

## **Circulation Policy**

### **A. Registration**

The Austin Memorial Library is supported primarily by taxes paid by the residents of Cleveland. Therefore, library borrowing privileges are available at no additional charge to residents of Cleveland. Others may apply for borrowing privileges by paying the current fee established by the City of Cleveland. City employees, children under the age of 18, those with proof of disability, or that are age 65 or older, may obtain a library card at no charge.

The library has a responsibility to protect the taxpayers' investment in the collection of the library; therefore proper identification is required to obtain a library card. Identification can be established through a current photo identification issued by a governmental agency. If no valid picture identification is available, the library will be unable to issue a card. A parent or guardian must assume responsibility for materials borrowed by a person under eighteen years of age; therefore, it is the adult's identification that is required for registration of a minor.

In the case of a patron who is physically unable to sign his/her name the staff person will note that the application is acceptable without the signature.

Materials cannot be checked out until a library card is issued. All library cards expire after one year. In order to renew a library card, patrons must produce identification and must clear all outstanding fines and bills. However new cards will not be issued.

### **B. Library Cards**

There is no charge for the first card for any library user. Patrons must have their library card or state issued identification present to use library services.

If a patron loses his/her library card, he should notify the library as soon as possible and request a replacement and pay the replacement fee established by the City of Cleveland.

All patrons, adult and juvenile, are expected to bring their library cards with them if they intend to check out items. An individual who repeatedly ignores this expectation may be denied the privilege of checking out materials until they present their card at the library.

### **C. Patron Responsibilities**

1. Because the Austin Memorial Library verifies the identity of all library card applicants, the individual named on the account is responsible for all fines and fees assessed to that account.
2. A library patron is responsible for all materials checked out on his or her card or on the cards of children for whom he/she has signed library card applications regardless of who checked the items out.
3. All lost or stolen library cards should be reported immediately because the owner of the card is responsible for all items checked out on the card until the card is reported lost or stolen.
4. When a patron moves, it is the responsibility of the patron to inform the Austin Memorial Library of the new address.

### **D. City of Cleveland Employee Borrowing Privileges**

1. City of Cleveland employees are granted free borrowing privileges.
2. Employees must wait their turn on reserve lists and may not change their priority to be higher on the list for materials.
3. Employee's who leave the employ of the city will have their status changed from a free-exempt to the appropriate code according to address on file.

### **E. Loan periods**

1. 2 weeks for books.
2. Reference books do not circulate.
3. Interlibrary loans are due the date indicated by the lending library.
4. Books may be renewed twice if there is not a waiting list for the title.
5. Additional renewals beyond the original two can be granted at the discretion of the Director. So that other patrons may have a chance to find the item by browsing, materials will not be renewed consecutively more than four times. Items must be returned to the shelf for 24 hours before being checked out again to the same patron.
6. Library staff will not discharge a book then immediately check the book out again to the same patron the same day when the renewal maximum has been reached. Materials must return to the shelf for a minimum of 24 hours before being checked out again to the same patron.
7. Overdue materials cannot be renewed until the assessed fees have been paid.
8. Patrons with amounts owed cannot checkout materials if owed over \$5.00 or had a fine on their account for 30 days.
9. Current issues of periodicals do not circulate.

10. Non-current periodicals may be checked out for two weeks and may be renewed.
11. Two weeks for cassettes, cd's audio books, and compact discs.
12. Two-weeks for videocassettes or DVD's.
13. Audio Visual materials are renewable.

There is no limit on the number of items a patron can borrow at one time, with one exception -- three items on a subject or five by the same author.

## **F. Reserves**

Patrons either in person, online or over the phone may place reserves. Patrons will be notified by postcard, e-mail or by telephone when the materials are available. There is no charge to the patron for placing a reserve or for interlibrary loan services.

## **G. Fines and charges**

There are fines for overdue materials. A first notice is sent after the material is due. If the material is not returned within a designated period, a bill will be sent for the material with the cost of replacement of the material and a service charge for processing, cataloging and postage. Patrons who have been sent an overdue notice shall be denied borrowing privileges until those overdue materials are returned or paid for if lost and/or damaged. If items remain overdue and no prior payment arrangements have been made the materials will be turned over to a collection agency in 21 days.

## **H. Damaged materials**

If materials are judged by the library to be damaged and being unsuitable for the collection, the patron must pay the replacement cost. A notice of these charges will be sent to the borrower with the cost of replacement. If the fee exceeds the amount determined for collections the fee will be sent over to the collection agency.

## **I. Claims Returned Policy**

The Austin Memorial Library extends the privilege to patrons of claiming that they have returned materials that the circulation system indicates are still checked out to them. This policy acknowledges that staff occasionally errs in discharging books from a patron's record.

Definitions:

Claims returned means that a patron has indicated that they have returned an item that the computerized circulation system indicates is still on their account.

Regulations:

1. If a patron indicates, by phone or in person, that they have returned items the computerized circulation system indicates are still check out to them, the staff will search the shelves for the items.
2. A staff person will immediately initiate a shelf search. If the staff person finds the items in questions, the items will be discharged from the patron's record in such a way that no fines will be incurred. Unless the item has already been sent to the collection agency.
3. If the staff person does not find the items in question on the shelf, he/she will mark the items claims returned on the patron's record.
4. Patrons will be notified either in person or by phone of the status of their accounts after the search.
5. Patrons may search the shelves for the items in question. If they are found, the items will be discharged from the patron's record in a way that no fines will be incurred, unless the item has already been sent to the collection agency.
6. Items marked claims returned remain on the patron's record for 30 days. If they are found, the items will be discharged from the patron's record.
7. Items marked claims returned remain on their account for 30 days, at the end of 30 days the materials are then assumed lost and fees will be assessed which the patron is responsible for.

## **J. Overdue Notices**

The Austin Memorial Library sends overdue notices to patrons as a courtesy to remind them of materials kept past the due date.

Definitions:

An overdue item is an item that has not been returned to the library by the due date.

An overdue notice is mailed notice listing library materials that have been retained past the due date.

Regulations:

1. *The first overdue notice will be mailed to patrons when materials checked out on the patron's card have been kept 3 days past the due date.*
2. *The second overdue notice will be mailed to patrons when materials checked out on the patron's card have been kept out 10 days past the due date.*

3. *A bill for unreturned items will be mailed to patrons when materials checked out on the patron's card have been kept for 17 days past the due date.*
4. *A notice for collections will be sent out when materials checked out on the patron's card have been kept out 30 days past the due date.*

## **K. Confidentiality**

All Austin Memorial Library records and other records identifying the names of library users and their transactions with the library remain confidential. These records include, but are not limited to, the following: personal names, addresses, phone numbers, email addresses; items in circulation, reserved and/or previously consulted; library accounts denoting outstanding fines, fees, and items lost; computer-use records, database-searching records, interlibrary-loan requests, and reference requests. Library staff and volunteers must protect each user's right to privacy regarding materials used and information sought.

Records of the Austin Memorial Libraries are confidential and are exempt from required disclosure under the Texas Open Records Act (VCTA Government Code Se. 552.124). To release such information in any manner not in accordance with the Open Records Act is a misdemeanor and is punishable by either or both a fine up to \$1,000 and confinement in the County Jail for up to six (6) months. (VCTA Government Code Section 552.352 (b)).

*The Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act ( USA Patriot Act)* became law on October 26, 2001. Under provisions of the act, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and law-enforcement officials may seek court orders for access to library records for investigations relevant to national security or terrorism. Libraries or library staff served with search warrants may not disclose, under penalty of law, the existence of such warrants or the fact that records were disclosed as a result of the warrants. Patrons cannot be told that their records were given to law-enforcement agencies or that said patrons were the subjects of FBI investigations.

Library records may be disclosed if the library determines that disclosure is reasonably necessary for the operation of the library and the records are not confidential under any state or federal law; if the records are released to the person or their authorized agent (as indicated by a signature on a person's library-card application or by the name of a guardian designated on the cardholder's library record); if the Texas Attorney General has determined that the information should be released;

or if the records are released to a law-enforcement agency or prosecutor under a court order, warrant, or subpoena according to library procedures.