



PRESS RELEASE: *Timmins Public Library goes 'fine free'!*

TIMMINS: March 10, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Timmins Public Library has eliminated overdue fines for all library patrons. This move ensures that our public library is living up to its commitment to provide inclusive, free and equitable access to knowledge, information and recreation. All outstanding overdue fines have been cleared from patron accounts.

Q&A

Why are overdue fines being eliminated?

- To increase patron access to library materials and services
- To reduce barriers for all patrons, eliminating the inequitable impact of overdue fines
- To improve patron/library interactions

Studies show that overdue fines do not actually deter people from returning items late, but they can stop people from using the library. Fines create economic barriers, and it's important to us that everyone in our community has the same access to our materials, resources, and services. This is an important contribution to the *City of Timmins Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan* in the area of social development.

What does going fine free mean for me?

- Overdue fines will no longer be applied to your account, and we have wiped clean any old fines from your accounts.
- *It doesn't mean that you don't have to return your items!* You're still responsible for anything that you have borrowed, and we'd like you to do your best to return borrowed materials on time because others may be waiting to use the items. If you're a little late, you won't be penalized with a late fine.
- If an item has not been returned in a certain amount of time, your account will be blocked and you won't be able to place holds or use digital items during that time. As soon as the items are returned, your account will go back to normal.

- If you haven't returned your items after a significant amount of time, you will be billed for the replacement cost of the items.

Does going fine free apply to current fines on my account or just fines going forward?

All overdue fines have been wiped from your account! If you had fees on your account for lost or damaged material, those fees will still exist.

What about that book I borrowed five years ago?

Bring it back! We just want the item back and you won't have any charges added to your account!

What if I lose or damage an item?

You will still be charged for replacement costs for lost or damaged items.

How do you know people will still return items if there are no late fines?

Hundreds of libraries across North America have been going fine free over the last decade. They report that items are still returned at the same times, or even earlier, than before fine free policies were put into place.

How long can I borrow an item?

- Books – 3 weeks
- Bestsellers – 2 weeks
- Magazines/DVDs – 1 week
- eBooks/eAudio Books – 2 weeks

How many times can I renew an item?

Most items can be renewed twice. An item cannot be renewed if someone is waiting for it.

Will I get reminders if my items are late?

Yes. We have recently added text (SMS) to make it easier to receive reminders. Let us know your preferred method of notification. (email, text or phone)

What happens if I return an item late?

The library encourages patrons to return items in a responsible and timely fashion so others may enjoy the shared resources of the library. Reminder notifications will be sent on a regular basis. Items not returned within 28 days of their due date will be considered lost and billed to patron accounts.

What happens if I return an item that is considered lost?

Any replacement cost billed will automatically be cancelled upon the return of the item.

When is an account suspended?

An account is suspended if a lost or damaged item is billed or if the account exceeds \$5. Patrons with suspended accounts cannot borrow items from the library until the fees are paid or the lost items are returned.

I always thought of my fines as a donation to the library. Can I make a donation?

Absolutely! We would appreciate any donation that you would like to give as we make this policy change to give back to our community! Donations will be accepted at the library circulation desk.

Are other libraries going fine free?

Yes! The fine free movement has taken on momentum in Ontario, Canada, and North America. The Federation of Ontario Public Libraries is encouraging all libraries in Ontario to go fine free and you will likely hear of more and more libraries doing this. <https://librarianship.ca/features/fine-free-libraries-in-canada/>

How many patrons will regain access to the Timmins Public Library through the waiving of accumulated overdue fines?

Approximately 2,000 accounts have been reinstated.

Are there any exceptions?

Yes, there are a few exceptions. Overdue fines will still be charged for special collections such as Interlibrary Loans, tablets, audio visual equipment and outdoor reading kits.

I haven't been to the library in years. Does my card still work?

Please come visit us at the Main Branch or at the C.M. Shields Branch in South Porcupine. Bring a piece of photo I.D. and we will either get your account reactivated or we will get you set up with a new card. We'd love to have you back!

From all of us at the Timmins Public Library, we thank you for your continued patronage and support.

For more information, visit <http://tpl.timmins.ca>, follow our [Facebook](#) page or contact:

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