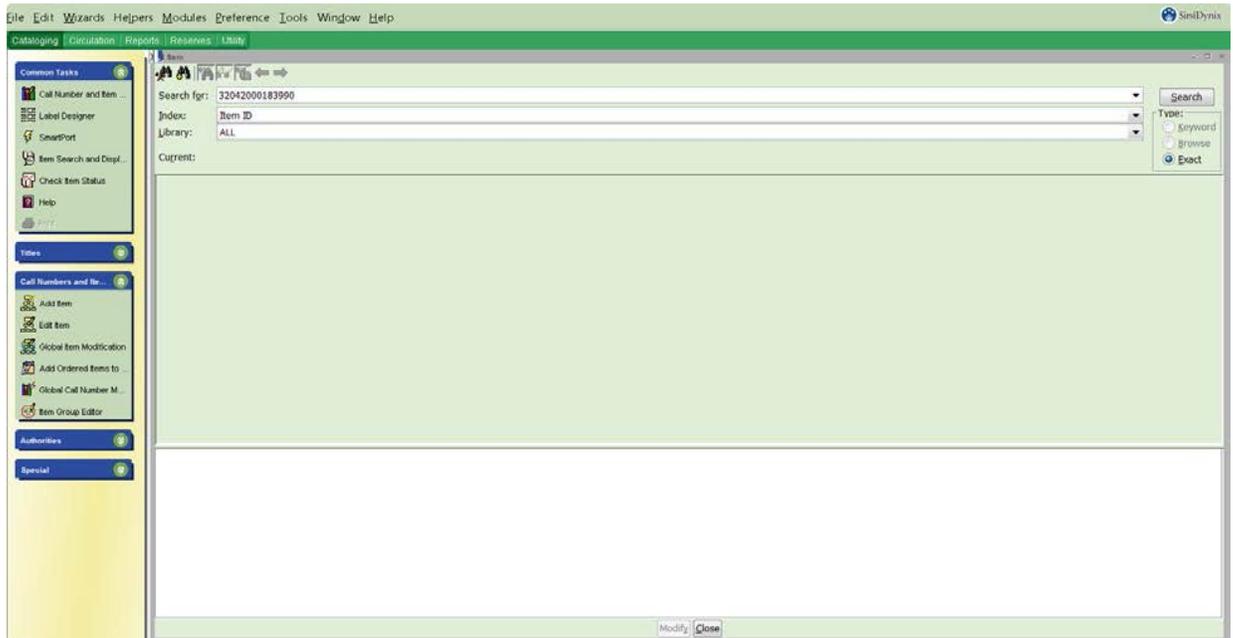
- These procedures only apply to items can no longer be used because of damage.
- The existing post-it notes for damage are only to be used for minor damage to ensure that a patron is not billed for damage that had taken place in the past before the owning library has the opportunity to record a permanent circulation note in the item's record.
- The circulating library should place a copy-specific hold for the owning library's TECH patron, setting the pickup location to the owning library (send home for evaluation). [See List](#)
- The owning library determines if an item is damaged to the point it cannot be used. Therefore the owning library bills the patron
- If the library wants to discard the item, first bill the patron and then discard the item. The bill will remain on the patron record even if the item is discarded.
- The owning library can contact SAILS if the last patron information is not available
- When the owning library bills the patron use the REPDAMAGE bill type. Enter brief note in the patron record and the bill note. The library determines the bill amount. It is not possible to include a processing fee in the bill although the library can add that to the bill amount.
- Payments should be made out to the owning library
- SAILS will generate bill notices. Notices will begin running 7 days after the patron is billed and one follow-up notices will be generated 30 days later.
- The patron's home library should have the patron issue a check to the owning library following the same procedures in place for accepting payment for lost items belonging to another library.
- If a patron pays using a credit card SAILS will reimburse the owning library.
- When the pickup library receives an item that is too damaged for use the item must be shipped back to the owning library and the patron's hold reentered to the top of the hold queue for the next available copy.
- When placing the hold add a hold comment that the item is damaged. Be specific.
- If the item is still usable the Pickup library may check the item out to the patron but must insert the Damaged Item slip on the inside cover. Patrons should be warned not to remove the slip.
- When the item is returned the library should be sure the edge of the slip is visible as an alert to the owning library that there is a problem.

## Procedure - Adding a Circulation Note to an Item Record

The SAILS Damaged Item Policy requires that owning library of an item which has sustained damage but is still usable describe that damage in a circulation note. This functionality is available to both circulation and cataloging staff and can be done at the circulation desk. If the owning library sees that an item has sustained some damage but is still usable (minor water damage, marks on the cover, missing insert for DVD) that damage should be described in a circulation note. This should be done when staff members see damage at checkout, check in, or when an item is returned in delivery there is a damaged note on the inside cover. Circulation notes can be added even if an item is currently checked out to a patron. Circulation notes may only be added by the owning library.

### Procedure

1. The staff may be logged in as CIRC or TECH
2. Click on the Cataloging Module on the toolbar
3. Click on the Call Number and Items Wizard. Click on Edit Item
4. Set the search index to Item ID.
5. Scan the  
barcode



## Circulation Policies and Procedures

- On the bottom of the right hand pane click on the CIRCNOTE field to begin entering a description of the damage. Be specific – water damage on pages 10 – 15. Coffee stain on page 50. Content notes missing. Page 15 torn. IMPORTANT - do not circulate any item that is so damaged it is unusable. Enter today's date. Click on save.

The screenshot shows the 'Item Info' window in a library management system. The title bar reads 'Item Info' and the window title is 'The night the gods smiled : introducing Inspector Charlie Salter / Wright, Eric, 1929-'. The main area is divided into several sections:

- Item information:** Includes fields for Item ID (32042000183990), Copy number (1), Type (BOOK), Item library (WESTPORT), Home location (MYSTERY), Current location (CHECKEDOUT), Item cat1 (MYSTERY), Item cat2 (ADULT), Item cat3 (BOOKS), Item cat5, Media desk, Total charges (22), and Price (\$7.80). There are checkboxes for 'Permanent' (checked) and 'Shadow item'.
- Extended information:** A table with two columns: 'Tag' and 'Contents'. The 'CIRCNOTE' tag contains the text 'Water damage page 15. 8/3/2016'. Other tags include 'PUBLIC' and 'STAFF'.
- Metadata:** A section at the bottom left of the window displays dates: 'Date created: 9/21/1988', 'Date last charged: 8/3/2016', 'Date due: 8/3/2016, 23:59', 'Last discharged: 8/3/2016, 13:05', and 'Date inventoried: 1/4/1999'.

At the bottom of the window are buttons for 'Return to Search', 'Save', and 'Close'.

- IMPORTANT – if you decide you do not want that note do not backspace to delete the information. Place your cursor in the field. Right click. Select Delete Field. Save.

NOTE – It is not appropriate to make notes of damage on the inside cover of the item. Damage must be noted in the circulation note.

### **Procedure - Post-it notes for damaged items**

The purpose of these post-it notes is to allow a patron to borrow an item without being charged for existing damage. These should not be used for items that are damaged by a patron to the point they cannot be used.

On the line that says Lending Library enter the name of the library that was going to circulate it - not the owning library.

1. Using the standard post-it note form supplied by SAILS record the type of damage, enter today's date and circulating library. This post-it should be put inside the cover of the item if possible.
2. The item can then be checked out to the patron
3. The circulating library should immediately place a hold on the item for the item's owning library. A hold note must be entered briefly stating the item is damaged.
4. When the item is returning to the owning library, that library should update the item record so that the circulation note states the item is damaged. The item can then be put back into circulation.

Also please note - it is the owning library that enters the circulation note not the circulating library.

## Policy – Delivery

SAILS Libraries agree to the following:

Items are properly prepared for delivery with item barcodes on the outside to facilitate sort-to-light whenever possible or using pre-printed transit slips when necessary

All items sent in delivery must have a scannable bar code. The only exception is for multi-volume sets cataloged under one barcode. The first item in the set should have the scannable barcode i.d. numbers should be written on remaining pieces to ensure proper return if a piece is lost from the set.

Sets sent to fill patron requests must be checked to ensure there are no missing critical components

Items too damaged to use will not be sent to fill patron requests. It is recommended that if the library wants to continue to shelve damaged items for local use that it be assigned a non-holdable item type.

3. Check the item out to the Pickup Library's Circ Patron. Override the hold but don't cancel it. When the item is discharged it should go in transit to the Owning Library. The Owning Library should check the item out to Mending or Discard when it is received from delivery.

### Checking In transit Items

- Every library must check their items in transit report weekly. They may use the List Transits report run by SAILS on Sunday or use the What's in Transit Wizard.
- It is the responsibility of the receiving library to do the following for items that have been in transit for more than 14 days:
  - i. Check their shelves for the item
  - ii. Contact the sending library using the on-line form
  - iii. Contact the owning library using the on-line form
- If after 21 days the item is still not found, the receiving library should check the item out to their In transit Missing patron.
- SAILS will run a report every month of items missing in transit. The report will be a list items owned by a library that were set to missing in transit.

### **Policy – Appropriate Items for Filling Request**

Libraries should use caution sending damaged items to fill holds and billing patrons for items already damaged at the time of circulation.

### **Procedures**

Check in notes are to be used by the owning library to indicate damage. A borrowing library may return an item to the owning library if it is deemed that it is too damaged for use

### Policy - Claims Returned Items

Libraries have the option of using or not using the Claims Returned feature in Workflows.

Libraries must fill out a Claims Return Notice before setting an item belonging to another library to Claims Returned and must wait for a response from the owning library before making any changes in the system. The owning library may request that the item must be set to lost if it cannot be found.

After 90 days items that have been set to Claims Returned must be set to Missing. The network will provide libraries with a list of items that have been Claims Returned for 90 days or more. The list will be generated once a month.

#### PROCEDURES:

If a patron claims to have returned an item which belongs to your library, you may set it to "claims returned" if that is your library's policy.

If the item belongs to another library, you must contact the owning library asking permission to set the item to "claims returned". The form to submit that request is on the SAILS site:

<http://www.sailsinc.org/Forms/circ.asp>

If the owning library does not use "claims returned", you can do one of two things.

- 1) You can use the "mark item lost" wizard to generate a bill. This will most likely immediately block the patron's card until the bill is paid or..
- 2) You and the patron can decide to leave the item as an active checkout until it is eventually marked "assumed lost". This will give the patron more time and hopefully the item will show up.

If the second option is chosen, document relevant information in a note field so that other staff members understand what has been done.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> day of every month libraries will receive a report delivered in the finished reports that will list items that have been set to claims returned for more than 90 days in the past. The report will be generated by owning library not circulating library. If the item was checked out at the owning library, the library may either check the item in and set it to Missing or use the Mark Item Lost wizard which will then generate a bill on the patron's record. If the item was set to claims returned at another library, the owning library may choose to check the item in and mark it Missing or contact the circulating library and ask that the patron be billed using the Mark Item Lost process. Bills must be generated by the circulating library so that patrons are not receiving communication from a library which s/he may never have visited. Circulating libraries are prohibited from setting an item to lost and immediately cancelling the bill that was generated.

Approved January 21, 2015

### **Policy – Library Patrons**

- Public library patrons may register for a card at any SAILS library.
- K-12 and Academic patrons may only use their card at the issuing school/college
- Libraries agree to follow SAILS policies for entry of patron data.

### **Procedure**

- When a public library card expires, the patron can go to any public library to have it renewed.
- If barcode on the card is damaged, it can be replaced by any public library.
- All public libraries agree not to check out items to patrons blocked at another library.

### **Creating a patron record**

Verify that the patron is not already in the database searching by name and phone number.

## Best Practice – Deceased Patrons

Please note that the steps listed below are just best practices and should not be considered SAILS policy.

1. A library should remove the record of a deceased patron as soon as possible. If there are issues that prevent immediate removal, the patron's email address or SMS information must be taken out to avoid notices or announcements being sent to the patron. \*Check to make sure newsletters are no longer being sent to the patron.
2. If the patron has no outstanding checkouts but has fines or fees on the record, waive the fines and remove the patron record. If the fines are for a lost item from another library, notify the owning library so that it can decide whether or not to remove the bill.
3. If the patron had checkouts and the items belong to your library, check them in and then set them to missing. They may be returned when the patron's family goes through the person's belongings.
4. If the patron had checkouts and there are items belonging to another library, email the [circulation contact](#) of that library and ask that the items be checked in and set to missing.
5. If the patron cannot be removed because of charge history, you can remove the charge history and remove the patron record. To remove charge history you must have the Remove Charge History option checked in the Remove User Behavior

Display property page:  Wizard Startup  Never

Behavior **Helpers**

Allow **Configure Properties**

- Pay bills
- Remove User Hold
- Prompt before removing charge history

At end of wizard

Show checked buttons  Perform selected action

Show

- Remove Another User
- Close

Perform

- Remove Another User
- Close

OK Cancel

### **Policy – Out of State Borrowers**

- Libraries may choose whether or not to issue library cards to out-of-state borrowers.
- Cards are only good for 12 months
- The network shall establish a minimum annual fee for a card for out-of-state borrowers. The minimum fee is charged per family.
- Any borrower that purchases an out of state card at the network minimum shall have access to all the network resources.
- Cards purchased below the network minimum are only valid at the library that issues the card.
- SAILS will provide libraries the issue restricted out of state borrower cards with a profile that will restrict the patrons to that library.
- Libraries may choose to issue in-state cards to out-of-state residents who work in the Massachusetts or attend school in Massachusetts.

### Policy – Teacher Cards

- Libraries may choose to use or not use this patron profile
- Cards are only good for 12 months and registration information must be verified before the card is renewed for another 12 month period.
- Materials checked out must be curriculum related. Personal, professional or academic reading material must be checked out on the patron's personal public library card.
- Extended loan period is limited to books. Loan period is 6 weeks with no renewal.
- Each library may decide whether to levy fines.
- Teachers are responsible for returning materials to the library on time and may be billed if items are lost.
- Teacher cards are only valid at the library that issues the card.
- Teachers may have only one card in the system.
- SAILS will provide libraries that use this patron profile with special cards that clearly identify teacher cards.
- Home school patrons are not to receive teacher cards. If a library decides to establish special lending privileges for home school patrons then a new profile will need to be set up and the limits approved by the membership at large.

### **Policy – Online Patron Registration**

- Cards are only good for 30 days
- Patron can place holds and access electronic resources during that time
- Libraries can opt out of doing this

### **Policy – Out of Network Cards**

Public library members in SAILS must accept out-of-network cards rather than issue new cards to patrons.

#### **Procedure**

1. The first time an out of network patron uses his/her card, their patron information is entered into SAILS following standard patron data entry procedures.
2. A small sticker will be placed on the card by the library entering the patron information in the SAILS system for the first time.
3. Residents of a SAILS community should always be issued a SAILS card even if they already have an out-of-network card.
4. Out of network residents are not required to have a card from their home library. If they do not have a card then they should be issued a SAILS card with MASS in usercat2.
5. If an out of network resident does not have his/her home library card the SAILS library may issue the person a SAILS card but the patron has to be reminded that they have to bring their SAILS card whenever using a SAILS library.

### **Policy – PINs for Self-Check**

If a self-check station has a keyboard available for public use the library must require PINs.

### **Policy – Altering Another Library’s Materials**

- The borrowing library should never physically alter anything owned by another library. This type of action includes but is not limited to
  - a. Stamping due dates
  - b. Repairing or writing on
  - c. Attaching date due slips
- If a patron alters something it should be noted by the borrowing library and returned to the owning library using the procedures used for damaged materials.

## **Policy – Hold Requests**

Libraries must process hold requests every day the library is open.

## **Procedures**

### **RHA**

must be checked once daily – in the morning or the evening.

### **Clean Holds Report**

must be checked daily and should include days that the library was closed.

### **Missing Items – Unfillable Hold**

- If a hold cannot be filled because an item is missing or damaged, the owning library must change the status of the item promptly so that patrons' holds can move to other copies.
- Libraries will receive a daily report listing holds that cannot be filled because all items are lost, missing, or discarded.
- It is the responsibility of the pick-up library to cancel the patron's hold and notify the patron that the item is unavailable.

## Circulation Policies and Procedures

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### **Hold Fulfillment Policy**

All members must make circulating collections available for interlibrary loan to other members on the same basis as they are in their own member organization. (SAILS BY-LAWS approved 5/2000)

Popular circulating collections that may be restricted from filling network loans are:

- Rental
- Friends
- Restricted memorial
- Summer reading

Requests for exemption from filling holds must be submitted in writing to the SAILS Board of Directors.

Libraries must have a minimum of one copy of a title of the same format available for system wide lending.

For every three copies of a restricted title, member libraries must purchase one additional copy for system wide availability

Items larger than 15 inches X 18 inches and multi-media kits are exempt from filling holds due to the difficulty in packaging and shipping them.

Items exempt from filling holds must be assigned an item type that prevents patrons from requesting the items.

With the exception of non-circulating or special collections, public libraries must agree to allow on-site circulation to patrons of non-holdable items.

Book Clubs may not place multiple hold on bestsellers, nor can they place holds on every copy in the system. Additionally, they must follow the SAILS hold shelf policy of returning items after the available hold shelf period has expired.

~~Approved June 15, 2011~~

Revision approved January 15 2014  
Revised October 4, 2018

### **Policy – Limits on Renewals**

- Items may not be renewed beyond the system limits.
- Staff members of SAILS libraries may not:
  - Renew items beyond the standard number of renewals allowed by the system except in special circumstances that are approved by their library director or supervisor.
  - Renew an item on which there is a hold

### Policy – Staff Privileges

Staff of SAILS member libraries must follow library and network policies regarding circulation and holds. They may not use the system overrides to provide themselves, family members or patrons with special privileges not offered to general members of the public. In instances where staff members are violating network policies, the SAILS Executive Director will notify the library director. Staff members who violate network policy may be barred from charging items to themselves. Habitual and egregious abuse of privilege may result in loss of access to the network circulation system with the agreement of the library director.

Staff profiles allow the following:

- Exempt from fines or bills.
- May have 20 overdue items before being blocked.
- May have 30 holds
- May have 120 items checked out

Staff may not do the following:

- Move themselves or a patron to the top of the holds queue except in cases where the patron's hold was cancelled by mistake.
- Renew items beyond the standard number of renewals allowed by the system except in special circumstances that are approved by their library director or supervisor.
- Modify due dates to give themselves or a patron with extended loan periods except in special circumstances that are approved by their library director or supervisor.
- Check items out to themselves that are arriving in the delivery to fill another patron's holds.
- Use system overrides to give himself, herself, or a patron any privileges beyond those allowed by the system.

### **Policy – Volunteers at the circulation desk**

Volunteers in public libraries are prohibited from working at the circulation desk and accessing patron records, payments, etc. the SAILS databases is a shared resource. Staff members agree to comply with existing network policies about patron privacy and appropriate use. Volunteers cannot be disciplined in the same manner as paid staff if they do not comply with network policies.

### **Policy – Commonwealth Catalog Lending**

Libraries within the SAILS Network has formally adopted the "Policies for the Patron-Initiated Virtual Catalog Borrowing Service", for transactions within the Commonwealth Catalog. This set of policies complies with the National Interlibrary Loan Code of the United States and attempts to "reflect and incorporate existing interlibrary and consortia agreements and practices".

#### **Limits on Patron Requests**

In its efforts to conform to regional and national ILL standards, the SAILS Library Network has placed a limit to the number of active requests by our patrons in the Virtual Catalog. The number of active requests is limited to 10, which is the same as the number of active ILL requests our patrons may have at one time. An active request is considered anything with the status of Pending, Shipped or Received. Once an item has been returned to the borrowing library, it is no longer active.