

Bucks County Library System

Circulation Services

MATERIAL RECOVERY

Policy Statement

To assist in material recovery, some Bucks County District member libraries use collection agencies to collect outstanding overdue items on the library's behalf. Other libraries use the Magisterial District Court to enforce the PA Criminal Code.

Bucks County District member libraries that use materials recovery processes notify library users of this process at the time of library card application and signs posted at service desks or other visible areas of the library. A list of these libraries is provided in an appendix to this policy.

Regulations

Library users whose home library uses a materials recovery process will be subject to that process even if the library they borrow from does not use a materials recovery process.

Library user accounts are sent to the collection agency or Magisterial District Court when:

1. Material is overdue by 45 or more days
2. Cost of the overdue material plus any outstanding fines for the material totals \$24.99 or more

Users are notified by email 3 days before the due date, 7 days past the due date, 14 days past the due date and 21 days past the due date.

Bucks County District offers its users several ways to manage accounts so that materials do not become overdue:

1. Users can return materials to the library's return drop 24/7.
2. Users may renew library materials in the library unless the item is on hold for someone else.
3. Users can access the MY ACCOUNT feature at <http://www.buckslib.org> 24/7 to renew items unless the item is on hold for someone else.

Libraries using a Collection Agency

At 45 days overdue, the library user's account is sent to the collection agency, and an additional non-refundable fee (see Fines and Fees Schedule for current fee) is added to the user's account to pay for the services of the collection agency. The non-refundable fee is updated automatically following vendor increases and rounded up to the nearest dollar.

The collection agency contacts users with delinquent accounts until the account balances are at zero, or until arrangements are made for repayment of amounts owed and return of overdue materials.

The collection agency follows this schedule when corresponding with users once reported to collection:

- Day 1 -- Letter mailed
- Day 21-28 -- Phone call
- Day 42 -- Letter mailed
- Day 65-79 -- Phone call
- Day 90 -- Letter mailed
- Day 120 -- Letter mailed
- Day 151-154 -- Phone call

Users who have filed bankruptcy may provide documentation to the collection agency. Users with a discharged bankruptcy case will have late fines and fees waived. The borrowed items must still be returned, or replacement costs must be paid.

Libraries using the Magisterial District Court

At 60 days overdue a final shelf check is conducted and if not found a reminder letter is sent to the patron's address of record to return overdue material(s).

After 3-4 weeks of no response a second letter is sent informing patron that if item(s) are not returned in two weeks a certified letter will be sent and the additional charge posted to their account.

Final (third) letter is sent regular and certified mail informing patron that they have 30 days to clear account before the library will proceed with filing a criminal complaint with the District Justice.

After all the above measures are taken the patron is cited with court action per Pennsylvania Criminal Code P.L. No. 334, Section 6708A. This action, once taken, cannot be reversed.