



HOME	About MBLC	Grants & Related Programs	Advisory Services For Libraries	Library Jobs	Massachusetts Libraries	Find Books & Magazines Online
----------------------	----------------------------	---	---	------------------------------	---	---

Trustees, Directors & Friends
Library-Based Literacy
Library Statistics
Public Library Data
Academic Library Data
Special Library Data
School Library Data
Public Library Facts Newsletter
Public Library Services At a Glance
Library Network Data
Other Sources
Planning
Preservation
Public Relations
MBLC Professional Library
Workshops & Continuing Education
Library Associations

[Advisory Services For Libraries](#) > [Library Statistics](#) > [Public Library Facts Newsletter](#)

Circulation Practices, May 2004 (v.7, n.3)

The FY2004 Annual Report Information Survey included a section of the Additional Information Survey (AIS) on public library circulation practices. The AIS asked questions about fines, standard loan and grace periods, renewals, overdue notification, and charges for out-of-state residents. Three hundred and sixty four (98.4%) of the three hundred and seventy public libraries in Massachusetts completed and returned the AIS.

Overdue Fines

294 (81%) of 363 libraries reported charging overdue fines. For those libraries that charged fines, rates varied based on the type of media borrowed.

Overdue Rates (per day)	Books-Children's (260 responses)	Books-Adult (263 responses)	Videos (288 responses)	Audios (264 responses)
Most frequent response and % responding	\$.05 (53%)	\$.10 (49%)	\$1.00 (66%)	\$.10 (47%)
Second (and third) most frequent response and % responding	\$.10 (37%)	\$.05 (44%)	\$.05 (8.7%) \$2.00 (7.6%)	\$.05 (41%)
Range of responses	\$.01-\$1.00	\$.02-\$1.00	\$.02-\$2.00 (one outlier-\$10.00)	\$.02-\$1.00

Maximum Fines

Approximately 65% of the Commonwealth's public libraries reported maximum fines for books and audios. 70% reported maximum fines for videos.

Maximum Fines	Books-Children's (243 responses)	Books-Adult (247 responses)	Videos (288 responses)	Audios (264 responses)
Most frequent response and % responding	\$3.00 (31%)	\$3.00 (28%)	\$5.00 (35%)	\$3.00 (25%)
Second most frequent response and % responding	\$2.00 (27%)	\$2.00 (25%)	\$10.00 (26%)	\$2.00 (22%)
Third most frequent response and % responding	\$5.00 (16%)	\$5.00 (19%)	\$2.00 (8%)	\$5.00 (18%)
Range of responses	\$.01-\$10.00	\$.10-\$10.00	\$.50-\$30.00	\$.50-\$25.00

Grace Periods

37% of public libraries reported offering grace periods before fines were imposed for books and audios. 24% offered grace periods for videos.

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Grace Period (# of days)	Books-Children's (138 responses)	Books-Adult (138 responses)	Videos (89 responses)	Audios (131 responses)
Most frequent response and % responding	1 (40%)	1 (40%)	1 (64%)	1 (40%)
Second most frequent response and % responding	3 (27%)	3 (27%)	3 (12%)	3 (26%)
Range of responses	1-30 (one outlier-90)	1-30 (one outlier-90)	1-30	1-30 (one outlier-90)

Renewals

Of the 358 libraries that responded to the question about renewals, 356 libraries (99%) reported they renew adult books, 355 (99%) reported they renew children's books, and 347 (97%) renew audios. 256 libraries (72%) reported allowing video renewal.

Renewals	Books-Children's	Books-Adult	Videos	Audios
(% of libraries responding)	Yes (99%)	Yes (99%)	Yes (72%)	Yes (97%)
(% of libraries responding)	No (1%)	No (1%)	No (28%)	No (3%)

Overdue notification

354 (98%) of the 362 libraries that responded to the question about notifying their patrons about overdue materials indicated they notify borrowers either by phone, mail or e-mail.

Charges to Out-of-State Residents

Most public libraries in Massachusetts (294, or 82% of the 357 libraries that responded to this question) reported that they do not charge residents of other states to borrow materials from their libraries. 63 libraries (18%) reported charging residents of other states for borrowing privileges.

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[^ Back to top](#)

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