
EPA Classification No.:	CIO Approval Date:
CIO Transmittal No.:	Review Date:

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

EPA NATIONAL LIBRARY NETWORK

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish uniform governance and management for the EPA National Library Network.

2. SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all EPA program and regional offices with Network libraries. Network libraries are defined as those libraries with an official membership presence in the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) system. These libraries constitute the EPA National Library Network. For purposes of this policy, “Network” is used interchangeably with EPA National Library Network.

3. AUDIENCE

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

4. BACKGROUND

In 1971, Howard Messner signed EPA Order No. 1300.1, “Library Services setting up the network,” which outlined the development of an Agency-wide library system with a coordinated approach to library systems planning and operations. EPA’s library system was designed to support staff in the program and regional offices and provide them with access to environmental information and related scientific, technical, management and policy information. Since that time, EPA’s library network has evolved to reflect changes in technology, information access, and staff needs. Today the libraries in the Network vary in size, target audience, subject focus, and depth of collections and consist of repository libraries, regional libraries, specialty libraries, and research laboratory libraries.

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In the recent past the EPA National Library Network has functioned as a collection of independent local libraries, catering primarily to the needs of their local EPA staff audiences and walk-in public visitors. To be most effective, EPA must now operate its libraries as a fully distributed and coordinated network in order to maximize access to resources and reduce duplication of effort. A distributed network will improve document access and core information services at all local EPA libraries, while at the same time enabling individual libraries to streamline operations and reduce redundancies.

5. AUTHORITY

OMB Circular A-130, Management of Federal Information Resources, Sections 8 and 9
EPA Delegation 1-19 General, Administrative, and Miscellaneous, 2(b)

6. POLICY

The EPA National Library Network is composed of libraries and repositories located at EPA Headquarters, in Regional offices, and in laboratories across the Agency. The Network libraries 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 Assistant Administrator for Environmental Information, as the Chief Information Officer (CIO) of the Agency, has the overall responsibility for the governance of the EPA National Library Network under this Policy and its related procedures and standards.

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. Mechanisms for public access to Network library collections are established at all EPA library locations.

The Network develops, maintains, and/or manages online tools to facilitate library operations and provides access to information resources for EPA staff and the public. These online tools include, but are not limited to:

- Online Library System (OLS), EPA's online catalog of bibliographic records of the collections in Network libraries, available on the Internet to EPA employees and the public.
 - EPA Desktop Library, the Agency's desktop gateway to online information resources, available on the EPA Intranet, which provides access to resources to support the work
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of EPA employees. Resources on the Desktop Library include, but are not limited to online journals, Federal Registers, news resources, and bibliographic databases. The Desktop Library is reviewed and evaluated on a regular basis to ensure the suite of tools meet the needs of users.

- Internet and Intranet Web sites for the EPA National Library Network and Web pages for individual EPA libraries. These sites/pages point to the Network's online tools and communicate access information, such as hours of operation and availability of services.

The Network supports and facilitates access to the Agency's electronic repository for information products which shall include digital copies of official EPA publications.

7. RELATED DOCUMENTS

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

8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Assistant Administrator for Environmental Information: The Assistant Administrator, OEI, as the CIO for the Agency, has the overall responsibility for the management 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.

Assistant Administrators and Regional Administrators: Assistant Administrators and Regional Administrators with libraries within the EPA National Library Network have the management responsibility of their individual libraries to ensure compliance with Agency-wide policies, procedures, standards and guidance relating to the Library Network.

National Library Program Manager: The Library Program Manager resides in OEI's Office of Information Analysis and Access and has the day-to-day responsibility to provide assistance and guidance to offices in the operation of the EPA National Library Network.

Federal Library Managers: The EPA employees who have first-line responsibility for operation of physical Network libraries and provision of library services.

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

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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. In a more general sense, the ability of a user to reach data stored on a computer or computer system.

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 Online Library System (OLS).

Desktop Library: A collection of electronic resources available to all EPA staff via the Intranet, including freely available and subscription-based services. The Desktop Library is funded and managed by the Office of Environmental Information with support from other offices.

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 the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) system. 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.

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.

OCLC: See Online Computer Library Center.

OLS: See Online Library System

Online Computer Library Center (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 assist librarians and the general public with locating, acquiring, cataloging, lending, borrowing and preserving library

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materials.

Online Library System (OLS): The online catalog for the EPA Library Network, which provides bibliographic records for the items residing in EPA libraries and links to documents on environmental topics on the Internet. OLS allows searches by author, title, subject heading, any standard numbers that are assigned to the work, classification number, and allows for keyword searching of the record.

Public Visitor: Person who is not employed at the EPA location but uses the library in person to obtain library services, to use materials in the physical collection or to access public EPA databases. EPA staff visiting from other EPA locations are also considered “public visitors.”

Reference: Services provided by library staff to meet the information needs of patrons (in person, by telephone, 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, referring patrons to resources outside the library when appropriate.

Repository Library: A central place where library collections are stored and made accessible. EPA Repository Libraries collect and preserve unique EPA documents and other materials deemed of value to the EPA National Library Network.

Services: Any service provided by the library. The most common services are answering questions and conducting research (known as reference), providing access to online databases, and interlibrary loan to retrieve materials from other libraries.

10. WAIVERS

There are no waivers from this policy. There may be waivers or exemptions for certain specifications in the procedures and standards.

11. RELATED PROCEDURES, STANDARDS AND GUIDANCE

EPA Library Materials Dispersal Procedures

EPA Library Reference and Research Services Procedures

EPA Library Usage Statistics Procedures

EPA Library Network Communication Strategies Procedures

Digitization Processes for EPA Libraries Procedures

EPA Library Planning and Managing Physical Space Procedures

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EPA Repository Library Management Procedures

12. MATERIAL SUPERSEDED

This policy supersedes CIO Policy 2170.0 (formerly 2106) Interim Policy – EPA Library Network.

13. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For further information about this Policy, please contact the Policy and Program Management Branch of the Information Access Division in the Office of Environmental Information.

***Molly A. O'Neill, Assistant Administrator
and Chief Information Officer
Office of Environmental Information***