

Montana State Library Commission Policy

Information Services - Library & Information Services Department

1. Mission Statementf

The laws of Montana (22-1-101-218 MCA) stipulate, in part, that the State Library Commission has the power to furnish, by contract or otherwise, library assistance and information services to state officials, state departments, and residents of those parts of the state inadequately serviced by libraries. Additionally, 22-1-212 MCA provides for a division of the state library to serve as the state publications library depository and distribution center.

MSL serves the work-related information needs of Montana officials and agency employees, assists local libraries that may need additional resources or subject expertise to serve the information needs of their patrons, and distributes the publications of state government agencies to participating depository libraries. Researchers from private firms researching a topic under contract with a state agency are also served for contract-related investigations, as are residents of counties not served by a public library.

The Policy is also developed in accordance with the American Library Association standards for the provision of services by state libraries to state government and to libraries. A separate document, the Collection Development Policy, outlines the criteria used in developing a collection of resources to serve MSL patrons.

2. Who May Borrow

The Montana State Library loans materials directly to Montana State government employees, agencies, institutions and officials throughout the state. Our materials are also available to all Montana citizens through interlibrary loan to their local libraries. Montanans without access to public library services may borrow directly from the State Library, as may walk-in patrons. We welcome visits from the public during our open hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding state holidays.

Library patrons complete a registration card and provide identification (social security, driver's license, or student ID) in order to borrow materials. Patron cards expire two years from date of issue, and may be reinstated by updating one's registration form.

The State Library does not usually limit the number of items a patron may borrow at any one time. We reserve the right to protect the interests of other patrons from abuse of this privilege.

A. Loan Periods

Books, government documents, CDs, and A/V materials circulate for 28 consecutive days. (Some high-demand grants/foundations books circulate for only 7 days.) **Documents on microfiche** are copied to fiche and given to the borrower.

Periodicals circulate for 2 business days.

Reference books do not circulate unless a librarian grants an exception for overnight loan.

Newspapers, microfilms of newspapers, and topographical maps do not circulate.

B. Renewals

Most items may be renewed for up to two additional loan periods unless the item has been requested by another patron. Renewals may be requested by telephone. Periodicals, 7-day books, and reference books may not be renewed.

C. Reserves

Patrons may request that a reserve be placed on an item that is checked out. When the item is returned, it will be sent out immediately to a requesting state employee or library. Others will be notified to pickup their reserved item, which will be held at the Circulation desk for 10 days.

D. Fines and fees

There are no overdue fines but patrons will be billed for any materials not returned and their cards will be blocked from future use until the item is returned or payment is made.

Overdue notices are sent when an item becomes seven days overdue. A second reminder is sent at 14 days and a bill at 21 days. There is a \$20 processing fee for lost or damaged materials, plus the actual replacement cost of the item. Items no longer in print will be assigned a value in accordance with that in the latest edition of the Bowker Annual Library and Book Trade Almanac for "US Hardcover Books" or "US Trade Paperbacks" in the appropriate subject area.

E. Lost/Stolen Library Cards

When a patron reports a lost or stolen library card, the State Library will immediately place a block on that card and issue a replacement.

3. Obtaining materials not available at MSL – Interlibrary Borrowing

When state government employees or their contractors need materials not found at MSL for state government work-related purposes, the Library will seek to locate and borrow that item from another library. Other persons are referred to their local public library or other appropriate library network for interlibrary borrowing services.

MSL reserves the right to limit the number of requests per week from any one individual or agency in order to continue processing requests in a timely and equitable manner for all. If a requested item is not available through libraries, we will try to provide the requestor with another document source for the material.

A. How to submit an Interlibrary Borrow request

An MSL Request form is available at the Reference Desk or by calling Interlibrary Loan. Registered state employees may submit requests in person, by fax, email, or by telephone if for a single request. A separate form is requested for each item. In agencies with agency libraries, employees are encouraged to submit requests through their library. Contractors working on behalf of a state government agency must document the project/contract number and/or state employee contact for which the information services are requested.

Completing all the information on the MSL Request Form will expedite a request. The author, title, publisher and date are requested for books. Citations for periodical articles should include the author and title of the article, full title of the journal, volume, date, and inclusive pages. It is also helpful to provide the source of the reference. Contact information such as full name, agency, phone number and email address are required to contact the patron if necessary and to forward the item by interoffice mail.

B. Interlibrary Borrowing Fees

There is no fee for interlibrary borrowing services. It is essential to return items when they are due in order to maintain MSL's good relations with other lending libraries.

C. Interlibrary Borrowing Renewals

Each lending library sets its own policy on renewals, and many items are not renewable. Renewals may be requested by telephone before the book has become due. MSL will contact the lending library and notify the borrower of the new due date if renewal is permitted.

D. Interlibrary Borrowing Limitations

Most libraries will not lend materials that are hard to ship such as newspapers and maps; items in high demand such as reference books and recently published books; or rare items such as those from special collections.

E. Interlibrary Borrowing Assistance to Montana Libraries

As a special support service to Montana libraries, MSL searches locations of holding libraries when librarians are unable to find the locations with tools they have on hand.

4. Interlibrary Loans

Montana State Library materials that circulate are available through interlibrary loan to all libraries in Montana and throughout the world. Materials are loaned for 28 days, and renewals are usually available unless the item has been requested by another patron.

5. Library Reference Services

MSL maintains a staff with professional reference librarians, discipline-specific reference materials and databases to perform research for state government entities, and a broad-based reference collection of print and electronic resources with which to assist other Montana librarians. Reference requests from registered state employees are accepted in person, by phone, fax, or email. Contractors working on behalf of a state government agency must document the project/contract number for which the information services are requested. Every effort is made to connect information seekers with the best resource library and expertise for their specific need.

Callers from the public are referred to their most appropriate library resource if their question cannot be answered by quick reference to our resources within the span of the phone call. Walk-in visitors are assisted with locating resources in the library pertinent to their interests or may be referred to other local subject-specific library collections.

A. Specialized Online Search Services

The Montana State Library provides specialized and comprehensive online search services to its primary patron populations at no cost. MSL subscribes to Dialog, which offers electronic access to over 650 bibliographic and full-text databases, indexing millions of documents in a broad range of subject areas, from agriculture to zoology. Coverage is international, some databases go back to the 1960's, and some are updated daily. Examples of typical search topics include: the effects of motorized recreation on wildlife; remediation methods for MTBE (methyl tertiary butyl ether) in groundwater; and environmental causes of spinal deformities in fish.

When multiple requests for online searches compete for librarian time available, requests from Montana State employees, agencies and officials or their contractors receive priority attention for their state government work-related information needs, followed by requests from libraries.

Others needing online searching services are referred to their local public libraries, other appropriate library networks, or to an information broker.

A.1. How to Request Online Searches

An Online Reference Service Request form is available from the Reference Desk and may be submitted in person, by mail, fax or email. All questions should be answered as completely as possible. A librarian will contact the patron to clarify the request.

B. Computer Reference Center

Several patron access computers are provided for state government employees to use specialized information resources such as the MSL and other library catalogs, bibliographic databases, subscribed specialty databases, and Internet websites. A menu on the computers

describes unique resources available at the terminal. Assistance with using these resources is available from the Reference staff.

Each patron computer may be reserved for one hour per day by calling the Information Desk. A reserved computer is held for up to ten minutes before being released to other patrons.

To ensure that the computers are available to all employees when needed, MSL does not allow use of Internet-based e-mail accounts, chat rooms, word processing, or games. An Acceptable Use Policy is posted in the Computer Reference Center.

6. State Documents Distribution Service

Libraries may request designation as a full or partial depository library for state government publications by contacting the Collection Management Librarian and completing a contract agreement. Mailings of new agency publications received by MSL are made regularly to participating libraries. All materials are available for loan.

7. Alerting Services

A. Notable Book Alerts

Regular postings are made to the Montana librarian email discussion group "Wired-MT" in order to alert librarians to notable new materials available from the MSL collection. Selected titles from the general reference, professional development, and state documents collections are annotated and reviewed. A similar service directed to state government employees is being explored.

B. WWW Site Reviews

Regular postings to Wired-MT prepared by reference librarians describe resources of special interest available within the websites developed by state agencies. A similar service for state government employees is being investigated.

C. Bibliographies

Annotated lists of resources on selected topics of special interest to state government employees or Montana libraries, and available in the MSL collection, are periodically published and distributed.

D. Journal Table of Contents

State employees may request to be placed on a list to receive table-of-contents from selected journals as they are received at the library. An electronic version of this service is being considered.

8. WWW Internet-Based Services

To Be Developed as a channel for appropriate information to state employees and librarians to stay knowledgeable on critical issues and as a convenient mechanism to request and receive traditional services.

Currently the MSL website provides descriptions of library services and resources, copies of MSL publications such as the Montana Library Directory, and online versions of selected state documents such as Montana Code Annotated and the Montana Operations Manual.

9. Reading Room

The Montana State Library offers reference, journal, and newspaper resources in an atmosphere conducive to quiet study, reflection, and idea generation. Notable publications added to the collection are displayed prominently for visitors to review.

10. Equipment

A photocopier and microfiche reader are available for making copies from library materials at no charge. Persons making an unusually large number of copies are requested to supply their own paper.