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# LINC CIRCULATION POLICIES

## GENERAL CIRCULATION

### STATEWIDE AND SYSTEM POLICIES

The LINC libraries agree to adhere to the following policies in manners related to LINC circulation at the local library and system level:

- Illinois State Library ILLINET Code
- Illinois Statute - Library Records Confidentiality Act (Chapter 81, Paragraphs 1201-1202)
- Lincoln Trail Libraries System Interlibrary Loan Policy
- Lincoln Trail Libraries System Library Records Confidentiality Policy
- Lincoln Trail Libraries System Resource Access Policy

These policies determine how materials are loaned, how patron records are validated and assigned, how patron circulation records are handled, whether or not fees can be charged for transactions between libraries and other matters of state and regional policy. LINC Circulation Policies shall not conflict with these statewide and regional policies.

### ITEM/BORROWER PARAMETERS

#### Background

Different libraries have different circulation rules and these different circulation rule sets must interact within the LINC system. The System's existing policies require each library to treat borrowers from other libraries the same as they treat local borrowers for the purpose of interlibrary loan and reciprocal borrowing. The LINC system will be implemented in a way that permits each library to follow the existing policies regarding reciprocal borrowing, interlibrary loan, and resource sharing.

#### Policy Text

LTLS will maintain parameters based on information on local circulation rules provided by the member libraries in such a way as to follow existing policies and to honor the local circulation rules of the individual libraries as much as possible within the parameters allowed by the Shared Itype policy.

### NEW FUNCTIONALITY IN LINC

#### Background

LINC libraries share an integrated library system (ILS). The vendor for this system upgrades and enhances functionality to the circulation software. Functionality such as self-renewal by borrowers and e-mail notices are examples that have been added recently. LTLS extensively tests the new functionality and make certain the functionality works appropriately in a consortia environment before releasing it to libraries.

#### Policy Text

New functionality added to the LINC circulation module, once it has been thoroughly tested by LTLS staff and volunteer libraries, will be implemented for all libraries. A library director can request that this functionality be turned off if this request does not violate LINC and LTLS resource-sharing policies.

## FINES/FEES

### AMOUNT A BORROWER OWES

#### Background:

LINC allows libraries to set a block on a borrower record at a dollar amount in fines that a borrower owes. This amount is a parameter set in the borrower type.

Illinois law (720 ILCS 5/16B2-5) defines library theft as the willful failure to return library materials with an aggregate value in excess of \$50.00. Such library theft is considered a “petty offense” under Illinois law; and if convicted, the offender may be fined an amount up to \$500 and be ordered to reimburse the library for the actual replacement cost of the materials not returned.

#### Policy Text:

LINC libraries agree that the maximum amount set in this parameter will be no higher than \$50.00. Libraries may set lower threshold block amounts at their prerogative.

### BILLING OF LOST ITEMS OWNED BY A DIFFERENT LIBRARY

#### Background:

The LINC library software generates bills for lost materials in the account which owns the borrower. In LINC this means that libraries are frequently billing for items that belong to another library. This is a result of the frequent resource sharing among LINC libraries and reciprocal borrowing by public library patrons.

LINC libraries collect for materials lost from their own and other libraries' collections .

#### Policy Text:

In order to provide better service to the public, libraries participating in LINC agree to follow these procedures when billing for items circulated by their borrowers, but belonging to another LINC library:

- The bill will be issued in the borrower's library account
- Any library will collect payment for the bill and credit this payment to the borrower's record in LINC. The library collecting payment must be careful to note the agency that owns of an item in order to separate their own items from those belonging to another library.
- Libraries collecting payment must collect for the lost item, the processing fee, and any other charges applied by the library that owns the item and remit this entire amount to the owning library. These charges could include additional assessments made by a debt collection service used by the library that owns the item.
- Processing fees can only be waived by the library that owns the item.
- The library collecting payment for an item belonging to another library will complete a web-based Lost Book Payment Form (<http://www.ltls.org/lincpac/LostItemPayment.pdf>) giving the date, name of the borrower, title of the item, barcode number, and amount. One copy of the form will be given to the borrower and one copy will be sent to the owning library with the payment for the item.
- If a borrower returns a lost book after paying for it, refer the borrower to the library that owned the item for resolution of any refund request.

## OVERRIDING BORROWER BLOCKS BY RECIPROCAL LENDING LIBRARIES

### Background

Some borrower block parameters are set by borrower type. These are established by the home library of the borrower and a borrower carries these blocks with them from library to library.

### Policy Text

Libraries participating in reciprocal lending agree that certain blocks in the borrower record will not be overridden by a reciprocal lending library. In Horizon, this type of block is indicated by a secondary window that appears at CKO, indicating the borrower has exceeded certain limits which must be overridden to proceed with checkout. Other blocks that should not be overridden include any block that would normally present checkout to the patron (ex: an 'address correction' or 'message to borrower' block in the borrower's BURB). The reciprocal lending library will deny the borrower the privilege of borrowing items until the blocks are cleared with the home library.

In the case of fines, borrowers will be allowed to clear their record by paying the fines at the reciprocal lending library.

## BORROWER TYPE CHARGE RATE

### Background

By setting all borrower loan type charge rates at 1, the fine rate of the owning library as indicated in the item loan type is upheld, no matter whether the borrower borrows an item at his home library, as a reciprocal borrowing borrower at another library, or receives an item to fill a hold from another library. Exceptions are made for interlibrary loan borrowers and homebound borrowers for the reasons given below:

1. Interlibrary loan borrower types are assigned to borrower records for libraries. According to the ILLINET Interlibrary Loan Code , Section V - FEES, "Libraries may not charge overdue fines to other libraries." Setting the charge rate at zero for interlibrary loan borrower types will exempt libraries from paying fines.
2. The Homebound module automates the circulation of items to borrowers who are unable to come to library facilities. These borrowers are usually served by a regular visitation schedule where staff or volunteers deliver and pick up library items. The loan periods for items do not necessarily match each visitation interval. Setting the charge rate at zero for homebound borrowers will exempt individuals who rely on library visitation schedules for the timely return of materials.

### Policy

The borrower type charge rate is the factor by which the charge rate in the item type is multiplied. In order to uphold various lending protocols within libraries, the borrower type charge rate will be set as follows:

1. All interlibrary loan borrower types (i.e., borrower type codes ending in SIL, IIL, or OIL) will be set with a charge rate of zero.
2. All homebound borrower types used in conjunction with the Homebound module (i.e. borrower types ending with HD, HI or HM and with a non-zero value in the borrower loan type Homebound field) will be set with a charge rate of 0 (zero).
3. All other borrower types will be set with a charge rate of 1 (one).

## PAYMENT OF FINES OWED BY BORROWERS

### Background

It is more cost effective for libraries to keep fines paid by borrowers than to reimburse each other and pay the bookkeeping and check writing costs. This only applies to fines.

## Policy

LTLS automated libraries agree to accept (and keep) payment of fines owed by borrowers to other automated libraries. This applies only to fines owed for materials already returned.

## BORROWER RECORD

### BORROWER PIN NUMBER

#### Background:

In LINC's web catalog, borrowers use their barcode and a pin number for placing requests and viewing their borrower information.

#### Policy Text:

In LINC, when borrower records are created, the borrower PIN number field will be completed by staff in the following way:

- borrower PIN number will be the last four digits of the home phone number if the borrower has a phone number
- borrower PIN number will be the last four digits of the borrower's barcode (if home phone number is not available).

Borrowers are able to change their own password through the My Account function on the web catalog once their initial access has been set up.

## GEOGRAPHIC BORROWER STATISTICAL INDICATOR

### Background

There will be two systemwide borrower statistical indicators (age and sex; geographical) maintained for all libraries to use. Libraries can also create additional borrower statistical categories as needed to retain local data.

### Policy Text

The following schemes will be followed for the two systemwide indicators:

- Age/sex indicator will make use of M (male) or F (female) with year of birth.
- Geographic indicator will make use of federal census tract numbers available at federal census web site (<http://factfinder.census.gov>) Federal census tract borrower stat numbers will be updated following every official census.

## BORROWER BARCODE

### Background

The borrower record has a field for the borrower barcode. Because LINC is used for interlibrary borrowing in addition to online circulation the LINC libraries will be required to enter a borrower barcode in the borrower record.

#### Policy Text

The LINC libraries will be required to enter an active borrower barcode in the borrower record.

## BORROWER EXPIRATION DATES

#### Background

Expiration dates of borrower cards are entered into LINC via the settings in each library's borrower types. If the expiration date field is left blank in a borrower type, borrower registrations will not expire on the system.

#### Policy Text

In order to keep borrower registrations current, expiration dates will be automatically entered by the LINC software. Since borrower registrations are shared in many cases, keeping the database updated is for everyone's benefit. Therefore, it will be mandatory for libraries to fill in the expiration field for their borrower types.

## EDITING BORROWER RECORD

#### Background

The borrower file on LINC is a shared file on the database. All staff with access to update borrower records have the ability to edit all borrower records on the system. On the other hand, each library has responsibility for the accuracy of its own records, and libraries' policies differ on the information that should be required for borrower records.

#### Policy Text

Libraries participating in LINC agree that each library will edit information only in their own borrower records. If a library becomes aware that information is incorrect in the borrower record of another library, the library will notify the library listed as the home agency of the borrower record. Only three exceptions will apply to this agreement:

1. When a borrower moves from an area served by one public library to an area served by another public library, ownership of the borrower record will be assumed by the public library to which the borrower has moved. The home agency will be changed, as well as other information in the record.

2. Inter-system reciprocal borrowing borrower records that have a borrower type of RB, should be changed and edited by all public libraries serving these borrowers. The home agency should become the public library that serves the RB borrower.

3. Maintaining public records for Lincoln Trail member libraries that purchase a LINC access fee and are not automated is the responsibility of Lincoln Trail Libraries System.

Since libraries will not be editing each other's borrower records, libraries:

1. Will not Renew an expired card from another library.
2. Will not perform an address check on a borrower record from another library.
3. Will not add information to a borrower record from another library or change information in a borrower record from another library. The only exceptions to this policy are updating existing telephone numbers and existing email addresses.

If libraries enter a borrower record from another library and, for example, LINC forces the operator into a borrower record for an address check, staff will quit the record without filing. This will prevent any changes from being stored in the record, including the automatic changes of verifying an address during an address check, or renewing a borrower record while in an expired record.

## BORROWER RECORD MAINTENANCE

### Background

None

### Policy

In order to maintain clean borrower files, which optimizes response time on LINC, Lincoln Trail staff will routinely run utility programs that will affect the borrower data in the following manner:

1. Resolved borrower blocks that have resided in the PURF History file for over twelve months will be purged semi-annually (one of these times will be in the summer).
2. Annually borrower records that have not been used or modified in the last four years, have no holds, have no items checked out, and owe less than \$5.00, will be deleted. Libraries will be provided with a report of borrower records that have not been used or modified in the last four years, but either have holds attached, items checked out, or owe more than \$5.00.

## SAVING BORROWER BLOCKS IN HISTORY

### Background

LINC software gives each agency the choice of whether to save resolved borrower blocks in the History file. Each library has exercised that choice on LINC. However, when libraries do not save resolved blocks, records of payments are lost. These records are very important to interlibrary communications with the amount of interlibrary loan activity and reciprocal borrowing that occurs on LINC.

### Policy

LINC libraries have agreed to set all agency records to save all resolved blocks to the history file. LINC system maintenance will be run annually to delete resolved blocks older than 3 years.

## HOLDS/REQUESTS

### CHARGING FOR HOLDS

#### Background:

The ILLINET Interlibrary Loan Code states that libraries may not charge service fees or delivery fees for loans of 'returnables' to other ILLINET libraries.

#### Policy Text:

Since holds on LINC are used to support the interlibrary loan of items among participating libraries, holds will not be charged for on LINC.

## ITEM INFORMATION

### CLAIMED RETURN

#### Background

The LINC software offers two options to libraries regarding the claimed return function. Accounts can be set to convert a claimed return item to lost after a specified period of time, or the account can be set to leave the item at a claimed return status indefinitely.

Libraries on LINC have chosen both methods of dealing with claimed returned items. Libraries using the second method clear claimed return items from the system.

#### Policy Text:

When items are loaned between libraries, the rule set governing the circulating library is followed when an item is set claimed returned. Since setting a claimed return status, and possible billing for that item, will work best if the rule set of the owning library is followed, libraries participating in LINC agree that each member should only set a claimed return status on their own items.

If a borrower claims to have returned an item belonging to another library, the circulating library should contact the owning library. If the owning library agrees, the owning library will set the claimed return status on LINC.

LINC libraries share circulation (itype) codes and choose from an appropriate range of settings defined in the 'Shared Itype Policy 'to implement local circulation rules at their library.

## STATUS CODES

### Background

Status codes are used in the Horizon software to indicate the current availability of an item. Status codes should be used to indicated a temporary location that affects availability, such as mending or binding or a temporary or permanent condition such as missing or lost.

### Policy

LINC libraries agree to assign items to updated statuses as often as possible to provide accurate information.

## NOTICES

### TYPES OF NOTICES

#### Background

On LINC different types of notices can be set to print or not print at the systemwide level only.

#### Policy Text

In LINC the following notices will be set to print for all libraries:

- Overdue notices
- Billing notices that include miscellaneous fees
- Final notices
- Hold notices (expired, notification)
- Request notices (expired, deleted)

## NOTICE PRINTING POLICY

### Background

LINC libraries have the ability to print/email notices for their own location through the reports component of the automation software. Horizon's auto notices are processed daily through an evening procedure run by LTLS staff and then are ready for printing/emailing the next day. Library customers rely on auto notices to receive information about overdue items, lost items, bills, and hold requests that have arrived at the library. In the interest of providing the best customer service, it is necessary that notices be printed/emailed and distributed to borrowers in a timely fashion.

### Policy Text

LINC libraries are required to print/email notices on the days they are open. This policy only includes those notices called 'Auto Notices' (overdues, final notices, bills, hold request). Other types of occasional notices such as reminder notices can be printed at the discretion and needs of the local library.

### ~~BIBLIOGRAPHIC SEARCH SCREENS IN THE CIRCULATION MODULE~~

--Committee recommends entire policy be rescinded

### ~~PATRON STATISTICAL INDICATORS~~

--Rescind, see GEOGRAPHIC BORROWER STATISTICAL INDICATORS