Statutes

Legislatures pass laws called statutes, which are printed chronologically and later codified by subject matter:

- **Slip laws** – the first publication of a law. Originally printed on a slip or piece of paper.
  i. Most libraries no longer receive copies of slip laws.
  ii. Shortly after a new law is published, it is now available on GPO Access and on Lexis and Westlaw.

- **Session laws** – the chronological collection of all the laws passed in a legislative session.
  iii. The U.S. Congress, for example, publishes new laws by public law number.
  iv. The public laws are collected in a session law volume called the *Statutes-at-Large*.

- **Codification** – the publication of laws in subject matter order.
  v. The U.S. Congress codifies the new public laws in the *United States Code* (the *U.S.C.*).
  vi. The *United States Code (U.S.C.*) is updated in print by inserts in pocket parts and by supplementary soft-bound pamphlets, called supplements, following the hard-bound volumes.

Federal Statutes and Codes

**Location:** Reading Room, Lower Level (turn left and go down the steps).

1. **The Codes** – U.S. laws are codified by subject matter (after publication in chronological order).
      i. Use the multi-volume index at the end of the code.
      i. Unofficial codes with helpful annotations such as:
         1. Cases that cite and often explain code sections.
         2. Legislative history, relevant secondary research resources (e.g., law review articles).
      ii. Court rules are in Title 28.
      iii. Use the index to find laws on your subject matter topic.
      iv. Use the popular name table volume if you know the name of the statute.
   c. Citation format is in *The Bluebook*, Rule 12.

   a. Published in chronological order of the sessions of Congress.
b. Citation format for *Statutes* (Stat.) or Public Law Number is in *The Bluebook*, Rule 12.4.

Statutes are also online on the GPO Access website ([http://www.gpoaccess.gov/](http://www.gpoaccess.gov/)) & the Westlaw Public Access Terminal in Circulation Area, as well as Lexis and Westlaw.

**State Statutes and Codes, and State Practice Materials**

**Location:** Reading Room, to your right as you enter the Reading Room.

- Shelved in alphabetical order.
- Statutes are followed by state regulations, practice materials, encyclopedias, reporters, and digests.
- Use the indexes at the end of the codes to find laws on your subject matter topic.

**State Statutes Features**

- These are often annotated statutes, with index volumes at the end of the codes.
- State and federal court rules volumes are at the end of the codes.
- Citation format for state statutes is in *The Bluebook*, Rule 12.

Available on some state websites and on the WESTLAW public access terminal in Circulation Area, as well as Lexis and Westlaw.

**Resources for Finding United States Statutes**

- *Statutes-at-Large* – the official publication of U.S. laws.

  *United States Code Congressional and Administrative News (U.S.C.C.A.N., pronounced U-scan)*

  The public law published as news shortly after it is enacted (but this is not official publication).


  The annotated codes contain short summaries of cases that cite to the *U.S. Code*, lists of secondary sources about the code sections, and other helpful research material. Most legal researchers prefer to use the annotated codes.

**Resources for Finding State Statutes**

- **Codes** – the Law Library has print editions of all the state codes.
  
  **Session laws** – the Law Library has some state session laws.

- **Practice materials** – follow each code and may include treatises, state law encyclopedias, etc.

  Practice materials are useful for finding state law by subject matter.

  Use indexes at the ends of sets such as encyclopedias or at the ends of volumes to find the subject matter. Be prepared with several synonyms for your topic.

terminology uses terms of art that often change the popular meaning of words.

Other Resources for Finding and Understanding Statutes

- Law Review articles -- use the legal periodicals indexes to find articles about state and federal statutes.

- Treatises and Hornbooks -- use the online public access catalog to find books that discuss statutes.