

Coming Soon To A Library Near You:

!PAPERBACKS IN WIDENER LIBRARY STACKS!

Conservation Services in the Harvard College Library will adjust its commercial library binding practices beginning July 1, 2009, in response to budget reductions affecting all aspects of library operations. Our goal is to maximize cost savings while minimizing their long-term impact on the collections. Setting aside our practice of contracting for the commercial binding of all paperback volumes before they are shelved in reference collections and open stacks, **we will send most paperbacks to the shelf unbound** and will bind them after they begin to show signs of wear or damage. For library staff this practice will require more sorting and exercise of judgment.

Some paperback formats should be sent to the Binding and Self Preparation group with a request for a binding decision:

- Thin items (i.e., less than ¼ inch thick)
- Landscape, oversize, and odd-shaped bindings
- Loose-leaf binders, spiral bindings, and volumes with pages that have weak or no attachment to each other
- Bindings with “art” covers, cut-outs, and other structures that are inherently vulnerable to damage

Paperbacks that are not sent to the bindery will go directly to Library and Harvard Depository shelves after call number tags, edge stamps, security strips, and bookplates are applied as appropriate.

A paper cover is more fragile than a hard cover and the contents of the volume will be more vulnerable to damage. Here’s how you can help:

Whenever you handle a paperback volume, evaluate its condition. Vulnerable items include:

- Items with covers that are partially or completely separated from the text block
- Items with covers that are worn or torn, leaving the text block unprotected and pages curling
- Items with detached pages
- Items with split text blocks

If you identify a vulnerable item **at the point of check-out** and it looks as if it may need binding after it returns, flag the record for the item with the Circ. Note, “*Preservation Review.*” If it looks as if the book is already in such condition that it will not withstand circulating outside the library, flag it for Preservation Review and send it to the Phillips Reading Room for viewing.

If you identify a vulnerable item **at the point of return** to the shelf or to HD, flag it for Preservation Review and place it on the Preservation Review shelf.

Thank you for helping to preserve Harvard’s collections.