
FAST **FACTS**

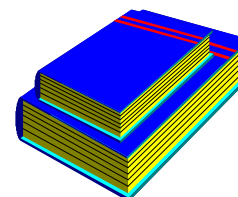
Recent Statistics from The Library Research Service

ED3/110.10/No. 122

November 13, 1996

Libraries Nationwide Report Circulation Policies

Do circulation policies vary widely throughout the country?
How do the policies of other metropolitan libraries in the U.S.
compare with those of Colorado?



To find out, in June 1996, we surveyed two dozen metropolitan public libraries nationwide, ten of which are Colorado public libraries. These libraries reported their circulation policies for different formats, and told us how they inform patrons of due dates.

Similar Trends Discovered for Different Formats

After compiling results of the surveys, we found a reassuring trend:

***Circulation policies for most format materials
(books, periodicals, audio cassettes, and audio CDs)
are fairly uniform among libraries surveyed.****

	Loan Periods	Grace Periods	Overdue Rates	Maximum Fines
Colorado Libraries	21 days	2 to 3 days	\$.05 to \$.10 per item	\$2.00 to \$5.00 per item
Other U.S. Libraries	21 days	None	\$.05 to \$.10 per item	Zero to \$10.00 per item

**Individual reports for each format are available from the Library Research Service.*

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A Partnership

Circulation Policies in Detail

■ **Loan Periods:**

Most Colorado and U.S. libraries surveyed reported loan periods of **21 days** for most types of materials (excluding videos and CD-ROMs). Half of the Colorado libraries that lend periodicals reported shorter lending periods of **7 to 14 days**

■ **Grace Periods:**

In Colorado, most grace periods for the familiar formats are **2 to 3 days**, while most metropolitan U.S. libraries extend **no grace period at all**.

■ **Overdue Rates:**

Most Colorado and U.S. libraries surveyed charge **\$.05 to \$.10** for items excluding videos and CD-ROMs.

We also found that three U.S. libraries routinely assess a split adult/child rate:

\$.10/\$.02 Buffalo & Erie County Public Library, PA
\$.25/\$.10 Multnomah County Public Library, OR, and
Tucson-Pima Library, AZ

■ **Maximum Fines:**

Of the Colorado libraries surveyed that circulate periodicals, the largest single group charges a maximum fine of **\$2.00**. Most Colorado libraries surveyed also collect maximum fines of **\$3.00 to \$5.00** for books, cassettes, and audio CDs. Other U.S. libraries surveyed charge amounts ranging from **zero to \$10.00** for formats excluding videos and CD-ROMs.

The same three libraries shown above also set maximum fines according to split adult/child rates for all formats circulated, except video and CD-ROM:

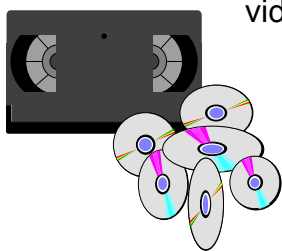
\$6.00/\$2.00 Buffalo & Erie County Public Library, PA
\$7.50/\$3.00 Tucson-Pima Library, AZ
\$10.00/\$5.00 Multnomah County Public Library, OR

In Colorado, an adult/child rate for maximum fines is charged by the Arapahoe Library District: **\$5.00/\$2.00** for books, audio cassettes, audio CDs, and videos.

Other U.S. libraries collect the **replacement cost of the item** for all formats circulated. (Public Library of Cincinnati & Hamilton County, OH, and Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, PA.)

Video and CD-ROM Circulation Policies Are Tighter

The surveys showed that the libraries impose generally tighter circulation policies for videos and CD-ROMs than for other format materials.



day).

Videos circulate for shorter periods and incur larger potential maximum fines.

CD-ROMs--where offered by libraries--circulate for up to **21 days**, but call for higher overdue rates (**up to \$1.00 per**

In Colorado, surveyed libraries allow grace periods of various lengths for CD-ROMs; but such grace periods are generally not granted at all in other U.S. libraries--a trend observed for all formats. In the Colorado and U.S. libraries surveyed, grace periods are not given for videos. Maximum fines for CD-ROMs vary among the Colorado and U.S. libraries, with the highest at **\$10.00 per item**. Maximum fines for videos are significantly higher than for CD-ROMs, up to **\$50.00 per item**.

Videos in Detail:

■ **Loan Periods:** Half of Colorado libraries and 61% of U.S. libraries report that videos circulate for **7 days**.

■ **Grace Periods:** The majority of Colorado and U.S. libraries offer **no grace period** for overdue videos.

Overdue Rates: Colorado libraries are in line with other metropolitan U.S. libraries, most charging **\$1.00 per item per day**.

Maximum Fines:

In Colorado, maximum fines for videos range from **\$3.00** (Weld Library District) to **\$25.00** (Jefferson County Public Library). Within that range, 30% of Colorado libraries charge a **\$5.00 fee**, and another 30%, **\$10.00 fee**. In other U.S. libraries maximum fines range from a low of **\$2.00** up to replacement cost of the item, with 31% of those surveyed assessing only **\$5.00**.

Adult/Child fines are structured as follows:

\$5.00/\$2.00 Arapahoe Library District, CO
\$10.00/\$5.00 Buffalo & Erie County Public Library, PA
\$7.50/\$3.00 Tucson/Pima Library, AZ

The highest maximum fine for videos reported outside Colorado is **\$50.00**, charged by the Oakland (CA) Public Library. Two U.S. libraries (Public Library of Cincinnati & Hamilton County

and Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh) charge patrons to replace missing items **at cost**, as is their policy with other materials.

CD-ROMs in Detail:

Half of the 24 libraries surveyed do not have CD-ROMs available for check out.

In Colorado, only three libraries (Aurora, Pikes Peak, Weld) that circulate CD-ROMs responded, along with eight libraries elsewhere in the U.S. Their responses are summarized below:

- **Loan Periods:** Most Colorado and U.S. libraries reported loan periods of **21 days** for CD-ROMs.
- **Grace Periods:** Colorado Libraries reported **2 to 6 days**, while most U.S. libraries reported **no grace period** is offered, following the overall pattern.
- **Overdue Rates:** Colorado libraries reported daily overdue rates for CD-ROMs of **\$.05, \$.50 and \$1.00 per item**. The \$1.00 rate is also preferred by most U.S. libraries offering CD-ROMs. Two U.S. libraries (Tucson/Pima Library and Multnomah County) charge a split adult/child rate of **\$.25/\$.10**, as is done for other formats.

Maximum Fines:

Two Colorado libraries charge **\$10.00**, while U.S. libraries report rates ranging from **\$5.00 to \$10.00**. Adult/child rates for Multnomah County are **\$10.00/\$5.00**, and for Tucson/Pima are **\$7.50/\$3.00**, the same amounts charged for most other formats.

How Do Libraries Inform Borrowers of Due Dates?

Of the libraries surveyed, 41% reported their methods for letting borrowers know when materials are due.

Most of these libraries give borrowers a **loose, disposable slip** stamped with the item's due date. One library (Boulder, CO) uses a bookmark for this purpose. Only one library (Jefferson County, CO) places the slip into a pocket affixed to the item.

Two libraries (Tucson-Pima and Weld) ***allow users to check materials out themselves*** by utilizing self-serve stations and stamping their own due dates.

Libraries also use these other methods: ***affixing white stickers stamped with the due date*** to the front or back of the item; or ***notifying users verbally*** of the date items may be renewed by telephone, as well as reminding them of the next due date during the telephone renewal.