



Library Fine/Fee Waivers

Purpose

Occasionally customers ask for fines/fees in their library accounts to be waived. Sometimes it is apparent to staff that fines/fees in a customer's record should be waived. This policy will serve to establish guidelines for staff assisting customers with overdue fine or fee issues, and promote equity and consistency in waiving customers' fines/fees.

Policy

In accordance with the following guidelines and using good judgment, staff may waive customers' fines/fees when appropriate.

Scope

This policy applies to all library fines and fees.

Procedures

The following guidelines are to be used when a fine waiver is requested.

Reasons to waive customer fines:

- Circulation system was down during the time in question.
- Customer had previously submitted a claims returned on an item that has now been located in the library. Any fine associated with that item should be waived.
- Customer returned item to another library system and it has been returned to us. Fines associated with this item should be waived.
- Due to workload, individual outlet may not complete day's check-ins. Outlet's calendar is marked accordingly and partial waiver can be granted if customer's fine was affected by heavy workload. LINK+ items, which are checked in immediately, are exempt from this provision.
- When a borrower returns items in damaged condition it is not always possible to process them immediately. If fines are accrued between the date of return and the date staff process the item, fines are to be waived.
- The Library has specific authority to hold a fine amnesty day annually or bi-annually based upon recommendation from the Library Commission.

Reasons to consider waiver of customer fines:

- Customer claims to have paid fines previously and has receipt with corresponding data.
- Complications with a customer who had been unaware of library policies with regard to fines. Customer is given a full explanation of fine structure and all or a portion of fines are waived as a good will gesture.
- Customer is paying for a number of fines or lost books. If the amount is large and the customer is unable to pay the entire amount, an agreement may be reached between a supervisor and the customer. This decision may involve the possibility of partial payment, payment at a later date or over an extended period of time. Customer pays amount agreed upon and the remainder of the fine is waived. This may include processing fees.
- Customer claims to have paid fines previously or that the items in question were returned on time. If this cannot be corroborated by a downtime calendar, receipt, or customer's online catalog system record, a staff member or supervisor must decide whether or not to accept the claim of the customer. There are situations where the customer's claim is convincing enough to support the decision to waive fines.
- Hardship situations occur, such as death in the family or hospitalization. Although borrower fines are not automatically waived due to hardship situations, there are occasions when the situation warrants a waiver. The staff member makes his or her decision on a case-by-case basis.

Financial Reporting:

At the end of each fiscal year, Library staff will provide the City's Finance Department with a summary of the total number of fines/fees waived, along with the total dollar amount of those fines/fees that were waived.

Adopted by the Pleasanton City Council, May 16, 2017.

Approved by the Library Advisory Commission, April 13, 2017.