

# Circulation Policy

## Policy Statement

Sterling Municipal Library makes a variety of materials, in a variety of formats, available to all persons on an equal basis. In order to provide for the efficient and equitable circulation of materials, the Library sets the following policies, regarding borrowing eligibility, length of loan for various materials, limits on the number of items that can be borrowed, renewals, reserves, Interlibrary Loan, overdue materials charges, and damage and replacement assessments. The library utilizes an integrated automated circulation system to maintain, monitor, and report circulation statistics, overdue notices, billings and balances, user registration records, and inventory control.

The Library will not be responsible for any damage incurred to personal property while materials and/or equipment borrowed from the library are in use.

## LIBRARY CARDS

The unique number on an individual's library card is the means by which the Library assures privacy of that individual's usage record. The patron should protect this card from misuse to avoid charges that the card owner has not authorized.

Presentation of a library card implies authorization, by the cardholder, to access circulation records related to that card.

Users should present their library card each time they borrow library material. Government issued picture identification (ID) may be accepted in lieu of a library card.

Borrowers are responsible for providing a current local mailing address and telephone number in order to receive timely information from the Sterling Municipal Library. Providing an email address makes it possible to receive additional services.

Lost or stolen Library cards should be reported immediately to avoid unauthorized use. Lost, stolen, or damaged cards may be replaced at a cost of \$1.00

## New Borrowers

There are no residency requirements to receive a Sterling Municipal Library borrower's card. A borrower's first card is available free of charge. A government picture ID is required. **For high school students who have reached their 17th birthday and are applying for an adult library card, a valid school ID with a photograph may be used in lieu of the government ID.** Patrons who are under 17 must have their registration signed at the circulation desk.

The expiration date for borrower registration cards is three years. Patrons who wish to renew their cards must verify current address. Library accounts that have no fines or fees and have not been used in three years will be purged.

Patrons who do not have a permanent address may be issued a **Visitor's Card**. Visitor's Cards will require address verification every three months in order to remain valid.

### Responsibilities

A parent and/or legal guardian is responsible for all charges associated with a patron account on which their signature appears.

The owner of the library card is responsible for:

- Any materials checked out on that card
- Returning materials by the due date and time
- All charges associated with the card
- Notifying the Library when their library card has been lost or stolen

### Loss of Privileges

A valid user may be prevented from borrowing materials for the following reasons:

- Exceeding the limit for outstanding fines and/or fees (see Fines Schedule)
- Abuse of Library property
- Abusing TexShare privileges (see TexShare section)
- Writing a bad check for Library fines or fees

### Confidentiality of Records

In accordance with Section 552.124 of the Texas Government Code, the Sterling Municipal Library will not release any information about a borrower including name, Identification number, or any checkout information except as required by Homeland Security

## **LOAN PERIODS AND LOAN LIMITS**

Sterling Municipal Library establishes checkout limits, loan periods, and return policies in order to ensure equitable access to all library materials and provide faster access to high-demand materials.

### Due Dates

Patrons who checkout items from the Library receive a receipt at the time of check out providing the following information:

- Barcode number of the item
- Due date
- Title and author of the material

All materials must be returned by closing time on the date due.

### Length of Checkout

The due date and item limit depends on the type of material.

**LOAN QUANTITY BY ITEM IN CENTRAL LIBRARY**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Borrower</b>	<b>Length of Checkout</b>	<b>Limit</b>
Books, Audio Books, CDs, Cassettes, Magazines, Test Books, Kits, VHS	Everyone	21 Days	No Limit
Books, Audio Books, CDs, Cassettes, Magazines	Everyone	Vacation Loan Period Varies	No Videos or DVDs for vacation loan
DVDs-Popular	Everyone	7 Days	No Limit
DVDs-Documentary	Everyone	21 Days	No Limit
Videos, Software, and Story Kits	Everyone	21 Days	No Limit
Interlibrary Loan	Everyone	Period set by lending library	5
Literacy Materials	Literacy Tutor and Student	60 Days	No Limit
Laptops and Accessories	Library card holders 17 or older	Maximum 2 hours	1
Books, Audio Books, Periodicals, VHS, DVD	Homebound/Institutional	30 Days	No Limit

## Returns (Book Drops)

- A drive through book drop is located on the Texas Avenue side of the library building. It is open 24 hours per day.
- Items returned in the book drop after library hours are processed on the next business day.
- Caution is advised when returning DVDs, CDs, talking books and cassettes through the outside book drop. (Please secure with rubber bands or put in plastic bags.)
- When the Library is open, you may bring the item to the book drop at the Circulation Desk.

Checked out items returned to the shelf or placed on a book truck are not properly checked in and will appear as overdue or lost items on a patron record.

## **RENEWALS**

Sterling Municipal Library patrons may renew materials for their convenience. Items may be renewed in person, by phone, or on-line. Patrons may renew items **two** times. Items on reserve may not be renewed.

## **RESERVES**

Sterling Municipal Library patrons may, for their convenience, place on reserve any item the catalog shows as circulating or on order. This can be done in person, by phone or on-line. Placing an item on 'reserve' puts that patron's name on a waiting list for an item.

Whenever the item is next available for checkout, or when that patron's name is the next on the reserve list for that item, the patron will be notified that the item may be picked up at the library.

Reserve items are held for seven (7) business days. When items are not picked up within that period, the next patron on the waiting list is notified. The patron who has missed their reserve period is dropped from the waiting list and must place a new request which will be the last on the waiting list.

Items being held for patrons are placed on the self-service shelves located near the Circulation desk. To assure patron privacy, a wrapper is used to cover each item. Each wrapper has the name of the person for whom the items are being held printed on the spine. The last date the items can be picked up is also printed on the wrapper.

Patrons may pick up the items they have on reserve and check these out at the circulation desk. Reserve items can only be checked out on the card of the person who placed the reserve

### Items Not On Shelf/Missing Materials

When a patron requests an item that is shown in the catalog to be on the shelf but it is not found, library staff will search for that item. If located, the requester will be notified and the material is held at the Circulation Desk for 7 business days.

Interlibrary Loan (ILL) Policy—See Public Services Policies (*link*)

### **TEXSHARE**

Sterling Municipal Library participates in TexShare so that Baytown residents can borrow materials at other Texas libraries, residents of other Texas cities can use the Sterling Municipal Library collection, and so that Sterling Municipal Library patrons can enjoy the benefits of the Lone Star Libraries Program. Request a TexShare Card at the Circulation Desk.

- To receive a TexShare card, a patron must be a member in good standing; that is, no fines or fees must appear on patron's record
- A Sterling Municipal Library patron must be a patron with the Library for 6 months before being eligible to receive a TexShare card
- A patron must produce a government issued picture ID prior to being issued a TexShare card
- The TexShare card will have an expiration date of 6 months after issuance
- Sterling Municipal Library borrowers under the age of 17 must have their TexShare card co-signed by their parent or legal guardian. The TexShare card cannot be sent home for a signature. The parent must sign the card at the Library
- Sterling Municipal Library will not be responsible for returning TexShare materials. The patron must return the material to the lending library in person or through priority mail.
- TexShare cards must be surrendered to Sterling Municipal Library staff if asked. Cards must be surrendered if delinquencies or failure to return materials occur on a TexShare record
- Sterling Municipal Library will immediately block a patron from using their library card upon learning of a TexShare overdue. Privileges will be restored when the patron produces a written release from his obligations by the TexShare library
- A patron will be denied future TexShare privileges if he defaults on a TexShare loan.

### **CLAIMS RETURNED OR CLAIMS NEVER HAD**

If patrons believe they have returned or never checked out an item on their record, the Library places the disputed item into a Claims Returned status. This enables patrons to continue checking out materials while the Library investigates the disputed charges. Overdue fines, fees, and/or replacement costs of a maximum of three (3) Claims Returned items per calendar year will be waived. Overdue fines, fees, and /or replacement costs of items above three (3) will be the responsibility of the patron if items are not found in the Library or on the Bookmobile within the billing cycle.

## FINES AND FEES

The Library does not charge fines or lost item costs on Library materials that have been destroyed by storm, flood, or fire; or that have been lost through theft when a copy of the police report has been provided to the Library. Emergency hospitalization is also considered but emergency departure from town is not exempt from fines since the drive through book drop is always available.

When an item is lost or damaged, the patron's account will be charged the cost of the item and a \$5.00 processing fee. The cost of the item and processing fee must be paid in full at the same time.

A borrower is responsible for all materials borrowed on his account. He is not, however, responsible for any materials borrowed on his account after the date he has officially reported his card as lost/stolen and the Library records have been marked accordingly.

### FINES SCHEDULE

Item Type	Fines	Maximum Fine
Books, Cassettes, CDs, Magazines, Video tapes, Software and Kits anything not listed below	\$0.10 per day	\$5.00
DVD	\$0.10 per day	\$5.00
Reference Materials	\$1.00 per hour	Cost of the item
Laptops and Accessories	\$6.00 per hour	\$54.00

### Suspension of Privileges

When a patron's fines exceed \$10.00 a patron's library privileges are suspended until the fine is paid down under the \$10 limit. Library privileges may be suspended for borrowers who fail to abide by the provisions of this policy or who have unpaid library charges. The Library will block a borrower's card for non-return or damaged materials including interlibrary loan materials.

### Appeals

Initial inquiries concerning a fine or the suspension of privileges should be made at the Circulation Desk. Unresolved issues can be appealed to the City Librarian.

### Overdue Material

An item is overdue and is subject to the fine schedule when it has not cleared the circulation files of Sterling Municipal Library on or before the date due. See Fines Schedule above.

### Overdue Notices

Material is due on the date printed on the "Date due receipt". The library is not responsible for notifying borrowers that materials are overdue, but the Library sends a notice as a COURTESY. The library is NOT responsible for late or undeliverable notices. Please advise the Library of a change in your email or mailing address, to assure you receive notifications about your account.

### Legal Action

*Pursuant to Baytown Ordinance 54-1, failure to return material borrowed from the public library is a criminal offense, punishable by a fine up to \$500.*

When a library account has overdue items that exceed \$200.00 in value and that account has been delinquent for 30 days, legal action may be taken. To reinstate library privileges, library balance must be paid in full.

## **DAMAGED MATERIALS**

Damage to library materials is defined as anything beyond normal wear and tear that permanently and/or aesthetically reduces the visual appeal, marketability and usability of an item.

The Library charges fees to cover the costs of repair to damaged materials, up to and including total item cost plus a processing fee of \$5.00.

## **LOST MATERIALS**

The lost item cost reflects the cost of the item to the Library. If the item is no longer available in print, the Library will assess an amount equal to the cost of replacing that item. A duplicate copy, purchased by the borrower, will not be accepted.

All lost item fees must be paid at the central library at Wilbanks Avenue.

When a single part/piece of a set, i.e. one CD in an audio book set, can be replaced, the cost of that individual part/piece will be assessed. When a single part/piece of a set, i.e. one CD in an audio book set, cannot be replaced, the full replacement cost of the set will be assessed.

If the catalogue does not specify a set price for an item the default price listed below will be assessed:

**DEFAULT COST FOR LOST ITEMS CHART**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Default Cost</b>
Trade Paperback books	\$8.00
Paper Back books	\$12.00
Hard Cover books	\$25.00
Booklets and leaflets	\$2.00
Cassettes	\$8.00
Compact Discs	\$8.00
Videos	\$10.00
DVDs	\$25.00
Talking Book	\$50.00

Charges will be assessed for failure to return carrying cases:

**CASE REPLACEMENT COST CHART**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Replacement Cost</b>
CD Case	\$1.00
DVD Case	\$1.00
Tape Cassette Bag	\$.50
Tape Cassette Plastic Case	\$.50
Tape Cassette Shell	\$1.50
Talking Book Plastic Case	\$4.00
Video Case	\$1.50
Video Shell	\$3.00

## PROCESSING AND LOST ITEM COSTS

### Processing Fees

In addition to the replacement cost, a non-refundable processing fee of \$5 per item is assessed when;

- The material is damaged beyond repair
- When an item is more than 30 days overdue

The processing fee represents the cost of acquiring and cataloging a replacement item

### Refunds

If a patron locates a lost item within one year after he/she has paid for it, the amount paid for the item will be refunded. Any fines and/or fees paid will not be refunded.