

## 2. CIRCULATION

One card is valid at all Cooperative libraries that are sharing one county-wide automation system to facilitate direct access to all materials. This system is constituted as the Pinellas Automated Library System (PALS) and is administered by the PPLC Executive Director with policy and fiscal decision-making authority vested in the Committee of the participating Library Directors or their designees. Each library has one vote, and simple majority vote of Library Directors participating rules. The Director's Committee will establish committees and interest groups to provide advice and expertise. Each library must maintain a contract with the LIS provider selected by the group, and is responsible for any charges beyond those shared fees that may be covered by PPLC.

The availability of a Cooperative delivery service makes it possible for patrons to return materials to any facility.

Library accounts will automatically expire after 3 years to facilitate checking the accuracy of patron information. Staff may manually expire an account before 3 years, in correlation with documentation provided by a cardholder or in compliance with the standard fee card policy. Patron accounts will be purged after 5 years of inactivity unless there are lost materials or fines on the account.

It is PPLC policy that all fines and fees on an expired account must be cleared in order to renew the cardholder's account and extend borrowing privileges for a new term. To avoid account blocks before the expiration date, no items must be in "lost" status, no collection fees must exist on the account, the number of overdue or claimed items must not exceed established limits, and any other fine or fee balances must remain below \$10.00.

Some libraries will give parents the choice to restrict their children's account privileges to prevent them from checking out DVDs. The patron account type "No DVD Juvenile" will block that cardholder from checking out DVDs at any cooperative library. This restriction may only be applied to accounts of young people 17 years old and younger. Not all libraries offer this option but all honor the restriction.

### 2a. Loan Periods

The following loan periods have been established by all Cooperative libraries:

General Book Collection/VHS Tapes	28 days
Best Seller/High Demand Books/Music CDs	14 days
DVD/Blu-rays	7 days
Book Club Bags	56 days

Loan periods for special collections are set at individual libraries in accordance with collection size and community needs. Reference materials and some special collections may not be loaned.

### 2b. Renewals

All \* items in the PALS system may be renewed up to three (3) times, unless they are requested by others. The due date of a renewed item is extended from the date the renewal is made and is extended by the item's standard loan period.

\*The only exceptions to this are DVD and Inter-library Loan (ILL) materials. DVDs may be renewed one (1) time.

## 2c. **Hold and Reserves**

The integrated PALS system allows cardholders access to material throughout the system. The holds queue is a prioritized list of active or pending requests for a specific title or item. By default, hold requests are arranged in chronological order according to the original entry date of the request; "holds" with earlier entry dates rank higher than "holds" entered more recently. Users can choose to suspend requests, which will temporarily remove their request from the master list. When a suspended hold request is re-activated, it reappears on the list according to its original entry date. Cooperative libraries utilize the system option of "Prefer My Location", which is designed to satisfy all requests for a title at the owning library and its associated branches before sending the material elsewhere. The result is that requests are not filled in exact order; patrons who pre-select the owning library of a title as their pick-up location will receive priority over patrons who select a non-owning library as their pick-up location. All patrons have the choice to receive automated hold notifications via e-mail, telephone or text. Mail notification is not an option at most libraries. Patrons can also access their accounts online to monitor the status of requests; items ready for pick-up will display as "held". Requested materials will be held for 5 days before the request status automatically changes to "unclaimed", at which time the request will be canceled and the material will be routed to its next delivery point.

All member libraries will strive to achieve a 4 holds to 1 copy ratio of reserves to material and a 8 holds to 1 copy ratio of reserves to electronic material.

Reserve/Hold limits for individuals are as follows:

- 15 Total: These 15 items may be a combination of item types.
- 8 DVDs
- 5 ILLs (Inter-library Loans from outside the PALS system)
- 2 Electronic games
- 2 Software items

## 2d. **Delinquent Materials**

Cooperative libraries make every attempt to notify patrons of overdue materials within a reasonable amount of time using the most cost-effective method and friendly manner. Failure to return materials to any library will affect circulation privileges at all member libraries, including possible suspension.

Overdue notices are most often delivered via email or telephone; some, but not all, libraries send notices through USPS. Reasonable efforts are made to notify cardholders about overdue materials. Failure to receive an overdue notice does not absolve a

cardholder of overdue fines or responsibility for returning materials. Depending upon an individual's notification preferences, an individual may receive 2 or more of the notifications below, generated at the following intervals:

- Reminder – 2 days prior to due date, email only
- 1<sup>st</sup> notice – 7 days
- 2<sup>nd</sup> notice – 14 days
- 3<sup>rd</sup> notice – 30 days
- Bill – 51 days

Some, but not all PPLC libraries send any unresolved items on to a collection agency at some point after this time. If there is a concern about this, please contact the reporting library as it is possible to be in collections at more than one library at the same time.

## 2e. **Fines and Fees**

The following fines and fees are presently in use in all Cooperative libraries:

-Single library visitor card	local library option
-Computer use only cards	local library option
-Non-resident full access card	\$100.00
-Replacement of lost card	\$1.00
-Overdue DVD/Blu-rays or Electronic Games per item.	\$.50* per day/\$5.00 maximum
-Overdue materials – other per item.	\$0.20** per day/\$5.00 maximum

\*\$1.00 per day for these items in Seminole

\*\*\$0.15 per day for these items in Gulfport

- Non-resident card fees and all fines are retained by the issuing or collecting library.
- Fines and fees for other materials and services, such as meeting rooms and photocopies, are set and collected by individual libraries.
- A cumulative past due fine or fee of \$10.00 or more owed at one or more Cooperative libraries will result in the suspension of circulation privileges at all Cooperative libraries.
- Libraries may not waive collection agency fees assessed by another library.
- Overdue fines are assessed to a patron's account when an overdue item is returned or renewed. Overdue fines are calculated from the first day after an item's due date, so one (1) free day is included in the assessed fine.

## 2f. **Damaged or Lost Materials**

Fees for lost or damaged material are assessed by the owning library, as are collection agency fees. Any library receiving damaged material or payment for lost material, processing fees and/or collection agency fees will forward that materials/payment to the owning library. Separate checks should be made payable to each owning library.

- For lost or damaged items, the replacement cost plus a \$5.00 processing fee is assessed.

- In lieu of the replacement cost, some libraries may accept an exact replacement copy new or like-new condition. The patron must get prior approval from the owning library and the item must meet the specifications agreed upon, such as a matching ISBN. The \$5.00 processing fee still applies.
- Receiving libraries will be responsible for notifying patrons of parts that are missing items and will make every reasonable effort to ensure items are whole before checking them in.
- Damaged material or material with lost parts will NOT be checked in but will be returned to the owning library for the determination of the fees. The owning library will be responsible for notifying patrons of any charges imposed.
- Communication with the owning library is crucial throughout this process.

**2g. Damage caused by pest infestation or exposure**

When addressing damage to library materials caused by pest infestation or exposure, member libraries will follow the *Collection Materials Policy and Procedures for Potentially Pest-Infested Materials*. When materials undergo localized treatment for pest exposure, residual damage may require additional attention. The owning library may assess damage fees to clean materials and also reserves the right to assess full replacement cost if the damage cannot be adequately remedied to maintain the item in the collection.

**2h. Claimed Returned/Claimed Never Had**

The “claimed returned” or “claimed never had” options should be applied when, in good faith, neither the patron nor the library can locate a disputed item for which the patron makes the described claim. The PALS system will allow up to 9 such claims before suspending the patron’s circulation privileges for the remainder of the 5 year activation period of the card.

If the individual wants to continue to use any PPLC library circulation services, a senior staff member, manager, or director will need to address the situation with the individual and assist in resolving the matter. “Claimed returned” and “claimed never had” item records and the associate link to patron record will be purged from the system after 5 years.

**NOTE:**

*Voted and approved by Library Directors Advisory Council – September 8, 2014*

*Approved by the Pinellas Public Library Cooperative Board – September 24, 2014*