

BORROWING POLICY

Residents of Massachusetts communities with public libraries certified by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners are eligible for a free borrower's card from the Merrick Public Library. The Library Board of Trustees reserve the right to deny borrowing privileges to residents of decertified libraries. Public Library patrons will have one C/W MARS card which will be accepted at all public and some academic libraries in the network.

Borrower Privileges

Massachusetts State Law (M.G.L. c.78 §7) prohibits disclosure by a public library of a patron's identity or patron's borrowing history to anyone. The law does not differentiate among categories of library patrons and applies equally to records of minor patrons and those of adults.

To obtain a library card, children ages 12 and under are required to have a parent or guardian cosign for the library account. The parent or guardian is then able to monitor account information for their child's benefit; however, the child's card must be present during any transaction. When the child reaches the age of 13, library account access and information will then be restricted to the account holder and the library.

Library Cards

Getting a Card:

1. Identification Required: To be issued a new library card, the borrower must provide at least one piece of identification bearing the borrower's name and current address.
 - a. Acceptable Identification: A driver's license is the preferred identification, but a current checkbook, bank book, voter registration card, grocery check-cashing card, utility bill, military ID, postmarked mail they have received, or other similar means of documenting a bona fide mailing address may be acceptable.
2. Identification of Minors: Children or young adults without identification may use their parents' identification. Children 12 and under require a parent or guardian's signature.
3. Addresses: Where a street address and mailing address are different, both should be entered on the borrower's record, with the mailing address listed as the primary entry.
4. Teacher and Institution Registrations: Special library cards and borrowing arrangements are available to classroom teachers and institutions. These cards have the same borrowing privileges listed below, except multiple students may circulate materials under the institution's name to protect the privacy of the individual.

Loan Periods

Movies and periodicals are checked out to patrons and circulate for 7 days, with 1 renewal for 7 days. Music CDs, books, TV shows, and audiobooks are checked out to patrons and circulate for 21 days with 1 renewal for 21 days. It is recommended that library staff do not override the renewal limit. All museum passes will circulate for 7 days and will not be renewed. Patrons may only borrow one pass at a time. The telescope will

circulate for 14 days and will not be renewed. Museum passes, kits, and the telescope will be lent in-house and will not be used to satisfy hold requests within the region. If any special collections are added they will be

treated similar to kits. The maximum number of items a patron may have checked out on their record at one time is 50. The maximum number of holds a patron may have on their record at one time is 20.

Innovative software allows for four categories of item specific charge limits. C/W MARS has established the following item specific charge limits:

1. DVDs: limit 20 items.
2. Music CDs: limit 20 items.
3. Audiobooks: limit 20 items.
4. Museum Passes: limit 1 item.
5. Telescope: limit 1 item.
6. Kits: limit 1 item.

Library staff will mail a list of checked-out or lost items to the cardholder, if necessary.

Return of Library Materials

Materials may be returned inside the library at any circulation desk during open hours. The outside book drop has been provided for patron convenience in returning library materials. Please secure videos and audiobook cases together with rubber bands and wrap them in a plastic bag before placing them in the outside book drop. The library reserves the right to bill patrons for any materials if damaged after being left in the book drop.

Overdue Materials and Blocked Accounts

Patrons are blocked by the system when:

1. Their registration expires.
2. Patron owes \$10.00 or more in fines, replacement costs, fees.
3. Patron has been billed for lost items
4. Patron has 50 or more items checked out.

During this time a patron will receive an overdue notice listing the materials by mail or email. An item will be considered lost if it has not been returned within 28 days after the original due date; or, if the item has been renewed 28 days after the renewal due date. Any accrued charges will be noted on the patron's account. The patron will be blocked from borrowing until the item is returned, the replacement cost is paid, or the item is replaced. If an adult has been blocked on his/her account, they may not open a library card in anyone else's name.

Lost or Damaged Materials

As borrowers are responsible for all items checked out in their name, borrowers need to arrange for the replacement of any lost or damaged item (or for a comparable substitute if the material is out of print or otherwise unavailable, appropriateness to be determined by the Library Director). Once an item is paid for, a refund will not be given.

Definition of Terms

1. Circulating Library: The library where the patron is physically standing and being served.
2. Owning Library: The library that owns the material.
3. Lost Material: Material that has been checked out to the patron on the C/WMARS system, and is now 28 days or more overdue, and has been billed by the system. The bill is sent from the owning library.

Lost Book Payment Policy

1. Patron comes into any C/W MARS circulating library to resolve a lost book charge.
2. C/W MARS circulating public libraries accept payment for lost material in the form of a check or money order.
3. Patron makes the check or money order out to the owning library of the material.
4. Circulating library staff note the patron record number or patron barcode number on the check in the memo area. Staff verify patron address on the check and in Evergreen. Note: In the event the lost book is found at the owning library, the patron's check is sent back to the patron. It is important the address on the check and in the system is accurate.
5. Circulating library clears the lost book from the patron's record by making a payment on the replacement cost of the item. A printout of this transaction is made. Note: If a printout is not possible, then library staff include a note with the check listing the lost item information.
6. The printout is placed with the check and mailed to the owning library.
7. The owning library receives the check and paperwork. Staff check the shelves for the lost item.
8. If the item is not found in the library, then the library processes the patron's check or money order.
9. If the item is found in the library, then the library mails the patron their check or money order. Note: a standardized form will be sent with the check that states "we found the book..."
10. If the patron finds the item after the payment is made, the patron must contact the owning library to request a refund. C/W MARS is in the process of globally updating the prices in the item records at the library's request. At present, many records do not have prices and the default prices from the system are not accurate costs for replacement. Per Massachusetts State Law (M.G.L. c.266, §99, §99A, & §100), it is a criminal offense to deface or detain library property. A library may bring criminal charges against any borrower who does not return or pay the replacement cost of lost or damaged library materials.