

A. Introduction

The shelves of the International Falls Public Library hold a broad spectrum of titles containing ideas as diverse as the world in which we live. This selection policy explains how and why items are included in the library's collection. The policies, criteria, interpretations and forms are geared to help the staff understand the basis for selection decisions. Also, the handbook will assist the staff in working with patrons who have questions or concerns about materials in the library.

While we always want to be responsive to the public, it is important to understand that concerns about materials in the library call into question selection decisions that have already been made. The process of registering complaints is designed to make sure the selection is appropriate but most often will result in explaining our philosophy and criteria of selection to the patron.

Public libraries preserve and enhance the people's right to a broader range of ideas than those held by any librarian or publisher or government. On occasion, there can be diverse opinions by individuals or groups as to what is acceptable or appropriate for the collection. Conversely, library collections are not limited to only those ideas and information one person or group believes to be true, good and proper.

Patrons who initiate comments or complaints should receive copies of the International Falls Public Library Materials Selection Policy along with the Citizen Comment Form. Staff should go over these materials with the patron.

Although it is not always comfortable to field this kind of complaint, it is good for the public to test our decisions and it is an opportunity for us to explain our policy and philosophy. At the International Falls Public Library we believe that our collections should stretch the boundaries of ideas and information. This handbook will give staff the background and support to make most of these encounters a positive experience.

B. Collection Development Policy

1. Material Selection Work flow

A. Staff Involved. Collection development will be the responsibility of the library's full-time staff with assistance from remaining staff as needed.

B. Schedule. The Committee will generally strive to maintain a steady flow of new materials of all types into the library's collection. However, for some types of materials it may be better practice to select materials at only one or two times during the budget year.

2. General Criteria. Informed by the philosophy expressed "Materials Selections Policy – Introduction" (Part 3, Section A of this manual), the staff will consider a combination of the following factors (listed in no particular order) in making collection decisions.

A. Potential Use. Potential use of an item under consideration will be an important factor in its selection.

B. Cost. The committee will consider the value to the collection of each item considered rather than simply its cost.

C. Physical Condition/Appearance. Generally a more attractive item will be preferred to a less attractive one, as will a durable item to a flimsy one. Items of abnormal size that create shelving difficulties will be looked upon unfavorably.

D. Enduring Significance. While recognizing that the usefulness of most items wanes as time goes by, the committee will generally prefer items of long-term usefulness, to those of short-term popularity. However, items regarded as "classics" will generally be given special consideration.

E. Reviews. Committee members may also consider whether an item has been favorably or unfavorably reviewed.

F. Collection Balance. The committee will strive to maintain a collection that meets the needs of the user without unwarranted depth in any area.

G. Format. Library materials in new formats will not be added to the collection without approval of the Board of Trustees and after careful consideration by the staff for usage, availability of technology and need.

3. Special Criteria. In addition to the above criteria, the Collection Development Committee will also consider these criteria for the following categories:

A. Nonfiction. Selectors will make a special effort to see that any nonfiction items under consideration offer current information.

B. Movies. The following considerations will apply.

1. Collection Identity. It has been observed that patrons

primarily use the videocassette/DVD collection for recreational purposes. Therefore the collection will emphasize (but will not necessarily be excluded to) feature films, classics, and entertainment videos.

2. Cost. Generally, single-tape DVDs costing over \$30 will not be selected, nor will multiple-disc sets costing over \$75.
3. Format. DVDs will be the preferred format.
4. Duplicates. No effort will be made to provide multiple copies of any movie.
5. Non-fiction or documentary movies will be considered in an effort to provide information that might be used by patrons that would not otherwise utilize the non-fiction section.

C. Minnesota Collection. The committee will attempt to maintain a complete collection of items by and about Koochiching County residents. Special emphasis will be given to items about the Arrowhead Region.

D. Periodicals. Each periodical subscription will be evaluated as a whole rather than on a copy-by-copy basis. The schedule for retention of back issues will be adjusted as necessary to reflect usage and space considerations.

4. Gifts and Memorials

A. General Criteria. Donated materials will be evaluated using all relevant Collection Development criteria.

B. Limitations. In accepting donations, staff will take into account the donor's preferences concerning the disposition of the donation. However, the library staff may only accept donations that are unconditional. The Board of Trustees may review any proposed donation accompanied by attached conditions.

C. Receipts. Employees will provide receipts for donated cash or items upon request. However, employees may not assign a cash value to donated items, nor will they authorize a receipt assigning cash values to donated items. Receipts will only be given for that which is actually received.

5. Reconsideration of Materials. Patrons who wish to petition for the reconsideration of a particular item may speak to any full-time staff member or use the form provided elsewhere in this manual (Part 3, Section C).

C. Request for Reconsideration of Library Material

Patrons may use this form to request reconsideration of any item held by International Falls Public Library. It is to be completed and returned to the library director or president of the Board of Trustees. It will be placed on the agenda at the next regular meeting of the Library Board and a written decision returned to the patron within two weeks after a decision has been made. Items will not be removed from circulation while a request is pending.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Item on which you are commenting:

Is this a specific edition? ____ yes ____ no

Have you read/viewed/listened to the item in its entirety? ____ yes ____ no

Is this item owned by International Falls Public Library? ____ yes ____ no

Do you understand the criteria through which this item was added to the collection? ____ yes ____ no

What brought this item to your attention?

What objections do you have to this item? (Be as specific as possible, including such information as page numbers, chapters, etc.)

Can you provide reviews or other kinds of information supporting your position?
(Provide copies if possible)

What resources do you suggest might be added to provide additional information
or viewpoints on this topic?

Approved 2/04

D. Maintenance of Collection

Deselection Criteria

1. Philosophy. Deselection, more commonly known as “weeding,” is an integral part of the collection development process. While acquiring valuable new materials helps to strengthen the library’s collection, removing items whose usefulness has passed or been superseded by that of other items further vitalizes the collection and enhances the patron’s library experience. Deselection helps achieve the best possible collection within the parameters of budget and shelf space.

2. Deselection Work flow.

A. Staff Involvement. Since weeding is an aspect of collection development, responsibility for deselection rests with the library’s full-time staff. Although other staff members or volunteers may assist in special weeding projects, only full-time staff will make actual decisions to retain or discard items. The Director has final staff authority in matters pertaining to collections.

B. Schedule. New items are brought into the collection on a daily basis. Deselection should be equally ongoing. Generally, weeding will not be approached as a special project, but as one of the regular duties of the staff. The library director will spend time each week evaluating a particular part of the collection and making selection and deselection decisions.

3. General Principles. Full-time staff will consider collection-building guidelines when considering materials for deselection, and will attend to the factors listed below (in no particular order):

A. Use. An item that has not been used in the past three years may be a candidate for weeding.

B. Currency of Information. For nonfiction materials, items whose contents are grossly outdated, or inaccurate, are good candidates for weeding. Usually nonfiction items whose only value is archival will not be retained.

C. Physical Condition/Appearance. Materials in poor condition, or unattractive appearance, or of unusual size, may be candidates for weeding. However, materials in poor condition through heavy use will usually be replaced, where possible with new copies. Irreplaceable items that are otherwise valuable will generally be retained and possibly repaired.

D. Multiple Copies. Duplicate copies of items in the same format will generally not be retained unless a heavy demand is anticipated, in which case the duplicate copy will be placed in storage. The same will apply to superseded editions of multi-edition works.

E. Enduring Significance. Works of enduring significance, both those commonly considered “classics”, and those identified as standard works in fields of interest to the general public, will generally be retained.

F. Collection Balance. For nonfiction, if the collection has unwarranted depth in a particular area, certain items from that area may be good candidates for weeding.

G. Presence on a Review List. The presence or absence of a particular item on lists of recommended works such as Public Library Catalog, Best Books for Children, or Fiction Catalog or reviewed Internet source lists may be a factor in determining retention or deselection.

The library staff member will use his or her best judgment in considering the relative importance of each applicable factor in making a deselection decision.

4. Exceptions. The materials listed below will be excluded from the General Principles for deselection in the following manner:

A. Minnesota Collection. Materials by and about people from Koochiching County will not be deselected for any reason, with the exception of triplicate (and greater) copies of readily replaceable items.

B. Periodicals. Periodicals will not be evaluated on a copy-by-copy basis. Evaluation will consider each periodical title as a whole. Generally, back issues will be discarded according to a set schedule.

5. Disposal of Deselected Items. IFPL reserves the right to dispose of withdrawn items as it sees fit. Usually deselected materials will be donated to the Friends of the Library for their book sale. Materials that remain unsold will be discarded.