Lost & Claims Returned Procedures

All OWLSnet libraries may use the Lost and Claims Returned features of the automated system on their items. The automation staff will provide each agency with reports to help staff manage lost and claims returned situations.

Please note: Libraries may only use Lost and Claims Returned for their own items. If a library marks materials not owned by that library as Lost or Claims Returned, they may be responsible for reimbursing the owning library for the cost of the item.

Claims Returned

Libraries may use Claims Returned when the patron indicates an item owned by that library was returned. If a patron claims to have returned an item owned by another library, the patron or library staff should contact the owning library.

When marking an item Claims Returned, the system returns three different options.
Each library should choose either option 2 or option 3, and all staff at that library should apply that option to all Claims Returned transactions.

1. Check in items (with no fines) and change status to Missing
   PLEASE DO NOT SELECT THIS OPTION
   The system checks the item in and changes the status to Missing. These items would be indistinguishable from items set to Missing by library staff because they could not be located.
2. Check in items (with no fines) and change status to Claims Returned
   Choose this option if your library never bills for claims returned items.
   The system checks the item in and changes the status to Claims Returned. Outstanding fines and bills for the current checkout are waived automatically. (Charges associated with previous transactions are not waived.)
3. Leave items checked out (send overdue notices) and change status to Claims Returned
   Choose this option if your library eventually bills for claims returned items, or you would like to leave the item on the patron account until the bill is generated.
   The system leaves the item checked out to the patron and changes the status to Claims Returned. The system will continue to generate overdue notices and will eventually generate a bill. The bill can be waived before sending if the library chooses.

Lost & Claims Returned Procedures

A Search Shelves Report (which includes Lost, Claims Returned, Missing and Recently Billed) will be generated every other week for each agency, so that the library staff can search for items Claimed Returned.

Lost

Libraries may use Lost (for their items) when a patron indicates an item was lost or damaged. OWLSnet recommends that patrons wait for the billing cycle if they simply cannot find the item. If the item was destroyed, or the patron is certain the item is permanently gone, libraries can set the item to Lost. Setting an item to Lost will change the item status to Lost. The price can be verified and a bill generated immediately, or a bill will be automatically generated (with the current price in the item record) the next day.

Do **not** use Lost Items on items your library does not own. If a patron says an item is lost, tell the patron that the owning library will bill for that lost item. The library or patron may contact the owning library and request that an item be set to Lost in order to quickly generate a bill. The owning library should verify the price and generate the bill. If a library collects money *before* billing for a lost/damaged item owned by another library and the price is wrong, **the collecting library is responsible for paying the difference to the owning library**.

If a patron does not pay for a lost item, the owning library can bill the circulating library for that item.

A Search Shelves Report (which includes Lost, Claims Returned, Missing and Recently Billed) will be generated once every two weeks for each agency, so that the library staff can search for items that are lost or have been recently billed.

A Lost report can be generated each month for each agency, so that staff can delete and/or reorder items. If you would like to receive this report, please contact the OWLS office.