

## **CIR-4**

### **LOST OR DAMAGED MATERIALS**

#### **POLICY STATEMENT**

Library materials are public property. Customers are responsible for the care and return of items checked out on their accounts and will be charged for lost or damaged items. Borrowing privileges are restricted on accounts with lost items.

#### **DEFINITIONS:**

##### **Lost item**

Items that are checked out on a customer's account and not returned will be declared lost 35 days after the due date or when declared lost by the customer.

##### **Damaged item**

Items that are damaged beyond repair and can no longer circulate are considered damaged items. Examples of damage include: offensive odors, water damage, stains, torn pages or covers, scratched or broken media items, missing parts of sets, etc.

#### **REGULATIONS:**

##### **Lost Items**

Customers must pay for lost items on their account. The original cost of the item in the library's system and a \$5.00 processing fee will be charged. The processing fee covers the library's cost of reordering and reprocessing the item. (SEE CIR-5 CHARGES)

Customers will be given a receipt for fees paid for lost items.

Items remain in lost status in the library's catalog for one year (365 days). Associated fees remain charged to the customer's account until paid or the account is deleted.

If lost items are found and returned within one year of the date the item was declared lost, the customer's account will be credited with the price of the item. Processing fees are not refunded. No refunds are given for items returned after one year.

The cost, fines, and fees for lost Interlibrary Loan items (borrowed from another library) are determined by the lending library.

##### **Lost Parts**

Lost parts of circulating items (such as books on cd, kits, etc.) prevent the library from loaning the item to other customers. Sets with missing pieces are not checked in until all parts are returned. If a set has missing parts, circulation staff will notify the customer by telephone, email, and/or postal mail. The item(s) will be held for up to 35 days from the date due to allow for the return or replacement of missing parts.

If the complete set is not returned or replaced in 35 days from the date due, the entire item will be declared lost and charged to the customer's account.

The customer may be charged for the replacement of the entire item if single parts cannot be replaced. If it is possible to replace the missing parts, the customer will only be charged for the replacement. Replacement depends on the vendor and the item. Circulation staff will explain that the library must determine whether replacement costs are an option and explain the charge will be placed on their account when it is determined. Staff who manage collection development will determine replacement costs if possible and add those costs to the account. In addition, a \$5 processing fee is added to any replacement cost. The Circulation Manager will send a letter to the customer to notify them of the final cost or the customer may call back or check their account through the library's online system.

The library does not accept replacements for lost or damaged parts of lost or damaged items. Customers must pay for the original cost of the item and/or parts, plus a \$5.00 processing fee.

A customer may offer to pay for a lost item prior to the date we declare an item lost. Staff may change the status of an item to lost and accept payment. Staff should explain that the customer will only receive refund of the item cost and not the processing fee. If the customer thinks they may find the book, staff may allow the customer to check out materials and allow the time to look for the item up until the day it is 35 days past the due date.

### **Damaged items**

Customers must pay for damaged items when checked out on their account. Damage charges will be assessed, depending on the extent of damage and availability of replacements.

The customer may be charged for the replacement of the entire item if single parts cannot be replaced. If it is possible to replace the damaged parts, the customer will only be charged for the replacement. Replacement depends on the vendor of the item. Circulation staff will explain that we must determine whether replacement costs are an option and explain the charge will be placed on their account when it is determined. Circulation staff will send a notice with the charges when determined, or the customer may call back or check their account through the library's online system.

The library does not generally accept replacement copies of lost or damaged items instead of payment. However, if a patron brings in an item of identical title and edition and the item is in new or excellent condition, it may be presented in exchange for the cost of the item. Replacement copies must be approved by the Collections Manager. The processing fee still applies to all accepted replacement items. The replacement item becomes the property of the library and is not returned to the customer in the event the lost item is found. Interlibrary Loan materials (ILL) not owned by the library are not eligible for this alternative.

Customers must pay the original cost of the items that are damaged when checked out on their account. The original price of the item is in the library's catalog record.

In addition to the cost of the item, a \$5.00 processing fee will be charged to the customer's account for items that are damaged beyond repair and that must be withdrawn from the library's collection. The processing fee covers the library's cost of processing the item.

Customers will be given a receipt for fees paid for damaged items. Customers may then keep the damaged item.