

ITEM NUMBER: 10.27A – a-c
CHAPTER 10: Circulation
CODE: Procedure
COMPUTER ID: CIUSE-8A

Title:	Claims Returned and Lost Materials, Communicating with the Customer
Effective Date:	6/06/07
Authorized By:	Library Director
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Conversations with Customers Claims Return

- Item is overdue and customer tells you they returned it already **or**
- Item is not overdue but the customer saw that the item is still out on their record and they say it's been returned.

You tell them:

- Information about the item: title, author, where it was checked out, when it was due back, type or size of book/item etc.

You ask them:

- When did they return the item?
- Where did they return the item? Which location? Inside or outside book return and which one?
- Did they return it or did a family member or friend? Do they truly know that that person did return the item?

What you're trying to do is gather some information from the customer to help you in your search for the item and also to get the customer thinking about the circumstances about the return of the item.

You tell them:

- You will search here (or call the branch). – if you find it right away, you will call them. (Check the item in under exempt fines or regular check in but then waive the fine(s) and add a note).
- They should give their home and vehicles another look.
- If you do not find it right away, you will check the shelves again in 1 week. (During the week the item may show up; perhaps it's out of order or a customer found it and wants to check it out which will clear the item).
- If you do not find it, you will call them to see if they found the item at home.
- If it is not found by the customer, or us you tell them you will set it to claims return and that we will continue to search for 3-4 months. During this time, they can check out and we will let them know that the search is still in place.

If they question you about what happens if the item isn't found or they tell you that they're not paying for something they returned:

- You tell them that we will search very thoroughly for the item.
- You tell them that you cannot just clear the item without it in hand.
- When the 3-4 months is up, the item will be set to lost and they would be billed for it.
- Tell them to wait and see what happens in the next few months.

Under very rare conditions, if you feel the customer is correct or is so adamant about having returned the item or if there is more than 1 item being claimed returned and you find all but 1...you could check the item in (providing there isn't a request for it) and then set it to "trace".

Lost Materials

- Customer has an item set to lost and they are being charged for the replacement of it.

You tell them:

- The title, author, what kind of item it is, when and where it was checked out and when it was due back.

If they tell you:

- I never checked out that item.

You tell them:

- It's checked out on their card – we would have needed either their card or some ID to check it out.
- Perhaps a family member used their card.
- They should check at home and check with family members.

We can check the shelves first before we take payment, but depending on the popularity of the item, some items don't stay on our shelves for very long before someone else would check it out. Basically, the money is due.

If they tell you:

- I never lived at that address.

You:

- Do your best to match the information we have on file with what the customer tells you.
- Ask them for their information – don't offer what we have on file.

The computer application is our legal documentation – the paper forms are shredded after 3-6 months. Here's what happened with the V-Cat merge:

- Records were merged if the first and last name and middle initial plus birthday matched.
- The address of the existing V-Cat record was what was kept even if the customer had not lived there for a while.
- Any lost or damaged materials from a V-Cat library need to be negotiated with that library, as they will do the same.

Again, basically, the money is due. We can check shelves before they pay or if the customer is adamant that the item was returned, we could set it to claims return - provided that this wasn't already done. However, if it was set to lost some time ago, don't set it to claims return – payment is due. Also, we do not set other V-Cat library materials to claims return without the library's OK.