

LOST OR DAMAGED ITEMS

POLICY QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS

1. Does the library charge the customer if he or she loses an item belonging to the library?
2. Does the library charge the customer if he or she damages an item belonging to the library?
3. How does the library policy on lost or damaged items support the library's goals and objectives?

DEFINITION

1. What is a *lost item*?
2. What is a *damaged item*?

REGULATIONS QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS

Lost Item

1. If a customer loses an item belonging to the library, is he or she expected to pay for the item? If so, does he or she pay:
 - a. fixed price based on the type of item that was lost?
 - b. the price of the item as shown in the library's database?
 - c. the current list price of a replacement copy of the item as shown in Books in Print or some other published source?
2. If a customer loses an item belonging to the library, is he or she expected to pay a processing fee to defray the library's cost to delete the lost item and purchase a new copy should the library choose to do so? If so,
 - a. is the processing fee the same for all types of lost items?
 - b. does the fee vary based on the type of material that was lost (for example, the processing fee for a lost book might be different from the processing fee for a lost videotape)?
 - c. is the processing fee assessed for cataloged and uncataloged items?
3. If the list item is overdue at the time the customer wishes to pay for it, is he or she also charged an overdue fine?
4. Will a customer be given a receipt if he or she pays any or all of the fees associated with a lost or damaged item?
5. If a customer finds the lost item after he or she has paid all the charges associated with the lost item, is he or she entitled to a full or partial refund of:
 - a. the item price?
 - b. the processing fee if one was paid?
 - c. overdue fines if any were paid?

6. Is there a time limit for returning the item and requesting the refund? If the customer was given a receipt showing the charges paid, must he or she present the receipt to obtain a full or partial refund?
7. Will the library accept a replacement item in lieu of the lost item? If so, may any member of the library staff determine that the offered item is an acceptable replacement, or may only supervisors or staff with a particular classification determine that the offered item is an acceptable replacement?

Damaged Item

1. Has the library established a standard charge that a customer is expected to pay when he or she damages an item or does the amount owed depend on the extent of the damage and/or the type of the item that was damaged? If the amount varies based on the extent of the damage, what guidelines should the staff use to determine what damage fee to charge?
2. At what point, if any, will the library consider the damage to be so extensive that the customer is assessed the full price of the item? Is he or she also assessed a processing fee if such a fee is collected for items which have been lost? If a customer pays the full price for a damaged item, may he or she keep the damaged item?
3. If a damaged item is overdue at the time the customer wishes to pay it, is he or she also charged an overdue fine?
4. Will the library accept a replacement item in lieu of the damaged item? If so, may any member of the library staff determine that the offered item is an acceptable replacement, or may only supervisors or staff with a particular classification determine that the offered item is an acceptable replacement?

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