

# Guidelines for the Retention and Removal of Materials from the Collection

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## Why weed?

We weed to remove materials that are:

- no longer being used (consider for transfer to another location)
- outdated and incorrect
- worn or damaged

Benefits include:

- areas needing new material are identified
- staff gain knowledge about the content and condition of the collection
- browsing and book retrieval are easier
- shelves are more attractive and inviting
- use increases

## Who weeds?

At Hamilton Public Library weeding is a [professional responsibility](#) but other staff assist in identifying material that should be weeded. The Collection Development Department may recommend the withdrawal or transfer of material based on the results of the reconsideration of materials process.

## When do we weed?

Weeding is not a special project or an emergency fix when a library is short of shelf space. weeding must be done on a regular, ongoing basis as part of collection maintenance.

Reports regarding items that have not circulated are produced on an ongoing basis.

## Weeding at the Hamilton Public Library is informed by the following:

- [Hamilton Public Library Material Selection Policy](#)
- [Hamilton Public Library Deselection Policy](#)

- [Meeting User Needs II: Our Collection Responsibilities, 2003](#)
- [Branch Library Roles in an Amalgamated Library System](#), July 13, 2000
- Results of the Central Library Service Review – to be announced
- Central Library Guidelines including:
  - Selection Profile: Print non-fiction
  - Selection Profile: Fiction (to be done in conjunction with branch profiles).
  - [Closed Stack Retention Guidelines](#) (Draft only)
- Branch Selection Profiles (to be prepared)
- Core Reference List
- Annual Statistical Measures
- Retention guidelines of other jurisdictions (e.g. Federal Depository Status, National Film Board)

## **Tiers of Service**

Hamilton Public Library employs defines service by tiers to maximize the use of resources. Instructions for retention, transfer and removal of materials will vary by tier. It should be noted that this is just one factor to consider when weeding and that there will be variations between branches in the same tier.

**Neighbourhood Branches** provide popular, recreational and general informational materials, with an emphasis on children's materials. Collections reflect local neighbourhood interests. Currency, size and use of the collection distinguish these branches from the community branches.

**Community Branches** provide more extensive popular, recreational and informational materials and a small print reference collection. Saltfleet is treated as a community branch for the purposes of weeding because the criteria established for weeding of the community branches fits better than those applied to Saltfleet given collection size, space and use.

**District Libraries** build upon the above, but include more non-fiction and reference materials. Currently only Terryberry meets this definition and is weeded accordingly.

**The Central Library** has a strong current circulating collection with a large reference component. The Special Collections Department is the only department that collects and retains materials at the comprehensive level.

## **Weeding Criteria**

Hamilton Public Library collections are weeded by three criteria:

- Use (Items that are lightly used at one location may be transferred to another location before they are candidates for final removal from the collection.) See [Transfer Guidelines \(under development, December 2003\)](#)
- Condition
- Content

These criteria apply to materials in all languages and for all intellectual levels in the collections of Hamilton Public Library. See the [Hamilton Public Library Weeding Guidelines](#) which are provided in a chart format by Dewey number.

### **Weeding by Condition**

Materials in poor condition reflect badly on the whole collection and send the message that it is acceptable to treat materials carelessly. Weed material that:

- is dirty, mouldy or smelly
- has missing, marked, mutilated, damaged or yellow, brittle pages
- has broken bindings
- is heavily vandalized (even if it contains information that is still useable)

If the damage is due to heavy use, replace the title, if available, and weed the worn copy.

**Responsibility:** All Staff. Pull damaged or worn items from the collection on an ongoing basis whenever they are encountered, for example, when working at the circulation desk or when filling holds. Set them aside for the appropriate librarian to review.

**Disposal:** Recycle

### **Weeding by Content**

The [Hamilton Public Library Weeding Guidelines](#) provide specific directions, by Dewey, for both the retention and removal of materials from the print non-fiction collection. These are based upon the philosophical position statements outlined in [Meeting User Needs II: Our Collection Responsibilities](#) and which include, but are not limited to, these commitments:

- Accuracy of information is the single most important standard for non-fiction. The age of the title can be a major factor in determining accuracy, but this varies depending on the subject.
- Presentation may date a title, even when the information has not changed: prefer newer works using non-sexist language and current terminology.
- Superseded editions are withdrawn as soon as a new edition arrives. Some exceptions are mentioned in the detailed weeding guidelines.<sup>1</sup> A location, may keep superseded editions for one year in either the reference or circulating collections. Withdraw annual editions that are more than two years old whether

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<sup>1</sup> In Horizon, the holdings record may include information about transfer of the older edition is when a new one is received.

or not your branch has received the new edition. Do not transfer these to the circulating collection or storage.

- Only current and accurate information should be on the open shelf. Older materials should be placed in the stacks provided that they fit the [Closed Stack Retention Guidelines](#).
- Works with Canadian content and points of view will generally be kept longer than non-Canadian works unless inaccurate or out of date.
- The Hamilton Public Library's collections are developed and maintained for use by the public. Since customers and use patterns change over time, staff will base collection decisions on who is using the collection, what they are looking for, and what the needs of the community are in order to make the appropriate adjustments to the collection.

**Responsibility:** Librarians, Library Assistants under the direction of a librarian

**Disposal:** attractive, and useful materials should be sent to book sale. Items that are old, badly out-of-date should be recycled. Medical and diets related to medical conditions MUST be recycled as they may provide dangerous information. Directories, handbooks and other such annual publications should be recycled.

See [Disposal Guidelines](#) for more information on disposal including sending items to Book Sale.