

Overdues

Initial question from librarian: Am having trouble with overdue books coming in. What are feelings about printing overdue patrons in the paper?? Or – any other suggestions.

Response from Cherie Heser, Rosebud County Library, December 23, 2011:

Montana Code Annotated, 22-1-506. Liability for injury to books or failure to return. Every person who defaces, tears, or otherwise injures any book or other work or who fails to return any book taken by him is liable to the state in three times the value thereof if such book is not replaced by a new one or another book of identical title, in good order and condition; and no statute of limitations shall ever be effective against the claim of the state under this section. We send delinquent patrons a letter which lists all items overdue and their cost of replacement. Then we ask them to note the MCA statute, followed by: "Failure to return the materials listed above will result in submission of the records to the County Attorney for action, which can include collection of three times the value of the item. Thank you for your attention to this matter."

After another two weeks, we turn the lists over to the County Attorney, who sends a very stern letter and almost always gets results. He involves the Sheriff's Office if necessary, depending on the circumstances and the worth of all the items.