

## Collecting Fees and Fines for Library Material Policy

### Patron Responsibilities

Patrons are responsible for the library materials checked out on their cards and are expected to return materials in a timely manner. Patrons are also expected to become familiar with the various options for renewing library materials. All patrons are subject to overdue fees and fines.

Patrons will maintain their account information. They will inform the library of any name, e-mail, telephone number or address changes and will notify the library immediately if their card is lost or stolen.

To assist patrons with their responsibilities, patrons may:

- Obtain date due slips at the time of check out
- Sign up to receive courtesy email alerts before library materials come due
- Access their account information via the library catalog/homepage
- Knowing the Library's Fines policies

### Patron Library Card Accounts

Patrons are informed of borrowing privileges and responsibilities (e.g. lending rules, fees and fines) when they receive their library card. Brochures are provided and information is available at the library website (<http://www.beverlyhills.org/exploring/beverlyhillspubliclibrary/borrowerservices/>)

Fees and fines for overdue, long overdue, lost library material or partially returned AV sets (CDs and DVDs) are charged to patron library card accounts. The Fee and Fine Schedule is used to determine the amounts that are charged.

Fees and fines may be paid in person by cash, check or credit card. Fees and fines may be paid by credit card over the telephone as well.

Outstanding fees and fines may result in restricted borrowing privileges. The following restrictions will apply:

- **Outstanding charges under \$25.00 for residents and \$15.00 for non-residents:** Patrons are informed of their outstanding charges at check-out. Borrowing privileges are not restricted and the patron is not stopped at self-check-out.
- **Outstanding charges of \$25.00 or greater for residents and \$15.00 or greater for non-residents:** Patron is stopped at self-check-out. Patrons may pay fines to clear their account and no further action is taken. When fines are not cleared in a timely manner, the library will take further action which may result in the account being sent to our collection agency. Payment may include a 40% additional charge to cover the collection agency cost. Payment must be

made in full to clear the account and reinstate borrowing privileges. Expired cards cannot be renewed until all charges are cleared.

- Outstanding fees and fines will not prevent patrons from accessing online database services.

### Resolving Disputes

Staff will work with patrons to explain charges and resolve disputes.

Staff will discuss fees and fines only with the patron involved, or in the case of a minor child, with the parent or guardian. Staff may share information about patron accounts with other staff only to the extent necessary to resolve the service question at hand.

Circumstances may warrant waiving a patron's fees and fines on a case by case basis. Staff will apply fee and fine waivers fairly and equitably according to the following practices:

1. Patron's requests for a waiver will be resolved in a timely fashion.
2. The circulation supervisor (or designees) is responsible for determining if a fine should be waived. Designees may waive up to \$50.00 in fines or fees per transaction. Circulation supervisor, Library Services Manager, or City librarian are authorized to waive fines or fees in excess of \$50.00 per transaction.
3. Overdue fines may be waived under certain circumstances:
  - a. Hospitalization (please provide a Dr. note indicated the dates hospitalized; no medical records)
  - b. imprisonment
  - c. Eviction (eviction notice)
  - d. natural disaster (insurance claim)
  - e. fire (insurance claim)
  - f. theft (police report)
  - g. financial hardship (bankruptcy papers)
  - h. card was reported lost to the library (any charges after the report date)
  - i. change in custody or guardianship of a minor resulting in confusion over responsibility for library materials (custody papers)
  - j. death of a card holder (death certificate)

Reasonable documentation is requested to confirm that a fine waiver is appropriate.

4. Upon waiving a fine or fee the information must be recorded in the library's computer system that a fine or fee was waived, amount waived, date waived, reason for waiver and initials of the person waiving.
5. Staff may use the waiving activity record to determine if future waivers are warranted.
6. Fines will not be waived if the request is based on any of the following reasons:
  - Lack of knowledge of Library policies

- Forgot due date or did not know due date
- Did not receive a courtesy overdue notice or an overdue or billing notice
- Outdated information in your library account (email, address, or phone number)
- Did not know how to renew materials via phone or website
- Loaned book to someone else
- Being out of town, on vacation or holiday
- Returned book to the wrong library
- Inclement weather

### Financial Oversight

Staff will follow established cash management procedures for collecting and depositing fees and fines.

Fee and Fine waivers will be tracked at the administrative level and reviewed for irregularities.

### Exemptions

The City Librarian has authorized the following exemptions:

1. Participants in the Homebound Program will be exempt from overdue fees.
2. One time fine/fee waivers will be given to participants in accordance with the annual Food for Fine program rules.
3. Roxbury Book Nook does not charge overdue fines. It does charge for items never returned, damaged, or declared lost.

### Notifications prior to an account going to collections:

Initial method of notification is determined by the patron when signing up for a card or at the time of renewal (email or telephone):

- Two weeks after the due date client receives notification that materials are overdue and should be returned.
- One week after the first notice a second notice is sent asking the patron to return materials.
- One week following the second notice a phone call is made asking for materials to be returned and or fines paid.
- Two weeks following the phone call a letter is sent advising patron they have two weeks to contact circulation and resolve their outstanding materials and/or fines or we will send the account to collections.

Patrons are only handed over to collections after every attempt at contact has been made with no results.