



Mid-America Library Alliance

Interlibrary Loan & Courier Delivery Service Manual

2023-24

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INTRODUCTION

The Mid-America Library Alliance (MALA) operates an interlibrary loan and courier delivery service for MALA member institutions.

As in any cooperative venture, the success of MALA's interlibrary loan and courier delivery service is highly dependent on the goodwill and professionalism of the participants. For this reason, it is most important that members do not impose unnecessarily on the staff time of other members. Such imposition can be eliminated by the prompt return of borrowed materials, the maintenance of accurate records of each library's own transactions, and careful attention to the accuracy of requests submitted.

Policy statements, procedures, lists, and directions necessary to participate in MALA's interlibrary loan and courier delivery program are contained in the following pages.

INTERLIBRARY LOAN POLICY

Adopted 11/19/80

Revisions 2/6/99, 1/9/08, 7/09, 2/10, 8/12, 1/13, 2/14, 10/15, 6/16, 9/17, 10/17, 10/18, 5/19, 8/20,9/23

Policies stated herein are meant to encourage a liberal lending of materials within the network region, recognizing that the primary needs of one's own clientele come first. Interlibrary borrowing is not a substitute for responsible collection development.

This policy affects only those transactions of a library-to-library nature. Reciprocal borrowing arrangements involving direct patron access are not described.

SCOPE

Any material needed for the purpose of information, instruction, recreation, research, or study may be requested for loan from MALA network libraries. The lending library has the privilege of determining whether an item should be lent. Materials of all types may be requested within the system.

INTERLIBRARY LOAN PROCEDURES

Interlibrary loan service is essential to the vitality of libraries of all types and sizes. It is one means of greatly expanding the range of materials available to users. Lending between libraries is in the public interest and should be encouraged. Interlibrary loan should serve as an adjunct to, not a substitute for, collection development.

By participating in the MALA Get Connected interlibrary loan courier and delivery service, members agree to abide by the following:

- **Risk:** Participating in interlibrary loan involves risk. The more courier delivery services are involved in the transport of ILL items, the more the risk increases. It is the choice of each library to participate in interlibrary loan courier delivery and assume the risk. Anytime an item is shipped to fulfill an interlibrary loan request, it is subject to mishandling and/or damage

during the delivery. The library assumes full responsibility for the risk involved in loaning an item.

- **Communication:** The most effective and efficient method of reaching all the MALA Get Connected participants is through bulk messaging. MALA uses Constant Contact as its primary communication tool regarding courier delivery.

To receive timely and important messages, at least one staff member per library must be designated to receive MALA announcements by email and cannot opt-out of receiving messages from Constant Contact. MALA adds the director and ILL contact information listed on the annual courier agreement form to the ILL Courier Listserv.

The email account for the designated staff member(s) needs to remain active, and any changes/updates to the designated contact(s) should be reported to the MALA Courier Coordinator or Business Manager as soon as possible. The designated staff member(s) should maintain firewall settings and permissions to receive bulk messages.

Contact the MALA Courier Coordinator or Business Manager if you would like to add or change a contact on the ILL Courier distribution list.

- **Use of Routing Slips or Book Bands:** Use a routing slip for all items you lend to other members. Fill in the necessary information including the name of your library. All materials circulating in the network must show clear ownership information.
- **Overdue Fees:** Members are requested to return borrowed items promptly. Lending libraries should send notices directly to the borrowing library. We suggest that no overdue fines will be assessed on interlibrary loan materials.
- **Renewals:** Arrangements to extend borrowing periods should be made directly with the lending library.

REQUESTING MATERIALS THROUGH INTERLIBRARY LOAN

- **Book loans:** Requests may be made through OCLC, ALA Interlibrary Loan Request Form, or other methods at the discretion of the supplying library. Information including the requesting library and staff contact information, the title, author(s), or editor(s), format, date of publication, and other pertinent bibliographic data are needed to complete the loan application form.
- **Photocopies or articles:** Requests may be made through OCLC, ALA Interlibrary Loan Request Form, or other methods at the discretion of the lending library. Information including the requesting library and contact information, title of the serial (full title, no abbreviations except "J" for journal), date, volume and issue number, inclusive pages to be copied, author of article, title of article, and maximum number of pages to be photocopied should be supplied with the serial request form.
- **Conditions of the loan:** Due dates shall be specified by the supplying library. The requesting library will honor any limitations on use imposed by the supplying library. Requests for renewal should be made prior to the due date and made directly to the supplying library.

All requests are to be for "known items"; subject requests will not be accepted.

The requesting library accepts the responsibility for any postage or other costs assessed by the supplying library unless waived by the supplying library.

We suggest that no overdue fines will be assessed on interlibrary loan materials.

PACKAGING AND ADDRESSING

Items shipped via the MALA Get Connected courier service must be packaged and labeled according to the following instructions. The MALA label makers contain the most current information about which sites can be reached by courier delivery. **If a site is not listed, it is not on courier delivery.** Contact MALA if you have any questions about a particular location.

Item Identification

Each item being shipped should include a copy of the interlibrary loan request or sufficient information to identify the item in the event it is separated from the bag.

Bags/Boxes/Tubs

All MALA Get Connected materials should be moved between libraries utilizing the nylon bags, boxes or tubs. Nylon bags are preferred. Use a separate delivery bag for each delivery site. Use the Get Connected labels, or other labels provided on the MALA website for the Extended Delivery services areas (Amigos, TAE and Mobius).

If multiple items are being shipped to a single drop site, they should be packaged together in a courier bag, padded envelope, small carton, or tote.

- **Zippered nylon courier bags**

Courier delivery bags come in a variety of sizes and colors. All of these bags are interchangeable and can be used for your courier delivery service only. Do not send these bags through the U.S. Postal Service. These bags include:

- Red and blue nylon MALA/KCMLIN courier bags
- Dark Green Mid-Continent Public Library canvas bags
- Green canvas KCLC bags
- Black MOBIUS bags (for use with MOBIUS libraries only).
- Purple nylon Trans-Amigos Express (TAE) bags

Fill the bags without placing strain on the seams and/or the zipper. Don't overfill bags.

- **Tubs**

Some libraries utilize plastic tubs to send materials back and forth through the MALA courier. Only 10-gallon or 14-gallon plastic tubs can be used for this purpose, and they must be labeled, lidded, and securely closed. There is a 40-pound weight limit per tub.

- **Envelopes/Boxes**

Any size or shape of envelopes or boxes may be used to ship items in the MALA Get Connected courier service. Make sure to completely seal the box or envelope, and provide an appropriate address label as described above.

Do not send any envelope smaller than 8 1/2" x 11". If you are sending items in a No. 10 business envelope, or manila routing envelope you will need to put this inside of a larger envelope or courier bag for shipment. There is a 40-pound weight limit per box or container.

For the Extended Service Areas – including Amigos, and MOBIUS – use courier bags exclusively to share resources with these partners. COKAMO items require special bundling and labeling slips, and are all sent to MALA for repackaging and delivery. Follow the instructions provided on the MALA website.

Oversized items larger than 14" x 20" cannot be sent through the Extended Delivery Service Areas. If you have questions, please contact MALA.

Labeling Items for the Courier

Using courier delivery involves specific labeling requirements that are not the same as the U.S. Postal Service. For all MALA Get Connected courier delivery service members, use the MALA labeling system. **Do not use any handwritten labels, return tags from lending libraries, or anything other than a designated MALA courier service label.**

Any changes to labels, including addresses and sorting codes, will be communicated through the MALA ILL Courier Listserv on Constant Contact. Some libraries use ILLiad to incorporate labeling into their workflows. Any questions from libraries using ILLiad about label content and updates can be directed to MALA. Do not use abbreviations, branch names, or OCLC library codes.

If an item is to go to a particular department or person at a library, addressee information needs to be provided **INSIDE** the bag, not on the label. The receiving library is responsible for delivering materials to a specific individual, not the courier. Couriers **cannot** open bags or envelopes. Do not ask them to open your bags or envelopes, or combine items together. They are restricted to delivering your material as sent to you from other member libraries.

Label each package with an appropriate address label.

- Courier bags: Place a label in the clear label display window
- Tubs, totes and other packages: Affix a label to the package. When using a previously used envelope or carton, remove, cover or black out with marker all visible shipping addresses from previous shipments. Packages/boxes need to be labeled on the top and at least one side.

Be sure to use only current labels, and **discard** all old labels. Incorrect labels or obsolete label formats will result in delays. Use the latest version of the label available on the MALA website. Any changes to labels, including addresses and hub/sorting codes, will be communicated to the ILL Courier listserv on Constant Contact.

The couriers **CANNOT** deliver books to libraries not on the members and partners list. The item will be returned to or left at the sending library.

REPORTING PROBLEMS

Report all concerns, such as missed delivery service, using the online form on MALA's website. The form, once completed, populates into an Excel spreadsheet and it is checked regularly throughout the work day by multiple staff members. A staff member will email you as your issue is addressed. Emailing, rather than using the web form, may delay the resolution of the issue if the MALA staff member is out of the office for the day and unable to access work email. Having a document trail is important and very helpful to us.

Missed Scheduled Delivery

The MALA Get Connected courier should deliver/pick up every day you have a scheduled delivery. Every stop is reconciled monthly, and notice of missed stops helps us maintain accurate records. **If a scheduled stop is not made, report it immediately via the online form.**

Delayed Scheduled Delivery

The MALA Get Connected courier should also deliver/pick up within a regular delivery window (typically a 2-3-hour timeframe). If you experience consistent deviations in your delivery times, please complete the online report form to notify us.

Incomplete Stop

A stop is considered incomplete if the driver only drops off, but does not pick up any items ready to leave the library or vice versa. Complete the online report form to report incomplete stops immediately.

Undelivered Materials

If expected items are not received within 15 days after routing is reported to you, please notify us using the online report form so that the courier service can be contacted. In addition, follow the procedures for reporting Lost/Missing Items under the Interlibrary Loan Procedures section.

Lost/Missing Items:

MALA adheres to the strict ALA guidelines that we have followed for the past 30 years. If MALA can identify patterns of negligence on the part of the MALA contracted courier, then we will negotiate on behalf of the libraries. We will assist libraries in recovering their lost or missing items by providing an online form for reporting damaged/lost/found items. It is the library's responsibility to fill out the online form for Lost/Missing items on MALA's website. Only when clear documentation has been provided, the damage is extreme and negligence is evident will MALA negotiate with the contracted courier service. If the Executive Director determines that the damage requires reimbursement, then MALA will send a reimbursement check to the library.

The MALA policy regarding lost or missing items follows the [American Library Association Interlibrary Loan Code for the United States](#), which states:

4.9 The requesting library is responsible for borrowed material from the time it leaves the supplying library until it has been returned to and received by the supplying library. This includes all material shipped directly to and/or returned by the user. If damage or loss occurs, the requesting library is responsible for compensation or replacement, in accordance with the preference of the supplying library.

- The responsibility for lost/missing items lies with the libraries involved. MALA is not able to intervene between the libraries. MALA provides an online directory of MALA member library contacts so that libraries can communicate with each other.
- MALA provides an online form on the website to facilitate libraries in reporting damaged/lost items. The form is the primary reporting method for lost items.
- Note that an item must be lost/missing for a minimum of 30 days before it can be posted.
- Libraries are responsible for completing the online form on MALA's website.
- If the requesting library never receives a borrowed item or the item never reaches the supplying library upon return, the requesting library is responsible for the costs associated with the replacement of the lost/missing items. Please contact the supplying library to work out a mutually agreeable resolution. If MALA can identify patterns of negligence on the part of the MALA contracted courier, then we will negotiate on behalf of the libraries.
- If an item is not found within 6 months of being posted, it is considered expired and records for it are no longer kept by MALA.
- In most cases, missing items claims must be submitted within the same fiscal year as the loss date. The MALA fiscal year runs July 1-June 30.
- Patterns of negligence that MALA can investigate and potentially negotiate involve items going from a MALA member library to a MALA member library. For lost/missing items involving other consortia partners (Amigos, COKAMO, MOBIUS, etc.), MALA will notify the courier delivery manager of the other consortia one time to report the lost item. Beyond that, the libraries involved are responsible for working out a resolution.
- If it is determined that a lost item claim will be submitted to the MALA contracted courier, the replacement cost will be supplied by the owning library, and may be modified by MALA at its discretion. Required fields are designated in the reporting form. Claim reimbursement does NOT include administrative or processing costs.
- Within the MALA membership (MALA member to MALA member transactions), if a claim is approved, reimbursement will be paid to the supplying (owning) MALA library.
- In the rare event that a pattern can be established and a claim can be submitted involving delivery network partners (Amigos, COKAMO, MOBIUS, etc.), then reimbursement will be paid to the MALA member borrowing library. For MALA member owning libraries in these cases, follow the ALA ILL Code.

Damaged Items

The MALA policy regarding damaged items follows the [American Library Association Interlibrary Loan Code for the United States](#), which states:

4.9 The requesting library is responsible for borrowed material from the time it leaves the supplying library until it has been returned to and received by the supplying library. This includes all material shipped directly to and/or returned by the user. If damage or loss

occurs, the requesting library is responsible for compensation or replacement, in accordance with the preference of the supplying library.

If the requesting library receives an article in damaged condition or the item reaches the supplying library upon return in damaged condition, the requesting library is responsible for the costs associated with the replacement of the damaged item. The replacement cost does NOT include administrative or processing costs.

- We expect that a resolution for a damaged item will be reached between the two libraries. In the rare instance that a resolution cannot be reached, the requesting library may contact MALA. A number of factors affect whether or not a claim may be submitted for review.
- MALA can only consider damaged items reimbursement claims for items going from a MALA member library to a MALA member library through the MALA contracted courier.
- In many cases we can accept clear color photos of the damaged item(s) **and** the bag the item(s) were delivered in.
- Should a claim be submitted, we may request that the damaged item (with its courier bag and original label, if available) be sent to the MALA office as part of the review process.
- If MALA can identify patterns of negligence on the part of the MALA contracted courier then we will negotiate on behalf of the libraries.
- Replacement cost does NOT include administrative or processing costs.
- If a claim is approved, reimbursement will be paid to the supplying (owning) library.
- **AV and non-book Materials:** For DVDs, CDs, Playaways, and other media formats, careful packaging is recommended. Place in padded bags, bubble wrap, or cardboard box for extra protection. Broken media cases will not be replaced.

COURIER DELIVERY SERVICE

Acceptable Materials

MALA Get Connected member libraries may send library related materials as well as items requested on interlibrary loan on the courier service. Additional charges will be imposed for non-library related materials. An example of this would be sending cases of college class schedules, boxes of discarded items, etc. Contact the MALA office at (816) 521-7257 for a quote on delivery service of these items.

Materials that may be shipped via the courier service include:

- Returnables such as books, AV recordings, microforms and kits
- Non-returnables such as photocopies of journal articles
- Communications and other documents

Supplies

If you need additional supplies, please fill out the online Supply Request form on MALA's website.

Bags: MALA provides nylon bags. You will receive an initial supply when joining the service. If you begin running short, fill out the online Supply Request form on MALA's website and an additional supply will be sent. Bags can only be provided upon request; standing bag orders are not available. If you have a surplus of bags, please send them back to the MALA office for redistribution.

Shipping Labels: The contract courier vendor has specified a delivery label format. These labels are accessible from the MALA website. Use only these labels for MALA to MALA deliveries. The Extended Delivery Service label maker is accessible through the MALA website for MOBIUS, Amigos and COKAMO delivery. Specific label data and formatting is required by each extended delivery courier service partner, so please do not write or create labels for libraries not found in the MALA label database. COKAMO items require special bundling and labeling slips. Follow the instruction provided on the MALA website. Please do not add any written text or other embellishments to the label unless specifically instructed to do so by MALA.

Closings

Fill out the online Scheduled Holiday Closures form to inform the MALA administrative office of days you will be closed throughout the courier year. Schools and academic libraries should notify MALA of spring breaks, holiday breaks (Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, etc.), and summer break schedules. Report known closures for the entire fiscal year using this form.

Emergency closures due to illness, funerals, broken water pipes, power outages, or other sudden events should be submitted using the Courier Delivery Service issues form on MALA's website. For emergency closures, email, phone or text notification is acceptable. Notify MALA as soon as possible in these situations if they affect courier delivery service in any way.

The library staff is responsible for informing MALA if they do not need courier service for a protracted period of time (for example, due to library closure for construction, disaster, etc.). This saves the courier from making unnecessary trips. Make all arrangements for courier schedule changes through MALA administration first and provide as much notice as you can.

Inclement Weather

Please notify the MALA office as soon as possible if your library will be closed or will alter the operating hours affecting courier delivery due to inclement weather. Please report on the Courier Delivery Services online form on the MALA website.

In the event of inclement weather, the couriers will often run behind schedule. The MALA office will always try to send an email out confirming this. In the rare occasion the courier cannot run due to inclement weather, an email will be sent to libraries using the ILL/Courier contact list. If you are aware of road, bridge or highway closures in your area, you are invited to report them to MALA.

GUIDELINES FOR STATISTICS REPORTING

Statistics will be kept on **ALL OUTGOING** courier items. This means each and every item (not bags) that leaves your library, whether it is a borrowed, loaned, mis-delivered, or reciprocal return is counted. This includes items to MALA, MOBIUS, Amigos, and COKAMO libraries.

Each library is required to report monthly statistics online. **Statistics for the preceding month must be reported by the 5th of the following month.** As a requirement of our LSTA grant funding for the

MALA *Show Me the World Get Connected Courier* delivery service, Missouri public libraries must report their courier statistics each month. These statistics assist the Missouri State Library in monitoring the use of the LSTA grant funds. It is VERY important that all monthly courier statistics be reported online in a timely fashion.

To report your statistics, go to:

<https://www.malalibraries.org/courier-service/submit-courier-statistics/>

- Enter your count of **individual items**. Do not count bags shipped, but each individual outgoing item, which could be several to a bag.
- If the online form is down or inaccessible, you can email your monthly statistics by the 5th of the month to the Courier Coordinator.

Everything that goes into the courier service, including mislabeled or misdelivered items, should be included in the count.

MALA Get Connected members who are also members of MOBIUS should only report items going into the MALA courier service. MOBIUS items are only counted if the MALA network handles them.

LIBRARY DROP SITE RESPONSIBILITIES

1. All shipments must be prepared in advance. Drivers cannot wait while packaging, labeling or paperwork is completed. The drop site is responsible for packaging all materials for shipment and completing all paperwork required prior to their scheduled pickup/delivery time.
2. If your library participates in multiple courier delivery networks, please make sure your items for the MALA Get Connected courier delivery service are clearly labelled and kept separate from your other courier pickups.
3. At pickup/delivery, a drop site representative is responsible for checking the address on pieces received and refusing any packages not addressed to the drop site.
4. The drop site is responsible for immediately reporting problems, such as missed stops, mis-routed items, or items missing from a package.

All missed stops must be reported to MALA right away. We reconcile the delivery records each month, and account for each complete stop.

APPENDIX A: LIBRARY BEST PRACTICES FOR COURIER DELIVERY

Library Best Practices for Courier Delivery Drop-off and Pick-up

The Mid-America Library Alliance (MALA) is continually working with our contracted courier delivery vendor to provide service in a timely and professional manner. To help make courier delivery as efficient as possible, we are noting library responsibilities and recommending best practices for program service days and drop-off and pick-up practices.

Libraries:

1. Courier delivery takes place on designated service days that the libraries select and note on their annual courier participation forms. If libraries wish to change or increase their service days during the fiscal year (July 1-June 30), they should contact the MALA office to do so.
2. Courier delivery service takes place within delivery windows. If a library has a question about when their service window is supposed to be, they should contact the MALA office.
3. Courier delivery takes place at a dedicated location within the library.

Responsibilities:

- Each library is responsible for coordinating their courier delivery with the MALA office first and for notifying the MALA office if their facility will be closed on their regularly scheduled delivery service day.
 - Best Practice: All requests for service, changes to library service (days, times, etc.), known and short-notice closings, etc. are communicated to the MALA office first.
 - Best Practice: We realize that some libraries have the ability to reach their drivers on their cell phones, especially for short-term closing notice during bad weather or other unforeseen events. If you need to contact your driver about an issue with your day's service, you also need to contact the MALA office to report it. MALA needs to be able to have precise information every time courier delivery service takes place or does not on each contracted delivery service day.
 - Best Practice: If your library is undergoing renovation and will be closed for a period of time, contact the MALA office first to make arrangements for your courier delivery. Any and all alterations for service are to be sent through the MALA office, along with firm closing dates. During renovation, the stop is either open or closed for delivery on a particular service day, and drivers cannot be authorized to stop in just to see if there is anything to go out. MALA needs to be kept apprised in advance of each open and closed day. If materials accumulate and a pick-up is needed, contact the MALA office to coordinate the service. MALA will contact the Courier Delivery Vendor, who will alert their contracted drivers.
 - Best Practice: The online form on MALA's website is used for reporting a change in delivery or an issue with service to the MALA office. This form helps greatly for tracking and documentation purposes. MALA can be contacted by phone or text 24/7. Leave a voicemail message if you call outside of business hours.

- Best Practice: There are areas of the network where the Courier Delivery vendor drivers are exemplary, and there are other situations that require intervention. Keep communicating with the MALA office when intervention is needed, as well as when service is going really well. Positive feedback is shared with the Courier Delivery vendor, as well as the problem reports.
- Each library is responsible for notifying the MALA office as quickly as possible if service does not take place on their designated service day.
 - Best Practice: Depending on your unique library situation some libraries may choose to maintain a log sheet of courier delivery and have the driver sign the log each service day. Neither MALA nor Henry (our courier vendor) require a log to be kept.
 - Best Practice: If there is a missed day of service or incomplete service (e.g., your driver dropped off items but forgot to take your outgoing material), Fill out the Delivery Services Report on MALA's website explaining what the issue is. There is very little that can be done to correct missed service days unless MALA is notified.
- Each library is responsible for notifying the MALA office as soon as possible if there is a pattern of service deviating from their delivery service window.
 - Best Practice: In addition to the best practices noted with service day delivery, monitoring delivery times can help to ensure consistency in your service and for your staffing.
 - Best Practice: As much as possible, MALA works with the Courier Delivery Vendor to have service take place during a library's open hours. In some cases, alternate arrangements need to be made.
 - Best Practice: Notify the MALA office if a pattern of delivery outside the regular service time occurs. MALA will contact the Courier Delivery Vendor to resolve the issue.
- Each library is responsible for having a dedicated location for courier delivery drop-off and pick-up.
 - Best Practice: Have an area of sufficient size to accommodate the library's load where the courier driver can drop off and pick up library materials.
 - Best Practice: The courier delivery drivers are supposed to provide their own covered totes and tubs to transport materials in and out of the libraries. Ideally, the drivers will use their totes to bring materials in, empty those, and then fill with the outgoing library material. It is recommended that the libraries provide their own tubs or boxes to hold their outgoing material and receive their incoming material.

- Best Practice: It is illegal to use the US Postal Service totes for any other purpose than delivering US mail. USPS totes are all clearly marked. This rule is strictly enforced. We suggest libraries return any USPS postal tubs to their local post office immediately. They are never to be used for courier service.