

# Literature Request and Inventory Guidelines

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## INTRODUCTION

1. Bibles and Bible-based publications are provisions from Jehovah that feed us spiritually and help us accomplish our ministry fully. The goal is to provide publishers and interested ones with the literature they need in a timely fashion while avoiding the accumulation of large quantities of literature. (Matt. 5:6; John 6:12) The following information is designed to assist you in meeting this objective. The Congregation Service Committee and all who are assigned to work with literature should become familiar with these guidelines. Additionally, when logged in to [jw.org](http://jw.org), please consult the “Help” text for specific instructions on how to submit, cancel, and modify requests for periodicals and other literature. As you review these guidelines, please keep the following key ideas in mind:

- (1) Provide good service to publishers and interested ones.
- (2) Maintain enough stock to last no more than three months.
- (3) Frequently check standing requests for periodicals in order to avoid overstock.
- (4) Promptly review correspondence from the branch office for instructions regarding new items and other literature-related matters.

## ROLES

2. **Literature Servant:** The body of elders in each congregation should assign a capable and reliable elder or ministerial servant to serve as the literature servant. His responsibilities include caring for the supply of periodicals and other literature. There is no need to assign a separate brother to serve as a magazine servant. However, other exemplary baptized brothers may be assigned to assist the literature servant.

3. **Literature Group, Language-Coordinating Congregation, and Service Overseer:** When more than one congregation meets in the same auditorium, those congregations form a literature group. If only one congregation in a particular language meets in an auditorium, they are considered the language-coordinating congregation. If there are two or more congregations of the same language in the literature group, the Congregation Service Committees of those congregations should designate one congregation as the language-

coordinating congregation. This congregation will maintain a common supply of stock items in its language for all congregations in the literature group. The literature servant in the language-coordinating congregation is responsible for (1) submitting requests to the Shipping Department for stock items in the language of the congregation, (2) taking a monthly inventory using the *Monthly Movement of Literature* (S-28) form, and (3) submitting inventory reports to the Shipping Department when directed. If a nearby congregation reports a surplus of an item, the language-coordinating congregation should verify whether this surplus could be used instead of submitting a request to the Shipping Department. The service overseer should verify and approve all requests before they are submitted to the Shipping Department to make sure that they correspond with the actual need, thus avoiding overstock. This review process provides the service overseer with an opportunity to train the literature servant. Changes to the language-coordinating congregation should be submitted according to the instructions found on the “Literature Coordination” page of [jw.org](http://jw.org) and the *Shipping Information* (S-36) form.

**4. Ship-to Congregation:** The combined Congregation Service Committees in the literature group should designate one of the language-coordinating congregations to serve as the ship-to congregation. The ship-to congregation is responsible for receiving, checking-in, and distributing shipments on behalf of all congregations in the literature group. The literature servant in the ship-to congregation should obtain a copy of the packing list to verify shipments received. Packing lists may be accessed using the “Shipment History” link on [jw.org](http://jw.org) and will be available to view for approximately six months after a shipment has been sent. If any discrepancies are discovered, the literature servant should follow the instructions found in [paragraph 13](#). Changes to literature groups and to ship-to congregations must be submitted using the *Shipping Information* (S-36) form.

## **SPECIAL-REQUEST ITEMS AND LITERATURE IN OTHER LANGUAGES**

5. The literature servant in each congregation may use [jw.org](http://jw.org) to obtain stock items in languages that are not coordinated by another congregation in the literature group and to obtain special-request items, such as annual items, in any language. He should use the *Record of Special-Request Items* (S-57) to keep track of special-request items that have been requested by individuals. He should distribute the items in a timely fashion. All literature requests should reach the Shipping Department before the cutoff date displayed on the “Current Literature Request” page on [jw.org](http://jw.org). The service overseer should verify and approve these requests to make sure that they correspond to the actual need of the congregation.

## **PERIODICALS**

6. According to the need, each congregation should have standing requests for the *Our Christian Life and Ministry—Meeting Workbook* and the study edition of *The Watchtower*. However, the language-coordinating congregation should determine and request the total quantities needed of *Awake!* and the public edition of *The Watchtower* in the language it coordinates. Since these quantities tend to change over time, the language-coordinating congregation should maintain good communication with the service overseers in each congregation so that the standing requests match the current needs. If additional quantities of a specific issue are required, a special request may be submitted.

7. After the ship-to congregation distributes the periodicals to the other congregations in the literature group, the literature servant should make sure that the periodicals are promptly made available to the publishers. In order to avoid accidentally placing nested magazines in the field ministry, the literature servant should ensure that nested copies are separated before they are made available to the publishers. This will help prevent the congregation’s supply of magazines from being depleted prematurely.

8. Publishers may be reminded to return surplus magazines to the Kingdom Hall. Magazines returned in good condition may be made available for redistribution. If the supply of an issue is depleted before the end of the months that it is featured, other items from the Teaching Toolbox may be used in the ministry. Periodically, the language-coordinating congregation should calculate how many magazines are moved on average and adjust standing requests according to the need. Monitoring magazine requests and inventory in this way will help to avoid accumulating large quantities of magazines.

## **INVENTORY RECORDS**

9. Accurate and up-to-date inventory records enable the service overseer and literature servant to monitor trends and to respond promptly to needs as they arise. They also allow the service overseer and literature servant to know how much literature is being moved on average and to estimate the needs for the next two or three months. As a result, when requests for more literature are submitted, the quantity requested will sufficiently supply the needs of the congregation(s), while avoiding accumulating large supplies of literature that may take many months to move.

10. Every month, the literature servant in the language-coordinating congregation should take an inventory of all literature and update the *Monthly Movement of Literature* (S-28) form. Twice a year, the branch office will ask language-coordinating congregations to submit their inventory reports via [jw.org](http://jw.org). When doing so, please follow the instructions provided in the *Monthly Movement of Literature* form and in *Announcements and Reminders* (S-147).

## **SHIPPING INFORMATION**

11. Please be sure that the shipping information on the “Literature Coordination” page of [jw.org](http://jw.org) remains up-to-date. If a congregation’s shipping information will change in the near future, the *Shipping Information* (S-36) form should be completed and sent to the Shipping Department.

## **LITERATURE DEPOTS**

12. If a congregation is assigned to pick up shipments at a literature depot, the coordinator of the body of elders and the secretary in the ship-to congregation will serve as contacts. They will be notified when a shipment has arrived, and they should arrange to have the shipments picked up on the date provided by the depot.

## **REPORTING DISCREPANCIES AND PROBLEMS**

13. If after a thorough search it is determined that an item or a shipment has not been received, the ship-to congregation may contact the Shipping Department to request a replacement. All damaged shipments and surplus items should be reported to the Shipping Department immediately upon receipt, and indication should be made as to whether replacements are needed for damaged items. Any necessary claims proceedings with a parcel carrier service will be filed by the branch office, not the congregation. Additionally, do not return any items to the branch office without first receiving authorization and instructions on how to handle the matter.

## **RUSH SHIPMENTS**

14. If a congregation has a unique need for a rush shipment, it should contact the Shipping Department. A member of the Congregation Service Committee should approve all rush requests. The congregation may be expected to cover any additional cost for expedited services.

## BRaille LITERATURE

15. Braille literature is available in various languages, grades, and formats. Before submitting a request for braille literature, please confirm in which braille language and grade the person reads. Further details regarding caring for the needs of the blind can be found in the *Braille Publications List* (S-58).

### APPENDIX A—QUICK REFERENCE CHART

Item	Who places the request?	Where is it stored?
Special-request items, study and large-print editions of <i>The Watchtower</i> , and <i>Our Christian Life and Ministry—Meeting Workbook</i>	Every congregation can request any language. Only request when an individual has specifically asked for an item. A few extra copies of the study edition of <i>The Watchtower</i> and the <i>Life and Ministry Meeting Workbook</i> may be requested for new ones and those who need a replacement copy.	In your congregation's literature supply area
Items in your congregation's language (not special-request)	The language-coordinating congregation for your language	Common supply area
Items in another congregation's language in your Kingdom Hall auditorium (not your language, not special-request items)	The language-coordinating congregation for that language	Common supply area
Items in a language that is not a congregation language in your Kingdom Hall auditorium	Every congregation requests its own stock	In your congregation's literature supply area