

**PASCO COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM
POLICY MANUAL**

SECTION: PUBLIC SERVICES

POLICY TITLE: FINES AND FEES

EFFECTIVE DATE: FEBRUARY 2005

REVISED: NOVEMBER 2007; JUNE 2011; OCTOBER 2017

Acceptance Statement:

The Pasco County Library System considers use of any of the materials or equipment owned by the Library to constitute acceptance of the Fines and Fees Policy.

Philosophy:

The Pasco County Library System is a tax-supported public institution. Patrons are financially responsible for items checked out on their library card and the cards of their minor children.

As a tax-supported institution, it is the responsibility of the library staff to serve as good stewards of the materials entrusted to our care and to attempt to keep those materials available for use by all patrons. It is also our responsibility to ensure that basic services are not impacted by the budgetary requirements of special or enhanced services.

Registration is free to citizens of Pasco County, as are basic circulation, reference services and computer access. Additional fees may be instituted as necessary to offset the costs of services beyond the basics.

Overdue Fines:

Overdue fines are charged for materials that are kept beyond the circulation period. Fines are intended to encourage the prompt return of library materials and to offset expenses incurred by the library due to the delinquent return of materials.

Overdue fines are accrued on a daily basis for all days the library is open. Overdue fines are not charged for days the library is closed. Materials returned in the book drop overnight or on holidays will be considered to have been returned on the last day the library was open.

Overdue Fines Charge:

Overdue fines are \$.25 per day per item, except for Equipment which is \$1.00 per day and Tablet Computers/Launchpads which are \$5.00 per day. Overdue fines are not charged for the Adaptive Toy Collection.

Avoiding Overdue Fines:

Overdue fines may be avoided by returning materials on or before the due date, or by renewing eligible materials on or before the due date.

The library provides three ways to renew your materials:

- You may bring the materials to any library location. If they are eligible for renewal, the staff will be pleased to do so.
- You may call any of the libraries. If your materials are eligible for renewal, the staff will be pleased to do so.
- You may renew any eligible material yourself by going to our website and logging into your account, selecting the checkbox next to items, and clicking the Renew Selected button below your list of checkouts.

The library provides a courtesy notice by e-mail three (3) days before your material is due to help you keep track of due dates. Failure to receive such a notice does not excuse the fine.

Lost Fees:

Materials that have not been returned by sixty (60) days from the due date will be considered lost. A lost materials fee will be automatically accrued to the patron's record. The lost material fee is equal to the actual replacement cost of the item unless the item is an Inter Library Loan (ILL). The lending library determines the replacement cost of an ILL item.

The lost fees are removed from the patron's record upon return or recovery of the materials in question. Overdue fines that have been accrued are not removed and are charged from the date the material was due until the date it is returned or recovered. Patrons are responsible for paying the overdue fees for lost materials that are found and returned.

Claims-Returned:

Patrons who claim to have returned an item which still shows as checked-out on their record, or who claim never to have checked out material that shows on their record, may have a fee equal to the lost material fee assessed to their record until such time as the material in question is located. The fee will be removed when the material is returned.

Patrons who have accumulated as many as five (5) claims-returned transactions on their record may have further service denied.

Damaged Materials:

In cases where materials are returned with damage or with missing parts that make the material unusable, the actual replacement cost for the damaged item will be assessed to the patron's record.

Patrons who repeatedly return materials with damage or with missing parts may have further service denied. Patrons who deliberately mutilate library material or who steal parts of library material may have further service denied and may also be subject to legal prosecution.

Waiving of Fines and Fees:

As custodians of both the collection and the public's trust, the Library is committed to fair and consistent application of our policies. Holding all users equally accountable for the use of the Library and any fees or fines incurred is part of meeting that public obligation. We understand that due to a wide variety of circumstances, materials are sometimes returned late. We do not attempt to judge any individual's circumstances as more excusable than another.

The Internal Auditing Department of the Clerk of the County Court requires that fines and fees not be waived except in the most extraordinary circumstances.

Waivers or reductions of fines or fees may be made on a very limited basis at the discretion of the Branch Manager or their designee in the event of certain extenuating circumstances, which may include:

- Natural Disaster
- Manmade Disaster – Accident or Criminal Act
- Medical Emergency – Self or Family Member
- Family Emergency
- Financial Hardship
- Loss or Theft of Library Card
- Library Error

The waiving of fines and fees is an unusual circumstance. Patrons who have had large amounts of fines or fees waived or reduced, either as a single act or over a period of time, may be denied further service.

Refunds:

If an item that has been lost and paid is returned, a refund may be issued under specific circumstances. Patrons are requested to retain the receipt issued when they pay for lost items. The Clerk of the Circuit Court will not authorize refunds without a copy of the receipt.

Overdue fines cannot be refunded.

Non-Resident Fees:

The Pasco County Library System has reciprocal borrowing agreements with some counties that allow their patrons in good standing to register with the Pasco County Library free of charge. A resident of another county who does not qualify for a free patron card can pay an annual fee of \$25.00 to receive a Pasco County Library Cooperative patron card and use the services of the library system.

Printing Fee:

To offset the cost of supplies, black and white printing is \$.10 per page; color printing is \$.25 per page.

Violation of Policy:

Failure to pay fines and fees assessed in accordance with this policy may result in the denial of library service.