

# Missouri Evergreen Consortium

## Circulation Best Practices

### **CUSTOMER SERVICE FOR PATRONS FROM OTHER MEC LIBRARIES**

1. All frontline staff should be trained in your library's policies for serving patrons from other Missouri Evergreen Consortium (MEC) libraries.
2. Patrons may borrow materials only through established procedures at their home library or through reciprocal borrowing agreements.
  - Direct walk-in borrowing at another member library is not implied or permitted unless a reciprocal agreement is in place.
3. To check out items to patrons from outside your library district, your library must have a signed Reciprocal Borrowing Agreement.
  - Reciprocal Borrowing Agreement: <https://moevergreenlibraries.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Reciprocal-Borrower-Agreement-2017.pdf>
  - List of reciprocal borrowing libraries: <https://moevergreenlibraries.org/libraries/>
4. Never modify a patron account belonging to another MEC library. This includes, but is not limited to: updating expiration dates, paying bills, and removing or clearing blocks that prevent checkout.
5. Regardless of reciprocal borrowing status, holds may be placed for patrons from other MEC libraries. If your library is not a reciprocal borrowing library, always select the patron's home library as the pickup location. Reciprocal borrowing libraries should follow their system policy. Staff may assist in the following ways:
  - Placing the hold for the patron
  - Calling the patron's home library to request they place the hold
  - Helping the patron log in to place their own hold(s)
  - Registering the patron for a local card (see Section 6) and placing a hold for pickup at your library
6. Libraries may issue local cards to patrons from other districts, but only by following MEC best practices:
  - Always search the full MEC system before creating a new account.
  - If the patron already has an MEC account, check for outstanding charges.
  - If charges exceed your library's fine/fee threshold, ask the patron to contact their home library to resolve the charges before issuing a new card.
  - If no outstanding charges exceed the threshold, you may issue a new card following your library's local policies.

## **COURIER SERVICE**

1. Ensure that the correct courier label is on the bag. Note that some libraries have courier service to more than one branch. The courier label should match the transit slip.
2. Follow MALA guidelines for placement of courier labels.
  - Courier Bags - Place a label in the clear label display window.
  - Tubs, totes and other packages - Affix a label to the package.
  - Packages/boxes - Place a label on the top and on at least one side.
  - Do not use USPS totes.
3. When using a previously used envelope or carton, remove, cover or black out all visible shipping addresses from previous shipments.
4. Keep a written spreadsheet to count individual **outgoing** items for monthly reporting. Counts should be based on what is visually accounted for; generating a report to determine counts of outgoing items is not recommended. Do not count bags shipped, but each individual outgoing item, which could be several to a bag. This means each and every item (not bags) that leaves your library, whether it is a borrowed, loaned, mis-delivered, or reciprocal return, is counted. (Items to be counted include MEC items, traditional ILL, freebies such as DVD cases, etc.)
5. Check the MALA website regularly for the most current version of courier labels at <https://www.malalibraries.org/courier-service/> - connected
6. Report any courier issues or request additional courier bags by contacting MALA at <https://www.malalibraries.org/courier-service/courier-delivery-service-report-form/>
7. For questions about courier reporting or service refer to the MALA ILL Courier Manual at <https://www.malalibraries.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/MALA-ILL-Courier-Manual-REVISED-2023-24.pdf>

## **SENDING MATERIALS**

1. Do not use tape on materials. Previously approved self-adhesive removable receipt paper and Scotch Removable Tape is permissible. Print the transit slip and place it in the transiting item. Place transit slips for audio-visual materials between the clear plastic cover and case insert, if possible, otherwise insert the transit slip in the case with the destination clearly visible.
2. Transit slips must not contain personally identifiable patron information.
3. Make sure that spine labels and barcodes are secure.
4. Make sure that locking AV cases are unlocked.

5. Only one library barcode should be visible. Remove or mark out invalid library barcodes. (ISBN barcode must still be readable.)
6. Check the item's condition before sending it to the borrowing library.
  - Do not send items that are fragile, in poor condition or incomplete.
  - Only send AV cases that are in circulating condition.
  - Use the Missouri Evergreen Item Condition Report form to note any issues with the item's condition.
7. Package audio-visual (AV) materials to protect cases. Sending AV without proper packaging is not acceptable.
  - Bubble wrap or padded envelopes work well and can be reused.
  - Rubber bands are recommended for bundling items together or closing envelopes. Staples are not acceptable.
8. Do not send items in the courier that are soiled or wet. Contact the owning library if an item is returned in this condition and discuss next steps. If returning a soiled or wet item in the courier, enclose it securely in one or more Ziploc-type bags to prevent damage to other items.
9. To prevent damage to items during transit, do not overfill delivery bags.
10. Do not zip tie delivery bags.
11. Ensure that the correct courier label is on the bag. Note that some libraries have courier service to more than one branch. The courier label should match the transit slip.

## **RECEIVING MATERIALS**

1. Ensure the correct item has been sent to fill the request.
2. Use the Missouri Evergreen Item Condition Report form to note any issues with the item's condition. This prevents charges to the patron for existing damage. Conditions to note include but are not limited to:
  - Torn pages/jacket
  - Marked or stained pages/jacket
  - Brittle pages
  - Loose pages/spine
  - No library identification
  - More than one scannable barcode on item

## **MISSING-LOST-OVERDUE-TRANSIT MATERIALS**

1. If an item is returned by the patron with pieces missing, the borrowing library should keep the item and attempt to recover the missing pieces.
2. The borrowing library answers any questions patrons may have about borrowed materials. Patrons should not be instructed to contact the owning library.
3. The borrowing library's policies apply to daily overdue fines. The owning library's policies apply to bills for lost and damaged items.
4. The borrowing library collects fees for lost and damaged materials.
5. The owning library should contact the borrowing library, not the patron, with questions about materials.
6. It is the owning library's responsibility to invoice the borrowing library for items lost or damaged while in the borrowing library's possession or checked out by a patron. The owning library should send an invoice to MALA when materials are lost or damaged while in the courier's possession.
7. Invoices may be sent for Lost material if the item has been Lost for six (6) months but not more than eighteen (18) months from the date it went into Lost status. Items that are Lost and Paid for or Damaged may be invoiced immediately. Libraries may use the ME-Report template **Library Money > Lists > Circulated Lost Items Between Libs** OR **Library Money > Lists > List circulation Bills from Owning Branch to Circulating Branch** to find libraries to bill for Lost items.
8. Do not send payment for lost or damaged item through the courier.
9. Replacement copies will not be accepted in lieu of payment for items.
10. It is the responsibility of all member libraries to follow-through with transits and holds fulfillment. This includes but is not limited to taking action to keep the Transit List cleared and rectifying Unfillable Holds ("Hopeless Holds"), Long In-Transit Holds, and Canceled Transits.