

# Deposit-Handling Suggestions

Some PINES libraries choose to require deposits in order to check out certain high-value or high-loss materials such as test preparation (GED, ASVAB, etc.) books.

A library system that chooses to require deposits on select items will determine its own local procedures for handling deposits. This page consists of suggestions based on the existing practices of various PINES library systems, but while one approach may work for one library, it may not work for another depending on staffing structure and the way that funds are held and balanced. Please use the following information as suggestions only and be sure that whatever procedure you follow within your own library system is consistent, clearly documented, and follows all money-handling guidelines your system is required to follow.

## General Notes

- The library system will determine which items will require deposits.
- The library system will determine whether or not to place copy alerts on the item's record.
- The library system will determine the amount of the deposit required for the item.
- The library system will determine where the deposit items are stored (most libraries store them behind the desk).
- The library system may choose to set up the copy record so that it will bill the patron account automatically upon checkout. Other libraries may choose to add bills to the patron accounts manually.
- Some library systems place stickers on the cover of the books indicating that deposit is required and stating the amount of the deposit required.
- Some library systems will accept non-monetary items (such as a driver's license) instead of a cash deposit for items that are for in-house use only. These situations are not typically logged in detail.
- Some library systems choose to use the Evergreen software to track deposits and refunded deposits, but others choose to create paper logs manually. If a library is required to reconcile its cash drawer with the cash report produced by Evergreen, then the library might prefer handling the deposit money separately from Evergreen for bookkeeping simplicity. However, if it is more important to a library to track the deposited funds and returned deposits within the patron accounts, then the library might prefer handling the deposits within Evergreen. Each library system should determine what approach works best for their individual situation.
- It is good practice to have the guidelines and procedures for deposits posted publicly (perhaps at the circulation desk or on the library's web site) so that the library's patrons can easily refer to them. One library system even takes the extra step of providing borrowers of these items with bookmarks that remind them to pick up their deposits when they return the items. The bookmark informs them that if the item is long overdue or lost, the deposit will go towards the cost of the item. It also informs them that if the person has returned the item but has not picked up their deposit, the deposit will be considered a donation.
- PINES policy states that items requiring deposits should be non-holdable outside their own library systems, but the software does not currently have this functionality.

## Managing Deposits Manually

### Checkout

Staff accepts the deposit (check or cash) and places it in a secure location. Libraries typically place the deposit in an envelope or bag (such as a pencil bag) labelled with the patron's name, library card number, date of checkout, book title, and barcode. Some libraries also keep a deposit log that patrons sign when they make a deposit and when they receive their returned deposit - this log is useful to have in case someone claims to have not received their returned deposit. It is good practice to have the library staff members that receive and return the deposits initial and date the log entry and/or envelope as well.

### Renewal

If the patron wishes to renew the item, any alert is overridden and the patron is not required to provide a second deposit.

### Return

When the patron returns the item, the staff will return the deposit that was being kept aside for the patron. If the item is labelled or has a copy alert on it, then the staff processing the returned item should notice that the patron is due the returned deposit. If the library is keeping a paper log, then the patron should sign that he or she received the returned deposit.

## Managing Deposits with Evergreen

### Checkout

The patron is billed for the deposit amount. This can be set up to happen automatically or the staff member can add it manually by opening the patron's account then clicking Bills > Bill Patron. If adding manually, the staff member should choose "Deposit Fee" as the Billing Type and enter the item's title and barcode, as well as the staff member's initials, location, and date.

Staff accepts payment for the bill and records the payment to the account (select the appropriate billing line item, choose the Payment Type, enter the amount of Payment Received, then click Apply Payment). Doing this ensures that the bill does not go above \$10 due to a deposit charge and that there is a record of the transaction on the account.

Staff places the deposit in a secure location (typically in an envelope labelled with the patron's name, library card number, date of checkout, book title, and barcode) and if necessary, records the amount in a paper log as well.

### Renewal

If the item is set up to bill the patron automatically and the patron renews the item, the patron will be billed a second time. If this occurs, staff should Void that bill.

## Return

When the patron returns the item, go to Bills > History > select the appropriate Bill and click Full Details. You should see that the Deposit fee was charged and paid. Close the pop-up window.

On the Bills > History screen, click Add Billing. Choose Billing Type of "Refund: Deposit Item Returned" with an amount of zero (0) and enter an annotation with the staff initials, date, and location. (After saving, if you look at the Full Details, you will see that it added a line item to the bill indicating that the deposit had been returned.)

Staff returns the deposit that was being kept aside for the patron. If the library is also keeping a paper log, then the patron should sign that he or she received the returned deposit.

## When a Patron Does Not Return the Item

If the book is not returned and ends up marked Long Overdue or Lost, the library may credit the deposit against the price of the book. If a personal check was used as a deposit, the library may wish to resolve the issue sooner rather than later because the personal check may no longer be valid after several months.

## When a Patron Does Not Pick Up the Deposit

If an item has been returned but the patron has not picked up the deposit, it is good practice to place an alert on the patron's account so that the deposit may be returned on the patron's next visit. If the deposit has not been picked up after a pre-determined amount of time, the library may consider it a donation (the library's policy on this should be clearly indicated in the documentation).

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