

Interlibrary Loan Code for the United States

Prepared by the Interlibrary Loan Committee, Reference and User Services Association, 1994, revised 2001. Approved by the RUSA Board of Directors January 2001.

Introduction

The Reference and User Services Association, acting for the American Library Association in its adoption of this code recognizes that the sharing of material between libraries is an integral element in the provision of library service and believes it to be in the public interest to encourage such an exchange.

In the interest of providing quality service, libraries have an obligation to obtain material to meet the informational needs of users when local resources do not meet those needs. Interlibrary loan (ILL), a mechanism for obtaining material is essential to the vitality of all libraries.

The effectiveness of the national interlibrary loan system depends upon participation of libraries of all types and sizes.

This code establishes principles that facilitate the requesting of material by a library and the provision of loans or copies in response to those requests. In this code, "material" includes books, audiovisual materials, and other returnable items as well as copies of journal articles, book chapters, excerpts, and other non-returnable items.

1.0 Definition

1.1 Interlibrary loan is the process by which a library requests material from, or supplies material to, another library.

2.0 Purpose

2.1 The purpose of interlibrary loan as defined by this code is to obtain, upon request of a library user, material not available in the user's local library.

3.0 Scope

3.1 This code is intended to regulate the exchange of material between libraries in the United States.

3.2 Interlibrary loan transactions with libraries outside of the United States are governed by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions' International Lending: Principles and Guidelines for Procedure.

4.0 Responsibilities of the Requesting Library

4.1 The requesting library should establish, maintain, and make available to its users an interlibrary borrowing policy.

4.2 It is the responsibility of the requesting library to ensure the confidentiality of the user.

4.3 Some requesting libraries permit users to initiate online ILL requests that are sent directly to potential supplying libraries. The requesting library assumes full responsibility for these user-initiated transactions.

4.4 Requested material should be described completely and accurately following accepted bibliographic practice.

4.5 The requesting library should identify libraries that own the requested material. The requesting library should check and adhere to the policies of potential supplying libraries.

4.6 When no libraries can be identified as owning the needed material, requests may be sent to libraries believed likely to own the material, accompanied by an indication that ownership is not confirmed.

4.7 The requesting library should transmit interlibrary loan requests electronically.

4.8 For copy requests, the requesting library must comply with the U.S. copyright law (Title 17, U.S.

Code) and its accompanying guidelines.

4.9 The requesting library is responsible for borrowed material from the time it leaves the supplying library until it has been returned to and received by the supplying library. This includes all material shipped directly to and/or returned by the user. If damage or loss occurs, the requesting library is responsible for compensation or replacement, in accordance with the preference of the supplying library.

4.10 The requesting library is responsible for honoring the due date and enforcing any use restrictions specified by the supplying library. The due date is defined as the date the material is due to be checked-in at the supplying library.

4.11 The requesting library should normally request a renewal before the item is due. If the supplying library does not respond, the requesting library may assume that a renewal has been granted extending the due date by the same length of time as the original loan.

4.12 All borrowed material is subject to recall. The requesting library should respond immediately if the supplying library recalls an item.

4.13 The requesting library should package material to prevent damage in shipping and should comply with any special instructions stated by the supplying library.

4.14 The requesting library is responsible for following the provisions of this code. Disregard for any provision may be reason for suspension of service by a supplying library.

5.0 Responsibilities of the Supplying Library

5.1 The supplying library should establish, maintain, and make available an interlibrary lending policy.

5.2 The supplying library should consider filling all requests for material regardless of format, but has the right to determine what material will be supplied on a request by request basis.

5.3 It is the responsibility of the supplying library to ensure the confidentiality of the user.

5.4 The supplying library should process requests in a timely manner that recognizes the needs of the requesting library and/or the requirements of the electronic network or transmission system being used. If unable to fill a request, the supplying library should respond promptly and should state the reason the request cannot be filled.

5.5 When filling requests, the supplying library should send sufficient information with each item to identify the request.

5.6 The supplying library should indicate the due date and any restrictions on the use of the material and any special return packaging or shipping requirements. The due date is defined as the date the material is due to be checked-in at the supplying library.

5.7 The supplying library should ship material in a timely and efficient manner to the location specified by the requesting library. Loaned material should be packaged to prevent loss or damage in shipping. Copies should be delivered by electronic means whenever possible.

5.8 The supplying library should respond promptly to requests for renewals. If the supplying library does not respond, the requesting library may assume that a renewal has been granted extending the due date by the same length of time as the original loan.

5.9 The supplying library may recall material at any time.

5.10 The supplying library may suspend service to a requesting library that fails to comply with the provisions of this code.