



MassCat Interlibrary Loan Policy

INTRODUCTION

Interlibrary loan is essential to the vitality of libraries of all types and sizes as a means of expanding the range of materials an individual library can make available to its users. Lending between libraries is in the user's interest and should be encouraged. Interlibrary loan should be used as an adjunct to, not a substitute for, local collection development. All libraries have a responsibility to acquire materials, which will be used regularly by their users. When resources within MassCat and a library's region have been exhausted, requests to more distant libraries must conform to the provisions of the National Interlibrary Loan Code (Appendix A).

It is the responsibility of all libraries to insure the privacy and confidentiality of patron information during interlibrary loan transactions.

This policy is meant to complement, not to replace, any other existing resource sharing agreements.

DEFINITION

An interlibrary loan is a transaction in which library material, or a copy of the material, is made available by one library to another upon request.

SCOPE

All MassCat member libraries have agreed to lend circulating materials, regardless of format, to other MassCat members. There are no lending charges. The owning library determines whether a particular item can be provided.

All libraries need to develop a local interlibrary loan policy, which will include guidelines regarding which materials may be borrowed and loaned (see Appendix B for sample policies). Decisions to lend may be determined by the nature of the material, its physical condition, local demand for the item or any other applicable local restrictions.

Interlibrary loan is a privilege, not a right. Continued disregard of any provision of this policy is sufficient reason for suspension of borrowing privileges after prior warning. Lending libraries may suspend borrowing privileges to any library that violates the provisions of this policy.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF BORROWING LIBRARIES

Each library should provide the resources to meet the ordinary needs and interests of its primary clientele. Material requested from another library should be limited to those items that do not

conform to the library's collection development policy or for which there is no recurring demand. Libraries should make every effort to exhaust their own resources before resorting to interlibrary loan.

Geographical proximity of a potential lender should be a primary consideration when submitting an interlibrary loan request. Libraries should attempt to borrow materials from libraries within their own region before requesting from more distant libraries. It is suggested that libraries first request loans from other MassCat members within their region. Requests may also be submitted to a regional interlibrary loan center. This does not preclude libraries from requesting loans directly from other (non-MassCat) members of their own region, from fellow members of other independent consortia, or from more distant libraries.

Library staff should be familiar with, and use, relevant interlibrary loan documents and aids, including the MassCat Interlibrary Loan Policy, Massachusetts regional interlibrary loan policies and guidelines, the National Interlibrary Loan Code, and any other relevant consortial agreements.

The borrowing library is responsible for compliance with the copyright law (Title 17, U.S. Code) and its accompanying guidelines and should inform its users of the applicable portions of the law. An indication of compliance must be provided when necessary. Unless specifically forbidden by the lending library, copying by the borrowing library is permitted provided that it is in accordance with the copyright law and no damage to the original volume will result.

All borrowing libraries should inform users of the purpose of interlibrary loan and of the library's local interlibrary loan policy. The borrowing library should give its users realistic information regarding the availability of materials, the length of time needed to obtain them, and the variability of loan periods. As a general rule, libraries should not request such items as bestsellers, high demand feature films, rare, valuable or very old materials, reference and genealogy materials, textbooks, tests, proprietary materials, and bulky or fragile materials that are difficult or expensive to ship.

Requested material must be described as completely and accurately as possible following accepted bibliographic practice (see Appendix C). Accepted interlibrary loan formats should be used for all requests, regardless of the means of transmission. A "need by" date should be indicated if relevant.

The borrowing library accepts the responsibility of careful use and prompt return of all borrowed materials. The safety of borrowed materials is the responsibility of the borrowing library from the time the material leaves the lending library until it is received back by the lending library. The borrowing library is responsible for packaging the material so as to ensure its return in good condition.

If damage or loss occurs, the borrowing library must meet all costs of repair or replacement, in accordance with the preferences of the lending library.

The borrowing library must comply with the conditions of loan established by the lending library. The borrowing library must ensure a borrowed item is returned on or before the due date and must

promptly return any item that is recalled by the lending library. In-house use only, no copying, and other special provisions should be honored.

The duration of loan is specified by the lending library. The due date supplied by the lending library shall be the day by which the material must be sent back to the lending library.

Interlibrary loan requests are generally to be used for one circulation only. Routine renewal requests are discouraged but may be permitted at the discretion of the lending library. Renewal requests should be made before the due date.

Libraries should provide alternatives to their users when materials are not available for loan; for example, encouraging users to travel to other libraries for on-site access to material when extensive use of a collection is required or the nature of the material requires special handling.

Libraries must supply any relevant interlibrary loan statistics that may be requested by their regional office. (see Appendix D for sample statistics and/or form)

Each library is responsible for maintaining the provisions of this code in good faith.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF LENDING LIBRARIES

While the decision to loan specific materials is at the discretion of the lending library, all libraries are encouraged to interpret their lending policies as generously as possible.

The lending library should process requests every day the library is open and respond to borrowing libraries within 48 hours. Conditions of loan should be stated clearly; due dates should be obvious, and materials should be packaged and routed carefully. A copy of the request or equivalent information must accompany the item. When a loan is not possible and, if permitted by copyright law, the lending library should consider providing a copy rather than sending a negative reply. Or, if appropriate, invite the patron to use the material in house.

All materials loaned should be clearly marked with the name and the address of the owning library.

The lending library should notify the borrowing library when unable to fill a request and, as a courtesy, state the reason why.

The lending library may recall items at any time.

Libraries must supply any relevant interlibrary loan statistics that may be requested by their regional office. (see Appendix D for sample statistics and/or form)

Each library is responsible for maintaining the provisions of this code in good faith.