

Tips About Installing Drive-up Book Drops

(James B. Casey, Director of Oak Lawn Public Library via PUBLIB, March, 2005)

- The height of the slot for the drop will need to be able to address vehicles of various size from compact cars to vans and trucks. Nobody will be 100% satisfied with the height.
- The slot must be on the driver's side rather than the passenger side. Make sure that the approach is such that drivers will come up on the drop box on the left side of the car. You will need to check with your Village or City to get signage to deal with traffic approach and to commit for "one way" traffic at some point. Anything involving vehicular approach will probably need to be examined by police.
- The box will have to have accommodation for both AV materials and books. Make sure the intention is clear -- which slot is which -- and that sufficient cushioning is provided in the drop for more fragile AV items.
- The box will get filled FAST and need to be unloaded every few hours -- especially in the morning before you open. Extra staffing must be available. If it is your Circulation staff that must handle this chore, be sure to make sure that they have some additional hours or another part-time position to handle the very significant workload.
- The box will need to be unloaded EVERY day --- even on days when you are closed. If you are closed for holiday or due to snow or power outage or whatever, someone will have to come and make sure that the drop is unloaded. If you want angry patrons, try closing down the "drive by book drop" even temporarily!
- The box will need to be unloaded every day RAIN or SHINE or -- especially in the case of New York state -- SNOW. The approaches to the box for cars and book trucks will have to be cleared and ready.
- Make sure that whatever you buy is both weather proof and of sufficient size to accommodate large accumulations of material. Rest assured that there will be a fair number of weather damaged items for which you will not be able to blame the patron. You may even need to revisit your policy on charging for damaged books.
- Make sure that your insurance agent is aware of this new service and considers any new coverage which may be needed.
- Graffiti coat. It makes our dark blue book drop finish look a little milky, but I was told one incident of graffiti that came off and it would pay for itself.
- Get one with a sloped or peaked top vs. a flat top. This is so people won't be tempted to sit on it or put stuff on top of it (backpacks, rocks, drinks, etc.) Our old one has kids sitting on it every afternoon (no wonder it leaks now) and our new one isn't even tempting as it is both sloped one way and has a peak in the middle. The worst that happens is kids bang on it like a drum because it makes a satisfyingly loud noise.