SOP: Handling Overdue, Lost, or Damaged Materials

This SOP details the procedures for **handling overdue, lost, or damaged materials**, including reporting protocols, investigation steps, accountability measures, and corrective actions. It aims to minimize material loss, ensure timely returns, and maintain accurate inventory records by implementing systematic tracking, communication, and recovery processes.

1. Purpose

To establish a standardized approach for identifying, reporting, investigating, and resolving issues related to overdue, lost, or damaged materials.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all staff responsible for managing inventory, circulating items, and overseeing material return processes.

3. Definitions

Term	Definition
Overdue Material	Any material not returned by the designated due date.
Lost Material	Materials reported missing and not found after a reasonable search period.
Damaged Material	Materials returned with impairment affecting usability or condition.

4. Responsibilities

- **Staff:** Monitor returns, report incidents, initiate follow-up, and update records.
- **Supervisors:** Oversee investigation, enforce accountability, authorize corrective measures.
- **Inventory Manager:** Maintain tracking systems and ensure implementation of recovery actions.

5. Procedures

5.1. Handling Overdue Materials

1. Generate overdue report from inventory system weekly.
2. Notify the responsible party (borrower/department) via email or call.
3. Allow a grace period (e.g., 7 days) for return or explanation.
4. If still overdue after grace period:
    - Escalate notification to supervisor and document communication.
    - Place a temporary hold or restriction as appropriate.

5.2. Reporting Lost or Damaged Materials

1. Staff identifies missing or damaged material at time of audit/return.
2. Complete Material Incident Report with photos (for damage) if possible.
3. Notify supervisor and log details in tracking system.

5.3. Investigation

1. Supervisor reviews report and contacts relevant parties for information.
2. Initiate search for lost items and assess extent/nature of damage.
3. Determine cause/root of the incident (process failure, carelessness, etc.).

5.4. Accountability Measures

1. Discuss findings with responsible individual/department.
2. Enforce consequences as per institutional policy (replacement cost, loss of privileges, etc.).
3. Document outcomes in incident log.

5.5. Corrective Actions & Prevention

1. Replace or repair lost/damaged materials as necessary.
2. Implement process improvements or additional training if required.
3. Update procedures as needed based on incident analysis.

6. Documentation

- Material Incident Report Form
- Incident/Resolution Log
- Inventory System Updates
- Communication Records

7. Review Cycle

This SOP should be reviewed and updated annually or when significant changes to processes occur.

8. References

- Company Inventory Management Policy
- Employee Handbook â€" Accountability Guidelines