Montana Shared Catalog Partners Resource Sharing Group

Membership Policies and Procedures

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INTRODUCTION

The MSC Partners Resource Sharing Group (Partners) is a consortium of libraries within the Montana Shared Catalog. Each Partner library opens its collections to the cardholders of all Partner libraries. Within the consortium, a Partner library cardholder in one community can reserve and check out items from a neighboring community or from a library several hundred miles away. Cardholders have access to many more materials, and to more diverse collections, than any one library could contain.

The Partner group's best practices are shaped by library staff across the system, and managed by bylaws, Membership Policies and Procedures, monthly meetings or teleconferencing, and an Executive Committee.

These elements are essential for every Partner member's success:

- Membership requires a commitment to sharing resources, and a "borderless" approach to item ownership, clientele and customer service.

- Each Partner library must have the capacity and resources to fulfill its obligations to the consortium and meet increased local demand for materials.

- Libraries must have access to viable transportation options for shipping Partner materials and understand their strategic place in the Partner network.

- The process of sharing materials with other libraries can illuminate differences in cataloging methods, technical services, and collection management. Partner Libraries must follow the standards and guidelines of the Montana Shared Catalog.

For Montana Shared Catalog guidelines on cataloging and circulation, go to:

http://msl.mt.gov/For_Librarians/Montana_Shared_Catalog/

For a list of current Partner member libraries, see Appendix I.

A NOTE ON REPORTS 🗎

Throughout this document a number of required reports are identified, and guidelines are given for their access and use. These reports help libraries maximize their membership in Partners and meet their obligations to each other.

Other reports, which a library may find useful for collection management and Partner-related tasks, are outlined in Part Six.

PART ONE: CIRCULATION RULES

Cardholders and Libraries

- An individual may register for a library card at any Partner Library. Each library sets its own eligibility requirements for cardholders.
- A Partner Library cardholder may use his or her card at any Partner Library.
- Cardholders may return Partner items to any Partner Library.

Checkout Limits

- An unlimited number of items may be checked out to cardholders with permanent and unrestricted accounts.
- A Partner Library has the discretion to limit the number of check outs for that library's new, temporary, or delinquent cardholder accounts.

Checkout Periods

- Check out periods for items are 28 days or 14 days.
- An item can be renewed twice if the item does not have holds.

Accounts and Fines

- Fines are 10 cents per day, per item.
- A Partner Library has the discretion to waive fines for their cardholders (during an amnesty campaign, for example).
- Cardholders are blocked from checking out if fines or estimated fines on the card they are using total $10.00 or more.
- Cardholders may pay fines at any Partner Library. Fines paid remain at the collecting library.

PART TWO: HOLDS

Cardholders and Holds

- A cardholder may place up to 40 holds.
- Notification of an available hold is made within 24 hours -- via phone, email or mail.
- An available hold is held at the pick-up library for eight days. After eight days, the hold expires.
- To pick up a hold for another cardholder, an individual must have proof of permission. Cardholders are subject to the privacy policies of the library they are using for check out.
- Cardholders may elect to pick up their holds at any Partner Library and are subject to the policies of the library they are using for pick up. Staff will not change pick up location of holds unless asked to do so by cardholder.
- If the pickup location of an available hold is changed, contact the library where the item is currently being held so it can be scanned and put in transit.
- Items may be returned to any Partner Library.
- If a cardholder presents an item for checkout that has an on-shelf hold (for another cardholder or Partner Library), proceed with checkout by using the hold override. Other cardholders who have a hold on that item will remain in queue.
- The default expiration date for a hold that is 365 days from the date the hold is placed. Cardholders can change the expiration date when placing a hold, and library staff can modify it at any time.

On-Shelf Holds

🗎 Each Partner Library accesses a daily PULL ON-SHELF HOLD ITEMS report first thing in the morning. To access the report:

1. Open Workflows via the CIRC login. (See MSC staff for Password.)
2. Go to: Reports > Finished Reports.
3. Select "pullonshelfhld items" for your library.
4. Log off the CIRC Workflows after the report has been accessed.

A Library may search for an on-shelf item for a maximum of two days. If an on-shelf item cannot be found:

1. Check the item out to your library's Trace account. If another Partner Library has a copy of that item, the hold will move to that copy. (For more on Trace see "Problem Solving".)

2. If your library has the only copy and the hold is for your library's cardholder, remove the hold and notify the cardholder.

3. If your library has the only copy and the hold is for another library's cardholder, notify the requesting library so that they can remove the hold and inform the cardholder.

Clean Holds Shelf

This report generates a list of INACTIVE holds that have been cancelled, removed, or expired or a list of ACTIVE holds that have been suspended. These holds need to be cleared from the Holds shelf each day.

🗎 Each Partner library accesses a daily Clean Holds Shelf report in the morning. To access report:

1. Open Workflows via your library's login.
2. Go to: Reports > Finished Reports.
3. Select "Clean Holds Shelf."

Available Holds / Inactive Holds

Once a hold is trapped at the borrowing library and the cardholder is notified, it will be available on that library's holds shelf for eight days. If cardholder does not pick up the item, the hold's status automatically changes from AVAILABLE to INACTIVE. Cardholders and library staff can also cancel or suspend holds. Each day, the system monitors these status changes. If a hold's availability has expired, been cancelled, or suspended – the system automatically traps the item and indicates it is headed for its next destination. The destination will be one of these four options: (a) available at the current library for the next hold; (b) at the current library for reshelving; (c) in transit to another library for another hold; (d) or in transit to the owning library for reshelving.

Managing Holds

While the Standard Operating Policies outline the basic requirements all Partner Libraries are expected to adhere to, there are a number of resources and reports that a Partner library can access to help that library provide excellent customer service to cardholders in the Partner group. Each Partner has a different capacity when it comes to collection and record management. It is recommended that as issues arise, Partner libraries address their needs openly and directly with each other and/or with the group.

Purchase Alerts, Holds to Copies, and List Holds reports run weekly and can be used to troubleshoot issues that impact customer service related to holds. With the aid of these reports, libraries should monitor and act on the changing demand for items, purchasing thresholds, and unreasonable wait time for holds.

- Holds to Copies: This report shows libraries which titles have a high ratio of holds (for their patrons) to available items. Libraries may use this report to find popular items that they should buy. Each library can set the threshold they want for this report. For example, the report might show all titles that have three holds from a specific library for each available copy.

- Purchase Alert: This report produces a list of titles that have more than a set number of holds. Again, each library can set the threshold. For example, the report can show all Partner titles with more than three holds. As with the Holds to Copies report, libraries may use this list to guide them in purchasing materials for their library. The report can also be used to find titles that have multiple holds because there is a problem, such as the sole copy on the title being checked out to BINDERY.

- List Holds Over X Days/Months Old: To ensure that patrons do not wait an unreasonable amount of time for their holds, some libraries run List Holds reports for items that have been on hold for a long period. Two reports can be run to identify problems: one report for a library's holdings that are on hold; and a second report on holds by a library's patrons. Reports can include holds over 60, 90, or 120 days.

It is each Partner's discretion as to how to resolve unfulfilled holds. However, when an item is determined to be unavailable in the system – for any reason – **owning libraries must notify Partner libraries that have holds on that item**. Requesting libraries can then pursue other borrowing options, purchase a copy, or remove holds and notify cardholders.

PART THREE: PREPARING AND SHIPPING

Cataloging: Item Types and Home Locations

Partner libraries are expected to use a universal set of item types that are mutually agreed on and managed by the Montana Shared Catalog.

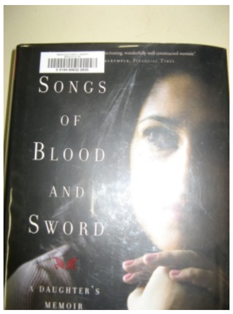
A spreadsheet of item types used by Partner libraries can be found at:

http://msl.mt.gov/For_Librarians/Montana_Shared_Catalog/ and go to "Partners."

Partner libraries are encouraged to keep the number of home locations to what is necessary. However, selection and use of home locations is an individual library decision.

Processing Items for Partner Sharing

The Partner group requests that item ID bar codes be horizontally placed on the face of all items: in the upper left hand corner, approximately a half inch to one inch from the top, and from the spine.



This ensures quick and easy access for staff at large library systems and Partner hubs, and for cardholders that use self-check out technology.

Shipping Partner Materials

Partner Items are shipped using different forms of transportation, depending on each Partner Library's location, schedule, and needs.

The following library systems ship four to five days a week: Bitterroot, Flathead, Lincoln County, Miles City, Missoula, North Valley Public, Polson, Rosebud County.

The following libraries ship two to three days a week: Drummond, Glendive, Hearst Free, Mineral County.

Crate Packing Guidelines:

- When crates include materials for more than one library, items must be banded together by library and clearly tagged for their destination on the face of the item or bundle. To ensure accuracy in sorting at the hub, please tag items in the equivalent of a bold 18 point font.

- A crate full of items for one library, but which is going through a hub library, must be clearly labeled at the top of the items for the final destination. This prevents a hub library from completely unpacking and scanning items destined for another Partner.

- Partner Libraries that use Greyhound/Trailways are responsible for including bills of lading with their crates and for managing their accounts with the bus system.

- All crates must be secured with bungee cords and clearly labeled lids. Care should be taken to not overfill crates: overfilling leads to damaged crates and spilled contents. Leave room for hands to use handles.

Receiving Partner Materials

All Partner items received at a library, for that library, are checked in after they are unpacked and before they are rerouted in-house.

- Upon scanning, Workflows will indicate if the item is (a) going back to the owning library's stacks; (b) an Available Hold for the receiving library's patron; or (c) In Transit to another library.

- If an item is checked in and a "Release Item" option appears, choose "Do Not Release Item." This ensures the item will be put in transit accurately.

- If an item's "Route/Transit to" location is FLOAT-RET, check in the item a second time for the actual location.

Transit Management

Due to human error, some items may be routed incorrectly after they are checked in and put In Transit. These items are then delayed in making their way from one library to another, or appear to be missing. These discrepancies must be resolved.

🗎 To identify and resolve In Transit discrepancies, INTRANSIT TO and INTRANSIT FROM reports are run for each Partner library once a week. The reports indicate the date that items were put In Transit. To access the two reports:

1. Open Workflows via your library's login.
2. Go to: Reports > finished reports.
3. Select "Intransit Stats TO"
4. Select "Intransit Stats FROM"

Libraries must search their shelves at least weekly for In Transit discrepancies.

- If an item is found: scan the item and route accordingly.

- If an item has been In Transit for two weeks or more, and is not found after checking the shelves:

1. Each library checks out their own items – listed on the In Transit To and In Transit From reports – to their Trace account.

2. If a missing item is not owned by either the sending library or destination library: Sending library notifies owning library to shelf check and/or process the item for Trace.

3. If the item sent to Trace is the only available copy to fill a hold, owning library is to notify that hold's pick-up library. The pick-up library will then remove the hold and notify their patron.

A current contact list for Partners can be found at the MSC website at:
http://msl.mt.gov/For_Librarians/Montana_Shared_Catalog/Partner_Libraries/

PART FOUR: PROBLEM SOLVING

Missing Materials

If a cardholder returns a Partner Library's item with missing materials (tape, disc, part of kit, etc):

1. Do not check in (discharge) the item.

2. Contact the cardholder and ask that they return the missing materials ASAP.

3. If allowable, renew the item while the cardholder is searching.

4. Keep the item at the library where it was returned until the discrepancy is resolved.

5. Leave the item checked out to the cardholder until missing materials are returned, or the item/materials are declared Lost.

6. If declared Lost, see Lost Item procedures (below).

If a Partner Library sends an item with missing materials:

1. Do not check in (discharge) the item.

2. Notify the Partner Library; Partner Library will notify previous cardholder and/or a conduct a search as outlined above.

3. Keep the item at the borrowing library until the discrepancy is resolved.

Lost Items

If a Partner Library item is declared Lost:

1. In Workflows, mark item Lost. In most cases replacement costs will automatically be assessed when this is done.

2. If replacement cost/processing fee is *not* attached to the item's bib record, use default item cost.

3. Notify the owning library that item's status is Lost.

4. Fines paid at collecting library remain at that library.

5. Refunds are not available for lost Partner items that have been returned after patron paid for replacement.

Damaged Items

If an item belonging to a Partner Library is returned damaged or needing repair:

1. Discharge (check in) the item*. Important!* Note if the item is in transit to another Partner Library or available for another Hold.

2. Return the item to its home library with:
    (a) a note about the damage; and
    (b) a note about it being on hold for another patron or in transit to another library if appropriate.

3. Owning library will assess damage, override holds/transits if necessary, and notify borrowing library about charges.

4. If there is only one copy of the item in the system, the owning library must contact *all* cardholder libraries who have holds on that item so that they can remove their holds.

5. Owning library will determine if the incomplete or damaged item is to be returned, discarded, or given to patron.

6. Fines paid at collecting library remain at that library.

Replacement Costs

If billing is for entire replacement of a lost or damaged item –

1. Use the default billing amount; this is generally attached to that item's record.

2. Fees paid at collecting library remain at that library.

If billing is for partial replacement (e.g. one disc for a multi-disc audiobook) –

1. Contact owning library to determine the billing amount.

2. Owning library will handle the purchasing and processing of partial replacement materials.

3. Owning library will determine if the incomplete or damaged item is to be returned, discarded, or given to patron.

4. Fees paid at collecting library remain at that library.

User Claims Returned

If a patron claims to have returned an item that is still checked out to the patron:

1. Always check the shelves before designating an item User Claims Returned.

2. When using the User Claims Returned wizard, the system asks for a date that the item was supposedly returned. Use the **actual due date** to prevent fines from being assessed and overdue notices from being generated.

3. Items that User Claims Returned should be looked for at least twice a month for a period of three months. To access the CLAIMS RETURNED report:
    1. Open Workflows via your library's login.
    2. Go to: Reports > finished reports.
    3. Select "claims return report."

4. If the item has not been found within three months, contact the owning library. Owning library must resolve the discrepancy on the cardholder's record. To resolve:

    1. Check the item in (even though the item is not in hand).
    2. Once checked in, either Discard or replace item with a new copy.

Trace

Each Partner Library can access a weekly TRACE report. The Trace account is used when an owning library wants to perform an extended search for items missing from that library's shelves. Items that are checked out to that library's Trace account show up on a Trace report. Library staff can use this report to resolve missing items – either reordering an item or discarding it.

When an item is checked out to Trace **owning libraries must notify libraries that have holds on that item** – so that they can in turn remove holds and notify their cardholders.

After six months Trace items automatically move to a “List Lost Report**.”** This report runs monthly.

PART FIVE: SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

Floating

Partner Libraries can choose to participate in “floating” collections, thereby sharing items between themselves for extended periods of time. Owning libraries may choose which items to float, and to which libraries, based on Float-Map policies. Some libraries float their newest adult fiction, or only within their branches, for example. An item that “floats” stays at the library that last handled it, regardless of the owning library. An item can be taken off a Float status whenever the owning library wishes to recall it, or when a participating library no longer wishes to house it.

- Instead of putting items In Transit upon being scanned, Workflows instructs staff to shelve FLOAT items at the library where they were last discharged/received. They will remain there until activated for a Hold or until the current library chooses to return them to the owning library.

- When handling a Partner’s item that the current library no longer wants floating on their shelves:

  1. Check the item out to the owning library’s Float Return account.
  2. Ship the item to the owning library.
  3. While the item is in transit, Workflows will indicate its location as FLOAT-RET.

- If a float item arrives at a library that is not within the allowed float-map policies for that library, the item will automatically be placed in transit back to the previous owning library, unless the item is there to fill a hold.

- When the owning library receives a Float-Return, the item’s “Route/Transit to” location will show as FLOAT-RET. Scan the item a second time and Workflows will give the new location for the item.

For a current list of Partner Library Float Account codes, see Appendix I.

Float Management

🗎 A library may use the FLOAT-NB (New Book) spreadsheet to determine which items have been floating for six months and need to recalled to an owning library. The Montana Shared Catalog emails this spreadsheet to participating libraries on the first of the month.

🗎 A library may also use an OFF-NEW report to determine items whose NEW status has expired after six months and needs to be changed to a regular status. This report is available in Finished Reports only to libraries who request MSC staff to create it.

- When using either FLOAT-NB or OFF NEW reports to change library locations for floating items:

    1. Put a **copy level** Hold on each item for the owning library's Float account.

    2. Change the pick-up location to the owning library. (Note: Pick-up location must be changed. If not, Workflows sends the item back to the last borrowing library.)

"Grab-and-Go"

A library may designate a popular, "on-demand" collection of items that are never available for holds and only accessible for check out on site. For example, Missoula Public Library has a "Grab-n-Go" collection. For each non-holdable item in a collection like this, the owning library must purchase at least one additional copy that is available to all Partner libraries for holds.

APPENDIX I:

CURRENT MEMBERS

Bitterroot Public Library (Hamilton)
Darby Community Library
Drummond Community Library
Fallon County Library (Baker)
Flathead County Library System (Kalispell, Columbia Falls, Bigfork, Marion)
Glendive Public Library
Hearst Free Library (Anaconda)
Lincoln County Public Libraries (Libby, Eureka, Troy)
Miles City Community College
Miles City Public Library
Mineral County Public Library (Superior)
Missoula Public Library and Branches
North Lake County Public Library (Polson)
North Valley Public Library (Stevensville)
Plains Public Library District
Rosebud County Library (Forsyth) and Branch,
    Bicentennial Public Library (Colstrip)
Whitefish Community Library

CONTACT LIST

A current contact list for Partners can be found at the MSC website at:
http://msl.mt.gov/For_Librarians/Montana_Shared_Catalog/Partner_Libraries/

FLOAT ACCOUNTS

BPL-FLOATRET
DRUM-FLOATRET
FCL-FLOATRET
HFL-FLOATRET
LIB-FLOATRET

MCPL-FLOATRET
MIN-FLOATRET
MSLA-FLOATRET
NVPL-FLOATRET
POLSON-FLOATRET

APPENDIX II: MORE ON HOLDS

The Holds Matrix

Hold requests are fulfilled in a strategic order that is determined by the Partners group and maintained by MSC staff. A downloadable spreadsheet of the matrix can be found at:

http://msl.mt.gov/For_Librarians/Montana_Shared_Catalog/Partner_Libraries/
Click on the Excel document "Partners Order of Holds Fill Matrix."

Holds: Daily Report Schedule

The Montana Shared Catalog is responsible for running daily reports that Partner libraries use to manage their holds and share their items. There are two kinds of reports: Some reports are run to trigger activity in the system; others are run so that library staff can access them and perform certain tasks. Here is an overview of these reports, and the order in which they run:

1. **Pull Onshelf Holds**: runs daily at 2:45 a.m. This is the report you access with the "CIRC" login to retrieve your listing of onshelf holds.
2. **Holds pickup notices**: runs daily between 3:30 and 4:45 a.m. These are email or printed notices notifying cardholders that a card is available and ready for pick up.
3. **Expire Active Unfilled Holds**: runs daily at 5:00 a.m. This report changes holds with an ACTIVE status to INACTIVE with a hold reason of EXPIRED. This report generates a notice (expired hold) that can be sent to patrons if desired.
4. **Expire Available Holds**: This report runs daily between 5:10 and 5:25 a.m. It selects holds that are on the "available holds shelf" but have not been picked up on or before the Pickup By date in the hold record. The hold status is changed to "INACTIVE" with a hold reason of "EXP_ONSHELF".
5. **Clean Holds Shelf**: This report runs daily between 5:30 and 6:15 a.m. It generates a list of INACTIVE holds that have been cancelled, removed, or expired or a list of ACTIVE holds that have been suspended. These holds need to be cleared from the Holds shelf.

6. **Purge Inactive Holds:** Clears holds that are more than 365 days old. MSC staff run this report as necessary.

None of these reports actually remove the holds from the system. They merely change status and/or provide holds management info and notices. A Partner Library should consult Montana Shared Catalog staff about changing defaults and establishing preferences. MSC staff may also be able to create customized reports for individual libraries based on unique needs.