
EPA National Library Network Standards for Core Library Services	
EPA Classification No.: CIO 2170-S-01.0	CIO Approval Date: 12/28/2016
CIO Transmittal No.: 17-005m	Review Date: 12/28/2019

*Issued by the EPA Chief Information Officer,
Pursuant to Delegation 1-19, dated 07/07/2005*

EPA NATIONAL LIBRARY NETWORK STANDARDS FOR CORE LIBRARY SERVICES

1. PURPOSE

To establish Agency-wide standards for the core library services provided by the EPA National Library Network to EPA staff and to the public.

2. SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

The standards apply to the EPA National Library Network and all EPA organizations that provide library services either onsite or through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with another Network library.

3. AUDIENCE

The audience for the procedures includes Assistant, Deputy Assistant and Associate Administrators; Regional, Deputy, and Assistant Regional Administrators; Senior Information Officials, Information Management Officers, Federal Library Managers, Contract Library Managers and EPA staff.

4. BACKGROUND

The EPA National Library Network is composed of libraries and repositories located at EPA Headquarters, in Regional offices, and in laboratories and research centers across the Agency. The Network libraries exist to provide efficient and cost-effective access to information and data about the environment and related scientific, technical, management and policy information critical for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to carry out its mission.

The Network provides library services to EPA staff and the public, and Network procedures ensure consistency in service delivery. All EPA employees have access to core library services, including reference/research and document delivery/interlibrary loans, provided either by onsite library professionals or remotely through agreements with another Network library.

This document articulates the standards of services, including timeliness and quality, established by the Network for core library services of Reference and Research Services, Interlibrary Loan and Document Delivery, Cataloging and Public Access.

5. AUTHORITY

Information Directive: CIO 2170.3 EPA National Library Network (<http://www.epa.gov/irmpoli8>).

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6. STANDARDS

6.1 Reference and Research Services

The provision of reference services is a core function of EPA libraries. Reference services involve responding to direct inquiries, anticipating user needs and providing services accordingly, or making library resources accessible to library users. EPA library professionals and technical staff respond to information requests from EPA staff, contractors, other government agencies and the general public.

6.1.1 Standards of service

- 6.1.1.1 Each transaction is unique. Library professionals and technicians use their best professional judgment in evaluating and processing requests in accordance with the needs of users and the availability of resources.
- 6.1.1.2 Library professionals and technicians strive to answer all questions. This sometimes results in the need to refer a patron to another library, agency or individual. Referring a patron to another location is only done when it is in the best interest of the patron.
- 6.1.1.3 Library professionals and technicians cultivate listening and speaking skills. Using reference interview techniques, they clarify the inquiry if it is broad or ambiguous. They always ask the patron if the question has been answered satisfactorily. If communication problems develop, they ask another librarian, if available, to assist the patron.
- 6.1.1.4 Reference professionals and technicians confer with other librarians onsite or at other locations if necessary.
- 6.1.1.5 Library professionals and technicians maintain awareness of the library's resources and new resources which would be beneficial for the library to acquire.
- 6.1.1.6 Whenever possible, information technologies are used to provide reference services to EPA staff working in the field, at emergency sites and at home.
- 6.1.1.7 All patron inquiries are handled in a courteous and professional manner.
- 6.1.1.8 Network librarians do not provide legal, medical or financial advice under any circumstances, nor do they interpret Agency policies or regulations. When appropriate, patrons are referred to an appropriate Agency staff person in response to inquiries for policy and regulation interpretation.

6.1.2 Quality of service

Quality is of utmost importance since the results of reference inquiries may be used to develop regulations, document court cases, and to inform policy decision-making. The appropriate supervisory librarian in each location makes appropriate training available to all library professionals and technicians serving patrons and monitors responses according to local needs.

- 6.1.2.1 Information supplied to patrons is complete, accurate and up-to-date. If the information provided is believed to be incomplete, this is communicated to the patron.
- 6.1.2.2 Patrons are kept informed of the status of their request.

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6.1.2.3 Patrons are provided with options or alternatives for other sources if the information they are seeking is not available in the library or included in the resources available to that library.

6.1.3 Timeliness of service

Inquiries from patrons are received by telephone, Web forms, e-mail, chat, fax, mail or in person. Reference services are provided in a manner that is timely and responsive to the needs of the requester. The length of time required to answer a question is determined by its complexity and the needs of the individual patron.

- 6.1.3.1 All non-rush or regular reference inquiries are answered promptly to meet the patron's information needs. The librarian evaluates the inquiry and informs the patron of anticipated response time if the request cannot be answered within the same business day.
- 6.1.3.2 All rush reference requests are given priority status. All rush requests are discussed with the patron and an agreed-upon timeframe for response is established to ensure that the needs of the patron are met.
- 6.1.3.3 For extensive research requests, an estimate of time of completion is provided to the requester by the next business day.
- 6.1.3.4 Staff monitoring the chat service respond to inquiries as soon as possible.

6.2 Interlibrary Loan and Document Delivery

EPA Libraries participate in interlibrary loan borrowing and lending to meet the information needs of their users in a cost-effective manner. Interlibrary loan draws from the cooperation of many libraries worldwide utilizing resources from OCLC. Other methods of obtaining documents for EPA staff may include, but are not limited to, purchasing them from commercial document delivery services with accounts established through the Federal Library and Information Network (FEDLINK), from private vendors or directly from publishers.

6.2.1 Standards of service

To ensure that EPA staff can access the materials they need, libraries utilize a variety of methods to obtain documents, articles, standards and other materials not held in their collections. The most frequently used method to accomplish this is through interlibrary loan (ILL), but libraries also make use of government/commercial document delivery services and direct purchase.

- 6.2.1.1 Each Network library maintains an active OCLC account with a three-letter identifier, indicating participation in the worldwide network of interlibrary loan (ILL) borrowing and lending libraries.
 - 6.2.1.2 All Network libraries make ILL/document delivery services available to EPA staff, whether performed onsite or through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with another EPA library.
 - 6.2.1.3 Libraries accept ILL/document delivery requests in a variety of formats including, but not limited, to Web-based forms, email messages, in-person requests, paper request forms, telephone requests, fax requests and interoffice mail requests.
 - 6.2.1.4 All Network libraries comply with copyright laws governing ILL processes. Additionally, Network libraries operate within the National Commission on New Technological Uses of Copyrighted Works (CONTU) guidelines.
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- 6.2.1.5 EPA borrowing libraries participate in the ILL process as lending libraries.
- 6.2.1.6 Libraries make every effort to obtain requested documents free of charge before utilizing fee-based options, unless time or other constraints require otherwise.

6.2.2 Quality of service

- 6.2.2.1 Materials acquired through ILL are inspected for accuracy, thoroughness and readability before being delivered to users. If materials are incomplete or illegible, library staff attempt to correct the issue before delivering to the user.
- 6.2.2.2 Lending libraries ensure that any photocopies or electronic scans of resources are complete and legible.

6.2.3 Timeliness of service

- 6.2.3.1 Requests from patrons are responded to promptly. Patrons are contacted within two business days regarding the status of their requests. If the request cannot be filled within two business days, patrons are given a reasonable estimate of the length of time it will take to fill the request.
- 6.2.3.2 Requests from other libraries are monitored daily and responded to promptly. Lending libraries respond to requests within two business days.
- 6.2.3.3 Rush requests are given high priority status and initiated in a timely fashion that corresponds with the patron's stated requirements.
- 6.2.3.4 Library staff keep users informed of the status of their request as necessary. Unanticipated delays in providing material are communicated to users in a timely fashion.

6.3 Cataloging

Cataloging is the process by which librarians create bibliographic records to describe the physical and electronic resources in the library collection. Records may describe books, DVDs, CD-ROMs, maps, websites, microforms or any other type of material held in the library collection. The bibliographic records are usually organized as part of a cataloging system, which allows users to search for materials in a given library collection through various access points, such as title, author or subject. The EPA National Library Catalog is an authoritative source for locating environmental resources that reflect Agency programs.

6.3.1 Standards of service

- 6.3.1.1 Each Network library maintains an active OCLC account with a three-letter identifier and an authorization level that allows modification of OCLC catalog records.
 - 6.3.1.2 Each Network library has the capability to generate original and/or copy cataloging records for its materials, whether performed onsite, through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with another EPA library or by commercial vendors.
 - 6.3.1.3 All original cataloging generated by Network libraries is created using the RDA: Resource Description and Access cataloging standard, as outlined in the RDA Toolkit.
 - 6.3.1.4 Each Network library maintains updated catalog records for materials in its physical collection, including all items in storage and special collections, whether
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or not the item circulates or is shelved apart from the main collection.

6.3.1.5 Each Network library performs an inventory of its collection on a regular basis (e.g., the entire collection every three years or one third of the library collection each year) and updates OCLC records accordingly to maintain accuracy in the EPA National Library Catalog.

6.3.1.6 Each Network library reviews and updates catalog records for journal holdings each year as subscriptions are added or cancelled.

6.3.2 Quality of service

6.3.2.1 EPA catalogers include bibliographic information at OCLC Level K (less-than-full input by OCLC participants). As feasible, catalogers include all access points at OCLC Level I (eye) (full-level input by OCLC participants) or the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA)'s Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records (FRBR).

6.3.2.2 Errors found in records are corrected in a timely fashion.

6.3.2.3 Cataloging records are free from critical errors. An error is considered critical if it prevents users from being able to locate an item either in the collection or in the EPA National Library Catalog. Examples include an incorrect call number or an error in access points such as title and author.

6.3.2.4 Journal records are regularly updated to accurately reflect current holdings.

6.3.2.5 URLs in cataloging records are regularly checked and broken links are corrected.

6.3.3 Timeliness of service

6.3.3.1 EPA publications have the highest priority for cataloging.

6.3.3.2 Rush requests are cataloged and made shelf ready in a timely fashion.

6.4 Public Access

From the beginning, the mission of EPA's libraries has been to improve access to information for EPA decision making and environmental awareness and to provide public access to Agency information. Access to EPA publications is required by federal law, regulation or policy through channels such as the Government Publishing Office (GPO) and the National Technical Information Service (NTIS). The libraries of the EPA National Library Network play a pivotal role in providing public access to EPA information by developing tools such as the EPA National Library Catalog to assist the public in locating information, by managing collections such as print and electronic document repositories, and by providing expert assistance in organizing information for retrieval, regardless of format.

6.4.1 Standards of service

6.4.1.1 EPA libraries adhere to the Agency's Customer Service and Public Access Standards when responding to patrons. These standards apply to requests for general information from the public, but do not apply where legal requirements take precedence, such as Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) inquiries. Individual library Statements of Work include language to address standards for customer service and timeliness.

6.4.1.2 The EPA does not tolerate discrimination based on race; color; religion; sex, including pregnancy, sex stereotyping, gender identity or

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gender expression; national origin; sexual orientation; physical or mental disability; age; protected genetic information; status as a parent or marital status; political affiliation; or retaliation based on previous EEO activity.

- 6.4.1.3 EPA libraries accommodate persons with special needs in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act as amended.
- 6.4.1.4 EPA libraries provide appropriate access for people with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), to the extent that resources allow.

6.4.2 Quality of service

- 6.4.2.1 EPA libraries provide access to public visitors at least twenty-four hours per week over at least four days on a walk-in basis or by appointment during core business hours. Core business hours are defined as 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. local time.
- 6.4.2.2 EPA libraries provide quality service to public patrons in accordance with other relevant sections of this document.
- 6.4.2.3 All EPA libraries provide current hours of access, contact information, and other access considerations on Web pages maintained by the EPA National Library Network. EPA libraries notify the Network of changes to this information to ensure timely updates.

6.4.3 Timeliness of service

- 6.4.3.1 Make every effort to respond to all phone calls by the end of the next business day.
- 6.4.3.2 Respond to written correspondence within 5 business days.
- 6.4.3.3 Respond to email correspondence within 2 business days.

7. RELATED DOCUMENTS

EPA National Library Network. EPA National Library Network Strategic Plan FY2015-FY2017, dated 05/2015 (<http://www.epa.gov/libraries/epa-national-library-network-strategic-plan-fy-2015-fy-2017-0>)

EPA. Customer Service and Public Access Standards, dated 01/24/2008 (<http://intranet.epa.gov/oei/imitpolicy/qic/ciopolicy/2171-s-01.pdf>)

CIO 2171.0 Information Access Policy, dated 01/24/2008 (<http://intranet.epa.gov/oei/imitpolicy/qic/ciopolicy/2171.0.pdf>)

EPA National Library Network. Core List for an Environmental Reference Collection (EPA 260-B-10-001), dated 03/2010 (<http://www.epa.gov/libraries/core-list-environmental-reference-collection>)

8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. The Chief Information Officer (CIO) for the Agency, has the overall responsibility for the governance and coordination of the EPA National Library Network, including establishing policy and supporting procedures, standards, and guidance to ensure the effective oversight of the EPA National Library Network.
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- B. Assistant Administrators and Regional Administrators with EPA National Library Network libraries are responsible for the management of their individual libraries, ensure compliance with Agency-wide policies, procedures, standards and guidance relating to the Library Network and ensure their individual libraries provide efficient and cost-effective access to information and data necessary to carry out EPA's mission.
 - C. The National Library Program Manager has the day-to-day responsibility to provide assistance and guidance to offices in the operation of the EPA National Library Network and to ensure that the individual libraries provide efficient and cost-effective access to information and data necessary to carry out EPA's mission. The National Library Program Manager resides in the Office of Environmental Information.
 - D. Federal Library Managers have first-line responsibility for operation of physical Network libraries and provision of library services and to ensure that their individual libraries provide efficient and cost-effective access to information and data necessary to carry out EPA's mission.
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9. DEFINITIONS

Access: The ability of members of the public to obtain information from a government agency. All public libraries and most academic libraries in the United States are open to the general public, but access to certain areas such as closed stacks, rare books and special collections may be restricted. In a more general sense, the right or opportunity to use a resource that may not be openly and freely available to everyone. In computing, the privilege of using a computer system or online resource, usually controlled by the issuance of access codes to authorized users or, more broadly, the ability of a user to reach data stored on a computer or computer system.

Access Points, Controlled: Controlled Access Points are searchable fields in the catalog or bibliographic record such as author and subject, for which libraries follow forms of entry that have been established by an authoritative body. The theory is to refer all variant forms of the same name to one form, so that all documents by the same person or agency can be found in the same search. The variant forms should either give the official controlled form or automatically convert the request to search on the controlled form. For example, a search on "Samuel Clemens" should also refer the user to Mark Twain. In the United States the research community follows the forms created by the Library of Congress (LC).

Access Points, Uncontrolled: Uncontrolled Access Points are searchable fields in the catalog or bibliographic record, such as title, for which libraries enter the form or forms, in which they find the data on the document.

Article: A self-contained nonfiction prose composition on a fairly narrow topic or subject, written by one or more authors and published under a separate title in a collection or periodical containing other works of the same form. The length of a periodical article is often an indication of the type of publication—magazine articles are usually less than five pages long; articles published in scholarly journals, longer than five pages. Periodical articles are indexed, usually by author and subject, in periodical indexes and abstracting services, known as bibliographic databases when available electronically.

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Authorized EPA Contractor: An individual working under contract to the EPA whose Federal Project Officer grants him or her permission to use EPA library services, either in writing or in accordance with local policy.

Bibliographic Information: Any information that describes a work or resource. The description can be about any format or container for information in a library: books, CD-ROMs, DVDs, maps, etc.

Bibliographic Record: An entry in a database that describes the attributes of a work, including its physical properties, its subject(s), its location in the physical collection and/or links to the online version. Also known as Catalog Record.

Call Number: Assigned by a cataloger, the call number is a unique number assigned to a book that gives its relative location in the library.

Catalog: A comprehensive inventory of the books, periodicals, maps and other materials in a given library collection, arranged in systematic order to facilitate retrieval (usually alphabetically by author, title, and/or subject). In most modern libraries, the card catalog has been converted to machine-readable bibliographic records and is available online. The catalog for the EPA National Library Network is the EPA National Library Catalog.

Catalog Record: An entry in a database that describes the physical attributes of a work, including its subject(s) and gives the physical location of the item and/or links to the work online. Also known as Bibliographic Record.

Cataloging: The process of creating entries for a catalog. In libraries, this usually includes bibliographic description, subject analysis, assignment of classification notation and activities involved in physically preparing the item for the shelf, tasks usually performed under the supervision of a librarian trained as a cataloger.

Controlled Access Points: See Access Points, Controlled.

Copy Cataloging: The adaptation of a pre-existing bibliographic record, usually found in OCLC or some other bibliographic database, to fit the characteristics of the item in hand, with modifications to correct obvious errors and minor adjustments to reflect locally accepted cataloging practice; as distinguished from original cataloging which is creating a completely new record from scratch.

Document Delivery Service: The provision of published or unpublished documents in hard copy, microform or digital format, usually for a fixed fee upon request. In most libraries, document delivery service is provided by the interlibrary loan office on a cost-recovery basis. The patron is usually required to pick up printed material at the library, but electronic full-text may be forwarded via e-mail. Also refers to the physical or electronic delivery of documents from a library collection to the residence or place of business of a library user, upon request.

EPA Document/Publication: An official EPA publication in any format, that has or should be

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assigned a special alpha-numeric identifier known as an EPA publication number.

EPA National Library Catalog: The online catalog for the EPA National Library Network, which provides bibliographical records for the items residing in EPA libraries and links to documents on environmental topics on the Internet. The Catalog allows searches by author, title, subject heading, any standard numbers that are assigned to the work, classification number and keywords present in the record.

EPA National Library Network: A national network composed of EPA libraries and repositories located in the Agency's Headquarters, Regional and Field Offices, Research Centers and specialized laboratories, as well as Web-based access to electronic collections. Network libraries are defined as those libraries with an official membership presence in OCLC. Centralized Network coordination comes from the Agency's Office of Environmental Information. Individual EPA libraries are administered by a range of offices in conjunction with contract staff.

FEDLINK: See Federal Library and Information Network.

Federal Library and Information Network (FEDLINK): A purchasing, training and resource-sharing consortium for federal libraries and information centers based at the Library of Congress. Participation in FEDLINK requires an interagency agreement with the Library of Congress.

IFLA: See International Federation of Library Associations.

ILL: See Interlibrary Loan.

Interlibrary Loan (ILL): The process by which a library requests materials from, or supplies materials to, another library. This service is provided upon request of a library user for materials not available in the local library.

International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA): An organization created to provide librarians around the world with a forum for exchanging ideas, and promoting international cooperation, research and development in all fields of library activity. IFLA's report, "Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records," establishes cataloging standards and informs practices worldwide.

Lending Library: A library or other institution that provides materials on request to another library, usually via interlibrary loan.

Materials: Items within the library collection that may include books, journals, reports, miscellaneous publications, microform, multimedia and other physical objects. Generally, library materials do not include official records, but convenience copies of records may be included.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU): A memorandum signed by more than one agency or

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organization that promises cooperation or coordination on a specific issue, project or agenda.

Microform: A generic term for a highly reduced photographic copy of text and/or images stored on a translucent medium (microfiche or microfilm) or on an opaque medium such as card stock (microopaque or aperture card). Microforms can be original editions or reproductions. Reader-printer machines are required to view and make hard copies. Digital storage media such as magnetic tape and disk, CD-ROM, etc., are superseding microforms in information storage and retrieval to some extent.

MOU: See Memorandum of Understanding.

National Technical Information Service (NTIS): NTIS serves as a central information dissemination resource for U.S. Federal Government technical reports and other government-funded scientific, technical, engineering and business related information. NTIS' basic authority to operate a permanent clearinghouse of scientific and technical information is codified as chapter 23 of Title 15 of the United States Code (15 U.S.C. 1151-1157).

OCLC: OCLC is a nonprofit, membership-based, computer library service and research organization dedicated to the public purposes of furthering access to the world's information and reducing information costs. OCLC maintains the largest catalog and interlibrary loan network in the world, which assists librarians and the general public with locating, acquiring, cataloging, lending, borrowing and preserving library materials.

Original Cataloging: The creation of a bibliographical or cataloging record from the beginning without the aid of a pre-existing record. Most EPA documents will need original cataloging by EPA libraries because they will be the first to see the works and because cataloging these documents is EPA's contribution to the OCLC database. As EPA is able to copy catalog from records created by other agencies and institutions, the other agencies and institutions will be able to pick up records that EPA created. Original cataloging is more time consuming than copy cataloging. To offset the time spent in creating an original record, OCLC offers a credit towards the account of the cataloging library.

Patrons: Anyone authorized to use the materials and services of the library. May include EPA staff, contractors and/or the public.

Periodical: A serial publication with its own distinctive title, containing works written by more than one contributor, issued more than once, generally at regularly-stated intervals of less than a year, without prior decision as to when the final issue will appear. Although each issue is complete in itself, its relationship to preceding issues is usually indicated by an issue and/or volume number. Content is usually controlled by an editor or editorial board. The category includes subscription-based materials including magazines, journals and newsletters, but not proceedings or the other regular publications of corporate bodies as they relate primarily to meetings. Newspapers are not formally classified as periodicals.

Physical Collection: The materials, whether books, maps, microforms, scrolls, CD-ROMs, DVDs or

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any other items that physically reside in a library or its storage space and are managed by one or more mechanisms of bibliographic control.

Public Visitor: Person who is not employed by EPA but uses the library in person to obtain library services, to use materials in the physical collection or to access public EPA databases.

Publication: For purposes of this document, when used alone, “publication” is an all-encompassing term that refers to a work capable of being read or perceived and may include monographs, journals or documents, regardless of source or format.

Reference: Services provided by library staff to meet the information needs of patrons (in person, by telephone, by mail or electronically), including but not limited to: answering questions; instructing users in the selection and use of appropriate tools and techniques for finding information; conducting searches on behalf of the patron; directing users to the location of library resources; assisting in the evaluation of information; and, when appropriate, referring patrons to resources outside the library.

Reference Interview: The interpersonal communication that occurs between a reference librarian and a library user to determine the requester’s specific information need(s), which may turn out to be different than the reference question as initially posed. A reference interview may occur in person, by telephone or electronically.

Resource Description and Access (RDA): A comprehensive set of guidelines and instructions on resource description and access covering all types of content and media. Libraries refer to this for guidance when cataloging materials. RDA is accessed through the Web-based RDA Toolkit which is purchased for the EPA Library Network by OEI.

SOW: See Statement of Work.

Statement of Work (SOW): A specific statement regarding the requirements needed in a service contract. The statement of work should include all aspects of job requirements, performance and assessment.

Subscription: The right to receive or access a newspaper or periodical for a designated period of time (or prescribed number of successive issues), upon payment of a subscription fee payable in advance to the publisher or subscription agent. Most subscriptions are renewed annually. Subscription also refers to the right of a library or library system to provide access to a bibliographic database or other online resource to its patrons under a licensing agreement with a vendor upon payment of an annual subscription fee and is subject to renewal.

Uncontrolled Access Points: See Access Points, Uncontrolled.

Walk-in Visitors: Persons who physically enter library facilities in a defined time period, regardless of reason; library and building/maintenance staff are not included.

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10. WAIVERS

Waivers to these standards must be approved by the Assistant Administrator for Environmental Information/Chief Information Officer. Waiver requests must be submitted in writing by the requesting office's Senior Information Official (SIO) through the Director of the Office of Enterprise Information Programs.

11. RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND GUIDANCE

The following related policies, standards, and guidance documents are available on the Office of Environmental Information Policy page (<http://www.epa.gov/irmpoli8>):

- CIO 2170.3 EPA National Library Network Policy
 - CIO 2170-P-02.2 EPA Library Reference and Research Services Procedures
 - CIO 2170.P-06.2 EPA Library Facility Management Procedures
 - CIO 2170-P-11.1 EPA Library Interlibrary Loan/Document Delivery Procedures
 - CIO 2170-P-07.1 EPA Library Cataloging Procedures
 - CIO 2170-P-12.1 EPA Library Public Access Procedures
 - CIO 2170-P-08.1 EPA Library Collection Development and Management Procedures
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12. MATERIAL SUPERSEDED

None.

13. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For further information about these procedures, please contact the EPA National Library Network Program Manager at epalibrarynetwork@epa.gov.



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U.S. Environmental Protection Agency