Circulation Policy

Approved by:	Eastern Counties Regional Library Board
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Purpose

With this Policy, Eastern Counties Regional Library (ECRL) strives to provide the communities we serve with suitable access to our collection of library materials, and to effectively manage that collection, so that it can continue to be shared as a core library service.

Library Card Registration

An Eastern Counties Regional Library card account is required to borrow from the library's collections and access many Digital Library Services. A library card number is also required to manage your account, place requests, and renew items online or over the phone.

Any person who wishes to access ECRL services may register for an ECRL card at no charge. Identification is not required in order to register for a library card; however, we need at least one point of contact for a user (e.g. phone number, mailing address, email address). Anyone aged 14 or older is fully responsible for the use of their Adult library card.

Children 13 and under must have a parent's, guardian's, or caregiver's permission to register for a Child library card. By granting their permission, that adult is agreeing to take full responsibility for use of the Child card.

Use of Library Card

To checkout library items, users can present their library card or, in the absence of a library card, they can confirm their identity by providing their full name and any one of the following identifiers in their account:

- Phone Number
- Address
- Email address
- Year of birth

If you wish to receive library service over the phone (e.g. checking your account status, renewing items, etc.) you will be required to provide information that will allow library staff to confirm access to your account.

These measures are to ensure only authorized access of your library card and account, which is necessary because all cardholders are responsible for:

- Materials checked out on their card
- Promptly reporting changes in account information (e.g. address or phone number)
- Promptly reporting the loss or theft of a library card. You will receive a new library card free of charge.

Borrowing and Returns

There is no limit on the number of regular circulating items a user can borrow. Limits may apply to use of ECRL's digital library services, as set by the digital content providers.

The Library is not responsible for any damage caused to audio-visual equipment by library materials.

Materials can be borrowed from and returned to any ECRL location. ECRL may also have community-based return locations (e.g. drop boxes). Because these locations are not emptied daily, items may show as being checked out on library card after they have been returned. Once the material is brought to a library location, the items will be cleared from the user's account.

ECRL is part of the Same Page Consortium, which allows all library users in Nova Scotia (outside of Halifax Public Libraries) to have the same access to the full library collection shared by eight regional libraries. ECRL users can place holds on and borrow items from any Same Page library, the same way they would with items in ECRL's own collection.

ECRL also participates in the Libraries, Archives and Museums Nova Scotia (LAMNS) Borrow Anywhere / Return Anywhere (BARA) initiative, which means that ECRL items can be returned to any public library, community college or university library in Nova Scotia. ECRL also accepts returns of items from other libraries in the province. Users may experience a delay in their account information being updated if items are returned using the BARA system.

Account Status and Notifications

Users are responsible for monitoring their library card activity, including items checked out and due dates. Users will be provided with a PIN when they register for a library card. Using their library card number and PIN, users can access their account information online, through ECRL's website. Users who cannot access their account online can do so by contacting library staff by phone or email.

Users with a working email address listed in their account will receive email notifications to alert them of the following:

- Pre-notification of due dates
- Overdue notices
- Notification of holds available for pick-up

Users who do not have an email address listed in their account will receive telephone notifications when holds are available for pick-up, and notices by mail if they have overdue items.

Holds

Items not available at a particular branch, out on loan to another user, or not yet available (new items on order), can be placed on hold and sent to your preferred ECRL location to be checked out. Holds can be placed in person or over the phone at a library branch, or through your online account.

Users will be placed on a waiting list and those with an email address or telephone number listed in their accounts be notified when the item becomes available. Users will have 10 days to pick-up their available holds.

Users have the option to suspend (defer) their holds until a future date (e.g. if the users will be on vacation, or otherwise unavailable to pick up their requested items).

Loan Periods and Renewals, and Overdue Fines

For most library items, the loan period is 3 weeks. Loan periods for special collection items may vary; you will be notified of these at the time of check-out.

If there are no holds on a loaned item, the item will be automatically renewed to the user for three more weeks on the due date. A total of three automatic renewals will occur, if there are no holds on the item. After that, the item must be returned to the an ECRL location to ensure it

is not lost, and then can be checked out again. Items cannot be renewed or checked out again if another library user has placed a hold on the item.

Overdue, Lost or Damaged Items

There are no overdue fines for library items returned after the due date.

When a borrower reports an item as lost, the replacement cost will be charged to their account. Any item 28 days overdue will automatically be considered lost and the replacement cost will be added to the user's account as a bill. If a lost item is returned before the bill is paid, the replacement cost will be removed from the user's account.

A user's library account will be blocked and they will be unable to check out more items if they have:

- $30 or more in bills to be paid; or
- 20 or more overdue items still checked out.

If a user believes they have returned an item that is marked as overdue or lost, they should notify library staff in person, by phone, or by email. Library staff will trust the user and remove the item from their account.

If a library item is damaged to the extent that it cannot be put back into circulation, the user should return the item or notify library staff by phone or email. The damage will be forgiven, and replacement costs will not be charged.

Authorizing Access to Account

Users can authorize others to have access to their borrower account, and can add or delete authorizations at any time.

To access the cardholder's account, those who have been provided with authorized access will be asked to present acceptable ID or their own library card to match their name to that listed in the account.

Once the Authorized Access person presents acceptable ID or their own library card, they can do the following on a card owner's account:

- Access the borrowing information
- Renew items
- Place requests

- Pick up holds for the card owner
- Pay fines/fees and obtain receipts
- Report a card lost/stolen

Questions?

If you have any questions or concerns about this policy or its related procedures please contact admin@ecrl.ca.