

FINE FREE @ APL

Your Alpha Park Public Library no longer charges overdue fines on items returned late, and all past overdue fines have been erased.

FAQs

Fine Free Decision

Fines collected from overdue items account for only 0.6% of total budget funds at Alpha Park Public Library. Ceasing collection of late fines is a way to foster community goodwill by removing a financial burden to you, our patrons. Any overdue fines on current Alpha Park Library patron accounts have been forgiven!

Any fees accrued for missing or damaged items (or other fees, including late fees assessed by other libraries) will still be in place. An account with fees in excess of \$5.00 will be blocked. An account in blocked status will need to settle the fee charges (by either returning the item or lowering the fees on their account under \$5.00) in order to restore the ability to borrow materials from Alpha Park Library.

Read on for details on the difference between a fine and a fee.

Difference Between a Fine and a Fee

Fines are:

- A daily penalty accrued on the late return of library items. These items are:
 - Books
 - DVDs/Blu rays
 - Toys
 - **Exemption: Equipment**
 - Late fines on equipment are exempt from the Fine Free Policy. Examples of equipment include but are not limited to:
 - Tablets
 - WiFi Hotspots
 - Laptops
 - VR Headsets

Fees are:

- Replacement charges assessed for materials that are lost, unreturned, or returned damaged,
- Processing charges incurred by the library as it replaces lost, unreturned, or damaged items,
- Charges assessed when the situation warrants referral to a collection agency.

Other fees still enforced:

- Replacement fees for lost library cards,
- Any late fees assessed by another library for overdue items checked out *at that location* using an Alpha Park Library-issued card,
- Any processing fees assessed by another library for missing/damaged materials checked out from Alpha Park Library through interlibrary loan,
- Library card fees for anyone living outside of Alpha Park Library's service area (non-resident card).

Fees are still included as part of the library's return policy

Why You Should Keep Returning Items Checked Out

Patrons should keep the habit of returning items on or before the due date. As stated above, we will still charge **fees** for items that are not returned based on replacement charges, processing charges, and charges assessed from collection agencies.

- The first overdue notice will be sent **7 days** after the due date for the item, *except* when it is equipment. Equipment overdue notices will be sent **3 days** after the due date.
- **20 days** after the due date, a second notice with a bill is sent to the patron for the item.
- If the patron brings the item back and there are no damages to the item, the fees will be forgiven on the account.
- If the item is not brought back, the patron's library account will be blocked until the fees are paid to an amount under \$5.00 or the item is returned.
- Approximately **49 days** after the item's due date, collection agency activity will begin.
 - Please note: Once an account is sent to the collection agency, the patron will be responsible for paying a \$10 collection agency fee, even if they have returned the item to the library.

Collections Agency Process

Collections agency activity begins approximately seven weeks after the due date. This is 49 days or nearly a month after we send the **second notice**. Here is the agency's schedule for letters and phone calls (their day 1 begins 49 days after the item due date):

- Day 1: Letter 1
- Day 21-28: Initial Phone Call(s)
- Day 42: Letter 2
- Day 65-79: Second Phone Call(s)
- Day 90: Letter 4
- Day 120: Letter 5
- Day 151-154: Final Phone Call(s)

How to Check the Status of Your Account

Patrons may check the status of their library account by doing the following:

- Call the Circulation desk: 309-697-3822 x10

- Use the RSACat mobile app and log in to your account using your library card and PIN/Password
- Head to www.alphapark.org
 - Click “Catalog” at the top
 - On the next page, click “My Account”
 - Log in using your library card number and PIN/Password