**GUIDELINES FOR SHELVING MATERIALS**

**Evergreen Catalog:** Evergreen uses a computerized system to check books in and out and locate materials in the library. This system serves all the libraries in the Central/Western Massachusetts Library System (C/W MARS)

Every book cataloged for C/W MARS is in the automated system. The screen will list all the copies in the system and will tell you if these copies are available for check-out.

When the circulation desk checks in a book on the computer, the online catalog immediately displays the book as being first on the shelving cart, then on the shelf. Prompt, accurate shelving is critical to providing good service to the public and to locating materials quickly and easily.

**Book Information:** The Library’s barcode is located on the front top left corner of the cover (or on the back, if it is an older book). The owning library is printed there. The labels on the spine of the book tell you where in the library the book should be shelved.

**Always** check the barcode and the spine labels before you return the book to the shelf.

**The 4 Ss** As you get into the serious business of shelving materials, a helpful phrase you may want to remember is the “Four Ss”, which are **SORTING,**

**SHELVING, SHIFTING, AND SHELF READING.** All are interconnected when it comes to successfully maintaining order and easy accessibility to materials.

**Accuracy in shelving is more important than speed**, although you will improve your speed as you go along.

**Neatness counts**: items should be lined up neatly and positioned so patrons can remove or replace an item easily.

**Pages should not get in the way of patrons:** If a patron is browsing where you need to shelve, do not excuse yourself and begin shelving there. Begin somewhere else. This rule also applies if you are already shelving somewhere and a patron wants to look at that shelf. Move out of the way immediately. Keep carts at the end of the aisle as you work so that they don’t block patron access to materials.

**Sorting:** When shelving cataloged materials from a book truck you will need to put the materials in order on the cart. Make sure to check the barcode and spine labels as you do this. Occasionally a book makes it onto our “put-away shelves” that does not belong to us. You are our last line of defense!

**Shelving:** When you begin shelving, glance over the shelf where you are about to put a book. Scan the whole shelf to make sure you are not misplacing the book or material by putting it next to another misplaced item.

Before placing the item on the shelf, look 4 items to the left and 4 to the right. Re-shelve anything you find out of place. Stray books which are completely out of place should be returned to the circulation area unless you are certain where they should go.

Try to avoid tightening bookends against materials too tightly. This forces books back behind other books and also makes returning a book to the shelf very frustrating for the patron.

The opposite extreme should be avoided as well. Books very loosely shelved or with gaps in between can end up falling and sliding.

Books should be shelved with the spines even with the front edge of the shelf, but not extending beyond. This makes them easier to see and to pull off the shelf, and gives a uniform and neat appearance to the rows of books.

Try to keep the same call number or author on the same shelf. But do not over-fill one shelf to accomplish this. It is always better to break up an author or call number on two shelves than to cram too many books onto one shelf.

(Adapted from the Saginaw Public Library)