

LIBRARY POLICY MANUAL

CIRC-4: Missing and Damaged Items Policy

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Revised:

Attachment(s): None

I. Definitions

*Long Overdue/Lost Items:* An item is considered long overdue or lost when it is 28 days overdue.

*Missing items:* An item is considered “missing” when it has an “available” status in the catalog (i.e., it is not checked out) but it can’t be found within the building.

*Damaged items:* An item is considered “damaged” if its physical condition precludes circulating it. Some damage may be resolved in-house. If there is any disagreement about whether the item can continue to circulate, the selector for the item’s area has the final say.

*“Claims Returned” status:* An item may be given a “claims returned” status, meaning that the item is not available for circulation but also not attached to any patron record.

II. Policy

The Circulation department is charged with observing and evaluating items returned to the library as well as ensuring the accuracy of the database as it relates to the collection and patron records.

*Long Overdue/Lost items:* Whenever possible, the replacement cost for long overdue/lost items is billed to the patron, according to the following guidelines:

- Items that are on a patron’s record that have not been returned within 28 days of the final due date are automatically billed to the patron.
- The replacement cost of an item is specified in the item record, and includes a processing fee in addition to the purchase cost (see Fines and Fees Policy).
- If a patron returns a long overdue item in good condition, they will not be held accountable for the billed fee.
- Patrons may not substitute items for or replace in kind materials that are lost.

- Lost parts of multi-part items, such as sets of CDs, may have partial replacement costs. See the Fines and Fees Policy.
- A refund is generated for patrons who find and return a lost item within six months of paying for it. This refund equals the replacement cost of the item minus the processing fee.

*Damaged items:* The replacement cost for damaged items is billed to the patron to whom the item is checked out when the damage occurred, according to the following guidelines:

- Items are billed to the patron when it is deemed that the item cannot continue to circulate and that the damage to the item did not result from regular “wear and tear”.
- The replacement cost of an item is specified in the item record, and includes a processing fee in addition to the purchase cost (see Fines and Fees Policy).
- After paying the replacement fee, the patron may keep the item.
- Patrons may not substitute items for or replace in kind materials that are damaged.
- Damaged parts of multi-part items, such as sets of CDs, may have partial replacement costs. See the Fines and Fees Policy.

*“Claims Returned” items:* The library provides a remedy for items which a patron believes they have returned but which cannot be located in the library, according to the following guidelines:

- The “claims returned” status is invoked only as a last resort, after library staff have searched for the item in house and the patron has searched at home.
- Patrons are limited to three active claims returned items at any one time. Any missing items in excess of the three active claims returned items are treated as lost, according to the guidelines above.
- Patrons are not billed for replacement of an item marked Claims Returned.
- There is no penalty if a patron finds and returns an item that was claimed returned.

*Missing items:* Materials that appear as “available” in the catalog, but that cannot be located in the library are considered missing and are handled according to the following guidelines:

- If neither patron nor staff are able to find a material it can be placed on reserve for the patron. After searching for an item for a limited period of time, the status of the item in the ILS is changed to missing.
- If a patron does not want to place an item on reserve, staff can mark the material as missing immediately.

- Selection staff may decide to purchase the item before the search period is over if there is another patron on reserve.