

Fines for Overdue Library Items

Frequently Asked Questions

When will TRL start charging fines for overdue items?

- October 1, 2009

Will items checked out before October 1 also be assessed fines?

- Yes, if items checked out before October 1 are returned on or after October 1 and if they are overdue, then fines will be charged. Fines will be retroactive back to the due date, even if the due date was before October 1.

EXAMPLE If a library item was due September 25 and is returned on October 1, then the patron is charged a fine for September 26 through October 1 at \$0.15 cents per day, or a fine of \$0.90 for the 6 days overdue.

Why is TRL going to charge overdue fines?

- Overdue fines will encourage patrons to return library items by the due date, making them available sooner to other patrons and reducing the amount TRL has to spend for additional copies of popular items.
- Overdue fines will help close the current budget gap and support ongoing library services.

How much is the overdue fine?

- \$0.15/day for each item for each loan period.

Will I still be able to check out items if I have overdue fines?

- You can check items out as long as you owe less than \$5.00.

How can I avoid overdue fines?

- Return or renew items you have checked out by the due date.

Will patrons be reminded about due dates before items become overdue?

- If you already receive TRL email notices you will automatically receive “Due Date Reminders” four days before an item is due. To sign up for email notification chose one of these three options:
 - ♦ Visit www.TRL.org and click on **My Account**, enter your library card number and PIN, click **Profile** and add your email address.
 - ♦ Ask library staff to sign you up for email notification.
 - ♦ Call Ask-A-Librarian at 704-4636 in the Olympia calling area or 1-800-562-6022.

How do I renew items?

- Ask library staff to help you renew items.
- Visit www.TRL.org and click on **My Account**, enter your library card number and PIN, then click **Checked Out** and renew items in your account.
- Call Telecirc, the library’s automated calling system (586-1599 in the Olympia calling area or 1-800-582-9703).
- Call Ask-A-Librarian at 704-INFO in the Olympia calling area or 1-800-562-6022.

When can I renew items?

- You can renew items unless you owe \$5.00 or more in fines or fees.
- You can renew an item 2 times unless there are hold requests on it.

How do I pay my fines or fees to TRL?

- Payments can be made by cash or check at any of Timberland’s 27 libraries. Please make checks payable to Timberland Regional Library.



Is there a maximum overdue fine?

- The maximum overdue fine is \$4.20 per item for each loan period.
- If you renew an item, that starts a new loan period.

How is the maximum fine calculated?

- \$0.15/day will be charged for each item for 28 days, i.e., to a maximum of \$4.20/item.
- When an item is 28 days overdue it is considered “lost” and you will be billed for the full replacement cost of the item.

When are overdue fines charged to my library record?

- Overdue fines are charged to your record when an item is checked in or renewed.

When can I pay overdue fines?

- You can **only** pay overdue fines **after** you have returned the overdue item and the library staff have checked it in or after you have renewed the item.

Are the overdue fines the same for all types of library materials and all library cards?

- Yes, fines are the same for all materials and all patrons.

Will I be charged a fine if I return an item to the book drop the day it is due but after the library closes?

- No, you will not be charged an overdue fine. The library will check in the item the next day the library is open but will “back date” items that came in through the book drop.

Will I be able to see how much I owe in overdue fines in the online library catalog?

- Yes, but only after the items have been checked in.

Does the library charge other fees?

- Replacement costs are charged for items that are 28 days overdue. These are referred to as “lost” items. You may know where they are, but they are “lost” to TRL.
- Damage fees are charged if an item is damaged while you have it checked out. Staff inspect items for damage when they are returned so you will not be charged for damage that occurred before you checked an item out.
- Interlibrary loan fees are charged if the library we are borrowing from on your behalf charges a fee. You determine the maximum amount you are willing to pay before we request the item. TRL always searches for free services first.

What is the Collection Agency fee?

- TRL uses a collection agency for library accounts that have fines (overdues) and fees (replacement or damaged item fees) of \$50 or more for 30 days.
- If your account is sent to the collection agency, you will be assessed a non-refundable Collection Agency fee of \$10.
- If you find the item, return it, and pay all other fines or fees, the Collection Agency fee must still be paid before you can check items out of the library.

What if I lose an item and pay for it, then find it and return it?

- If you find and return an item that you paid for, your account will be credited the amount you paid to replace the item.
- You can request a refund if you return the item within one year of the date of payment.
- Library staff cannot give you the refund in the library. A check will be issued to you from the TRL Administrative Service Center. It takes two to four weeks to receive the check.
- Collection Agency fees are not refundable.

