

Library Card & Borrowing Policy

Library Card Registration

Library cards may be signed up for at the front desk of any branch. Before your library card is issued, you will need to provide photo identification and proof of your current address. A Maryland driver's license or MVA identification card with a current address will be accepted. A picture ID (work, school, bank id, etc.) may also be used together with a proof of address such as mail or a utility bill.

All materials checked out on your card are your responsibility. Please report lost cards immediately. You must have a card or photo ID to check out materials.

Registration for a library card is free if you live, own property, work, or attend school in Maryland. If you live outside of Maryland, the fee for a library card is \$40.

Replacement cards cost \$1.

Children's Registration

Children under 18 must be present and accompanied by a parent or legal guardian when applying for a library card. The parent or guardian must show photo identification for the person who will be responsible for the child's library use. If the parent/guardian has fines on their library card, the child will be unable to receive a card until the balance is paid.

Materials checked out by child patrons are the responsibility of the adult signing them up for a library card; children are not restricted in borrowing or using library materials by the library staff.

Online Registration

For convenience, patrons may register for a temporary card online. Temporary cards may be used to access online resources and place holds in the online catalog.

Temporary cards should be converted into a regular library card following the identity verification procedures above. This must be done before physical items can be checked out of the library.

Temporary cards that have not been verified will expire after six months.

Student Cards

In collaboration with Somerset County Public Schools, the library offers student cards to every student in the County. Parental permission forms are distributed at the start of the school year, and the cards remain valid until the start of the next year.

There is no physical card issued to students; their card number is simply SCSD followed by their lunch number.

Student cards provide access to library computers and most online resources. They can have up to three books checked out at a time.

Easy Access Card

An Easy Access Library Card is available to patrons who cannot provide address verification. Patrons with this type of card may use library computers and have full access to all online resources. Easy Access cards also allow for the checkout of up to three physical items.

Easy Access Cards expire after one year.

Circulation Rules

Unless otherwise specified, library cardholders may check out up to 50 items at one time. The loan period for most items is 21 days, and they may be renewed up to three times.

Exceptions are:

- DVDs have a 7 day loan period, and there is a limit of 10 per library card.
- Current issues of magazines are intended for in-library use only and may not be checked out.
- Reference material in the local history collections are intended for in-library use only and may not be checked out.

Renewal

Most items will automatically renew themselves at their due date, unless:

- the patron's card has expired,
- the limit of three renewals has been reached, or
- another patron is waiting for the item.

Patrons may also manually renew items via the online catalog or at the front desk of any branch.

If warranted, library staff may provide extensions beyond the regular borrowing period or the regular renewal limit. Library staff will not extend loans if another patron is waiting for the item.

Interlibrary Loan

Eastern Shore Library Consortium

The Somerset County Library shares a catalog with the seven other Eastern Shore Libraries, governed by the Eastern Shore Library Consortium. All items in the consortium's catalog may be requested for pickup at any Somerset branch.

Items requested from another county but checked out from the Somerset County Library follow Somerset County's borrowing policies.

Your card is valid at any public library location on the Eastern Shore. If you travel to another county to borrow an item, the loan is governed by the location from which the item was borrowed.

Statewide Loan

In collaboration with the Statewide Library Resource Center, most materials statewide are available through interlibrary loan using the statewide catalog.

If the material is available on the Eastern Shore, the statewide catalog will direct the patron to use the local catalog to request it.

Materials borrowed via interlibrary loan may have different borrowing requirements imposed by the lending library. It is likely that renewal of a loan will not be allowed.

Out-of-State Loans

If an item is neither available in the Eastern Shore catalog nor the statewide catalog, it may be requested through the interlibrary loan request page in the statewide catalog.

The request form should be completed comprehensively, and it is recommended that patrons obtain staff assistance in completing the form.

Patrons should also consult the WorldCat catalog to verify an item's availability before placing a request.

Book Suggestion Form

The library has a book suggestion form on its website for patrons to recommend book purchases. Generally, the library will purchase suggested material if it is readily available for purchase, recently published, and/or unavailable through the Eastern Shore or statewide catalogs.

Fines and Fees

The library does not charge overdue fines.

Patrons will be billed the cost of the item plus a \$5 processing fee for items not returned within three weeks of the due date or for items that are returned to the library damaged. The library may accept a replacement copy of the exact edition in lieu of payment.

Once items are paid for, they become the property of the patron. Refunds will not be issued once an item has been paid for.

Library staff will photograph any damaged item that is discarded because the nature of the damage (i.e, water, insect infestation) makes it unfit to keep for evidence.

A fine of \$5 will be assessed for any missing artwork, booklets, or inserts.

A fine of \$5 will be assessed for damage to the case of an audiobook or DVD when the discs are undamaged.

Data Retention

In compliance with Maryland law on the confidentiality of library records, the library does not maintain borrower records longer than necessary to conduct ordinary library business. Typically, this is until another patron has checked out and returned an item or until lost or damaged materials have been paid for.

Patrons may elect to maintain their own borrowing history in the library's catalog, either by activating the history from the catalog or by asking staff to activate it from their record. This history is not retroactive and will only list material checked out after it was activated.

Regardless of how the history is activated, library staff cannot access the patron's borrowing history.