sierra circulation

# Barcodes and Barcode Changes FAQ

### How do barcode scanners work with Sierra?

Sierra has no specific hardware support for barcode scanners. As far as Sierra is concerned, a barcode scanner is just a text input device, and scanning in a barcode looks to Sierra as if the same barcode had been typed on a keyboard.

This means that if you are having problems with scanning barcodes and need to test whether your scanner is reading them correctly, you can test your scanner by scanning into Notepad.

It also means that Sierra can take input from any “barcode scanner” that can output text, including a magnetic stripe reader or RFID reader.

### What do I need to do if I am changing from a barcode reader to a stripe reader?

Sierra supports both barcode reader and magnetic stripe reader formats for identification cards if the library has scanners that read the cards. Innovative does not need to make any system changes unless the barcodes are changed.

### My library is getting new barcodes. What information does Innovative need?

If the actual format of the barcodes change, then it may be necessary for Innovative to change some of the settings in your system to recognize the new pattern as a barcode. Otherwise, prior to scanning or typing the barcode, staff will have to type a 'b' to identify the index.

If you will be changing the basic pattern of the barcodes (for example, they were always 14 digits, beginning with at 2 and a mod-10 check digit, but now will be 10 to 15 digits always beginning with a 4), then please send the Help Desk the pattern(s) that will be used as well as examples of each barcode's pattern that will be used on the system (including the current pattern if some records still use the old barcodes).

### Does Innovative assign barcode patterns or make recommendations about what kinds of barcodes to use?

No, Innovative does not assign patterns. However, Innovative does recommend that the item and patron barcode patterns be distinct, for example, all item barcodes begin with a '3' and all patron barcodes begin with a '2.' Because all barcodes are in the same 'b' index, this helps prevent retrieving two similar barcodes that belong to different record types.

If you want to attach multiple items and extrapolate barcodes, note that this functionality supports only 14 digit barcodes with a mod-10 check digit as the last (14th) digit.

### How do we enable duplicate checking on barcodes?

Duplicate barcode checking can be set in your Database Maintenance and Circulation system options files.

### Database Maintenance system options:

06 > New Records: Always check for duplication for record types.............b

07 > New Bib Record: Duplicate check on fields..............................k

08 > New Item Record: Duplicate check on fields..........................NONE

### Circulation system options:

086 > New PATRON Record: Duplicate checking on fields...u

### We are updating our barcode readers. My barcode reader vendor wants to know what barcode symbology we use. What does that mean?

Your barcode reader vendor is asking what type of barcode you use, because each type, or 'symbology', has a unique set of meaningful characteristics, including bar and space patterns.

Your barcode vendor can tell you what symbology your barcodes use. Your barcode reader 'decodes' the barcode when you scan it and transmits that decoded value to Millennium. Many libraries are using Codabar or Code 39; however, Millennium does not require any particular symbology because it receives the scan output in its 'decoded' form.

## Other Resources:

* [New Bib Record: Duplicate check on fields & New Item Record: Duplicate check on fields](https://documentation.iii.com/sierrahelp/Default.htm#search-New Bib Record)
* [New PATRON Record: Duplicate checking on fields](https://documentation.iii.com/sierrahelp/Default.htm#sadmin/sadmin_options_circ_newpatdupcheck.html)
* [New Records: Always check for duplication for record types](https://documentation.iii.com/sierrahelp/Default.htm#sadmin/sadmin_options_new_records_alw.html)
* [Barcodes: Overview](https://documentation.iii.com/sierrahelp/Default.htm#sgcir/sgcir_appen_noteonbarcodes.html)

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