

Borrowing Policy

Policy Level:	Library Board
Author:	Director Public Services - Branches
Review Period:	4 years
Approval Date:	April 2022

POLICY PURPOSE

To ensure that Hamilton Public Library facilitates broad utilization of library collections and serves its members in a fair and consistent manner. The borrowing policy outlines:

- The criteria for library membership to get a library card
- Member confidentiality and the terms of the library card agreement
- Borrowing responsibilities of the library card holder and
- Borrowing privileges and loan periods

KEY POINTS SUMMARY

Summary: This policy defines who is eligible for a Library card and under what terms. A library card is not required to enter the library or use most resources within the library. Members may choose to create a library card in-person at a library branch or online through the library website. A library card is used as the primary form of contact tracing when required by Provincial regulations for operations.

The Library issues the following types of cards for Adults and Youth:

1. Discovery cards
2. Non-Resident card
3. Inspire card
4. Reciprocal Borrowing card
5. Burlington Reciprocal card
6. Community card

Customer Confidentiality: The Library protects personal information about a borrower consistent with the Library's Privacy Policy.

Borrowing Responsibilities: Library card holders are responsible for materials they have borrowed. *Returning items on time enables others to share the library's collection and provides greater opportunities to browse items at the location.*

Borrowing Privileges: Loan periods vary based on the kind of materials borrowed and the type of library card. Borrowing privileges can be suspended under certain circumstances, such as materials overdue for greater than 35 days or having a high volume of materials overdue.

Borrowing Overview

Card Valid	# of Items Out	# of Holds	Borrowing Period and Limitations	Privileges suspended at 35 days overdue and # of items overdue	Digital Resources
Discovery Cards					
Youth	0-17	50	50	21 days	10 overdue Yes
Adult	18+	50	50	21 days	10 overdue Yes
Non-Resident Cards					
Youth	0-17	50	50	21 days	10 overdue Yes
Adult	18+	50	50	21 days	10 overdue Yes
Inspire Cards					
Youth	0-17	5	5	21 days	1 overdue Yes
Adult	18+	5	5	21 days	1 overdue Yes
Reciprocal Cards*					
Youth	0-17	8	2	21 days	3 overdue No
Adult	18+	8	2	21 days	3 overdue No
Community Cards					
	200	99	90 days Manager approval required for media, no games or serials	25 overdue	Yes

* Burlington Reciprocal Cards – have the same parameters as Discovery cards except Digital (only Libby)

**Loan periods vary when borrowing Express materials, magazines, and special items such as Park Passes.

DEFINITIONS

- **Community cards** are available to Hamilton daycare centres, institutions, schools, corporations, businesses, government agencies, associations, charitable and non-profit organizations or group homes.
- **Discovery cards** have full borrowing privileges and are issued to individuals who live, work, attend school or own property in Hamilton, or has a Six Nations address in Ontario, and have appropriate identification.
- **Youth** is the term used for library users up to the age of seventeen (17). Staff may refer to this library card as a Youth card.
- **Non-residents** are those who live outside Hamilton and do not qualify for a Discovery card.
- **Inspire cards** are designed for individuals who have limited identification. These cards have limited borrowing privileges and other parameters.
- **Reciprocal borrowing** and **Burlington Reciprocal** are services coordinated, by formal agreement, with surrounding library systems.

POLICY DETAILS

The public may visit any library location, use its in-house resources, and access express computers and catalogue stations. A library card is required to borrow materials, access digital collections and resources, use Extended Access facilities and Makerspaces, and to log on to public computers. The Hamilton Public Library Board establishes who may obtain a Hamilton Public library card.

Library cards are issued free of charge to eligible individuals.

Types of Library Cards

Discovery Card (Adult)

Discovery cards are issued to individuals who are residents of Hamilton with identification containing name and address. This card is also extended to applicants who have related identification that indicates they: work, pay taxes in the City of Hamilton or are a student who attends a Hamilton educational institution. Discovery cards are also available to any person who has a Six Nations address in Ontario.

Discovery Card (Youth)

Youth cards are issued to individuals up to the age of seventeen (17) who live or go to school in Hamilton. The library card or application form must be signed by a responsible party, if they are not present when the card is created for children under the age of 13.

In keeping with the Library's [Rights of Youth in the Library Policy Statement](#) [1], there is no restriction on the material that may be borrowed by children. Parents and/or those responsible for the child are responsible for the selection, usage and safe return of materials borrowed by their children.

Inspire Cards

Inspire Cards are available to individuals that have limited identification or choose to have more basic borrowing privileges. These cards have limited borrowing privileges for physical materials but full access to digital resources.

Online Cards

Online cards allow anyone who lives or works or is a member of Six Nations to register for a card online. An online card allows library members to access online resources and place holds on library materials. Library members will be asked to verify their identity with one piece of identification during their first visit to a local library when borrowing materials.

Non-Resident Cards

Non-residents can purchase an annual library membership:

- There is an annual non-refundable fee effective from the date of registration. Cardholders will be asked to verify their address and phone number at that time. (see [Service Fees Policy](#) [2])
- Non-resident cards have the same privileges as a Discovery card, except for Extended Access.
- It is noted that non-residents who are eligible for a reciprocal card may wish to pay the annual fee to obtain access to our full digital and physical collections.
- Expired cards will be removed from the system after approximately 1 month.

Reciprocal Borrowing Cards

Hamilton Public Library has several formal reciprocal borrowing agreements with neighbouring municipalities. Reciprocal borrowing agreements require library board approval. Individuals from outside of Hamilton require a valid library card from a participating library system, along with identification showing their name and address. This card may be used to borrow, but a Hamilton Public Library card is not issued.

Participating Systems:

- Burlington Public Library- has a separate reciprocal borrowing agreement giving access similar to the HPL Discovery card, but without Extended Access privileges.
- Cambridge Public Library
- County of Brant Library System
- Grimsby Public Library
- Haldimand Public Library
- Milton Public Library
- Region of Waterloo Library
- Waterloo Public Library

- Wellington County Public Library

Community Cards

Staff employed by a Hamilton daycare center, institution, school, corporation, business, government agency, association, charitable and non-profit organization, or group home may apply for a Community card.

A special application form must be completed for this category of library membership. A Community card application requires the signature of an executive or administrator who is authorized to accept financial responsibility for the organization. In the case of schools, the application needs to be signed by the principal. These specialty cards carry additional conditions:

- Library card must be in hand to borrow materials.
- The executive or administrator is responsible for all lost or damaged materials.
- Card cannot be used by staff for personal use.
- The Manager of the lending location reserves the right to impose limitations on the amount and type of material available, or to shorten the loan period if necessary.
- Community cards are verified annually to confirm all information. Verification may be done by phone.
- HPL Digital Media, DVDs and Blu-ray are for personal use only. Customers accessing these resources and showing content to anyone outside of their home or a personally deeded residence is infringing copyright if they do not have a public performance license.

Member Confidentiality

Library registration is carried out in accordance with the [Privacy Policy for Library Members](#) [3], which provides full information about the collection and use of personal information.

- Information about what a person has borrowed is not kept in the member's account after the item is returned except where fines and fees may have occurred, or when the member has activated the borrower history feature which keeps a list of returned items. Staff may access the last borrower information for library business purposes only.
- Home Library Service (HLS) customers' information is retained for the period they are enrolled in the service.

Notifications

Library cardholders receive notifications regarding their borrowing from the Library. Members are notified by email or automated telephone calls/voicemail messages regarding items that are overdue or are on hold and ready to be picked up. Members who provide an email address will additionally receive emails about items that will be automatically renewed or are coming due. If members prefer not to receive library notifications and opt to manage their borrowed materials, this can be requested.

Inactive Cards

Inactive cards are deleted on a four (4) year cycle.

Borrowing Responsibilities

Signing the library card implies the card holder's acceptance of and adherence to rules and regulations of Hamilton Public Library. All card holders are responsible for:

- Materials checked out on their card
- Returning materials to the Library by their due date
- Promptly reporting changes in registration information such as name, address or contact information and
- Promptly reporting the loss or theft of a library card

Card holders also authorize the Library to collect personal information for the purpose of providing service.

Verification: Discovery, Inspire and Reciprocal card holders are required to verify their contact information every three (3) years. Non-Resident, Reciprocal, Community Cards require annual verification.

Borrowing Privileges

A valid Hamilton Public Library card is required to borrow materials. Loan periods vary based on the materials borrowed and the type of Library card used to borrow materials. Loan periods also vary when borrowing Makerspace items or technology equipment.

Loan Periods

- 21-day loan period - applies to most materials except Express DVDs, magazines, and specialty items.

Staff can offer extended loans to 21-day loan material, excluding new or requested items (items "on hold" for another customer). The maximum due date can be extended up to the maximum renewal limit for the item (i.e. up to twelve (12) weeks from the date of original check out). The Manager may impose restrictions on the number of items that can be extended.

Borrowing Limits for Materials

Discovery cards and Non-Resident cards have limits on the number of items customers can borrow:

- A maximum of 50 items can be checked out at any time.
- A limit of two (2) DVD Express and two (2) Bestseller Express items can be checked out at any one time.
- A maximum of 50 holds can be placed.

- Access to digital collections and resources

Inspire card users can borrow materials and are subject to the same responsibilities as a Discovery card but with reduced borrowing limits:

- A maximum of five (5) items can be checked out at any time.
- A maximum of one (1) Express item.
- A maximum of five (5) holds can be placed at any time.
- Access to digital collections and resources.

Community cards have extended borrowing and loan periods.

- A maximum of 200 items can be checked out at any one time.
- Ninety (90) day loan period for 21-day items.
- Games and periodicals are excluded from borrowing with this card.
- A maximum of ninety-nine (99) holds can be placed.

Reciprocal card holders must have a valid library card from a participating library system.

- Card holders may borrow up to eight (8) items and place two (2) holds.
- These customers have the same loan periods as a Discovery card.
- They do not have access to all digital collections and resources.

Renewals

Most items may be renewed up to three (3) times following initial checkout. Items that are eligible for renewal will be automatically renewed on the due date. Customers with email notification will receive an email informing them of which items have been renewed and which items will be due. There are no renewals permitted on the following items:

- Magazines
- Express Books and Express DVDs
- Items requested by another Library member

Renewal of **Interlibrary loan** materials is subject to the guidelines of the lending library.

Reserves/ Holds

Customers with a valid Hamilton Public Library card may reserve an item that someone else is currently borrowing. This is referred to as placing an item on “hold.” The following circulating items cannot be reserved:

- Magazines
- Express Books and Express DVDs

Upon notification that a reserve is available, customers have **7 open days** to pick up the item. eBook users have three (3) days (72 hours) to download their hold. Customers can choose to turn on an automatic borrowing feature that checks out the eBook copy as soon as it becomes available.

Returns

Borrowed items from the Hamilton Public Library need to be returned to one of its locations. Drop boxes are available for the return of items when the location is closed. If a Hamilton Public Library item is returned to another library system in error, the card holder is responsible for any associated charges or limits placed on future borrowing. Certain items may need to be returned during open hours.

Suspension of Borrowing Privileges

Borrowing privileges are suspended when customers have overdue materials over the limit threshold. Suspensions only apply to physical borrowing; digital collections and resources remain accessible. See [Service Fees Policy](#) [2].

Related Documents

[1] [Rights of Youth in the Library Statement](#)

[2] [Service Fees Policy](#)

[3] [Privacy Policy for Library Members](#)

APPROVAL HISTORY

February 2017; April 2019; November 2019; June 2020; May 2021; April 2022