

## **Montana State Library Commission Policy**

### **Montana Talking Book Library - Loan Policy**

The following policies govern the circulation of books, magazines and equipment to eligible blind and physically handicapped patrons who are registered with the Montana Talking Book Library. Eligible patrons who borrow materials from the library through the USPS free matter mail service accept responsibility for using materials with reasonable care, returning them to the Montana Talking Book Library according to established loan policies, and not losing or damaging them through negligence. Violation of this policy can result in suspension of some or all library services.

#### **POLICY**

##### **ACTIVE STATUS:**

To remain active, patrons must borrow at least one book per year in any format OR subscribe to one or more magazines provided through the library.

##### **CHANGE OF STATUS:**

Each patron, or representative of an institution, must notify the library of changes of address, a desire to cancel the service, and temporary or permanent transfer of service to another state within 30 days.

##### **MATERIALS AVAILABLE:**

Recorded books and magazines in all available formats and specialized playback equipment will be loaned by the library to eligible registered patrons and institutions serving eligible patrons without charge. The library will keep records of all loans.

##### **EQUIPMENT LOANS:**

Equipment necessary to listen to the recorded materials may be borrowed on extended loan for as long as the patron is using it to listen to materials provided by the library. Institutions may borrow equipment, on extended loan, for the purposes of demonstrating materials provided by the library.

If playback equipment ceases to function properly or needs repair, it must be returned to the library. A replacement will be provided, upon request. Under NO circumstances is the patron to attempt repairing the playback equipment, or replacing the battery. MTBL is not responsible for repair or replacement of non-library provided equipment used to play MTBL materials.

##### **MAXIMUM BOOKS LOANED:**

The maximum number of books loaned to, or downloaded by, a patron is established on an individual basis. Patrons or institutions receiving books through the mail from MTBL will establish a maximum number of books with their Readers' Advisor. Once the maximum number of mailed books is reached, no additional books will be automatically sent until books are returned to MTBL. In special circumstances, a patron may request an increase in the maximum number of books they receive. Books are sent on a weekly, biweekly, monthly, replacement after return, or "request only" basis. As long as BARD materials are used according to the Pledge agreed to by each patron, there is no limit on the amount of BARD materials a patron can download. MTBL monitors patron services to make sure each patron is receiving appropriate services and support.

##### **LOAN PERIOD:**

The loan period for books is 1 month for digital and 2 months for cassette.

##### **OVERDUE BOOKS:**

No fines for overdue books will be levied. However, patrons are urged to observe the loan period so mailed books can be made available for other patrons.

##### **PATRON RETURNS OF MATERIALS SENT THROUGH THE MAIL:**

The patron must ensure that books, magazines, and equipment being returned to the library by free matter are delivered into the hands of the United States Postal Service by being placed in a mailbox or

delivered to the Post Office. Placing them on the doorstep of the patron's home for the mail carrier to pick up does not constitute delivery into the hands of the Postal Service. If problems arise by use of this method, the patron is responsible for lost or damaged books.

**LOST OR DAMAGED MATERIALS:**

The patron is responsible for replacing lost or damaged books that are not returned according to procedures provided in patron handbook.

**NON ELIGIBLE READERS:**

Patrons may NOT lend library books, magazines, or equipment to other persons.

**SUSPENSION OF SERVICES:**

If any of the above policies are violated, the patron's service may be suspended for a period of time, after being given a written warning and an opportunity to reply. If, after reinstatement of service, a policy violation continues, service may be suspended.

In the event of suspension, the following steps will be taken:

**Suspension Procedure:**

1. Library staff will first discuss the violation(s) with the patron by telephone or in person.
2. A warning letter will be sent to the patron that summarizes the discussion and the violation(s). The patron will be provided an opportunity to reply.
3. If policy violation(s) continue, a second warning letter will be sent to the patron, citing the earlier warning letter and listing examples of subsequent violations. The patron will have an opportunity to reply by a certain date (no less than 30 days from the date of the letter). The Library will then suspend service for a stated period of time (usually up to six months). A specific date to reinstate service will be included in this letter.
4. When service is reinstated, a letter will be sent notifying the patron of reinstatement of service and remind the patron that further documented violations will result in another suspension of service. In case of repeated verbal abuse of library staff by a patron, service to that patron may be suspended by the library supervisor, according to the above suspension procedure.

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Adopted 02/10/99; Revised 08/18/04

Reviewed: 06/06/2012 by MSL Commission