

Hugh & Hazel Darling Law Library

UCLA School of Law

Research Guide Series

HOW TO FIND CALIFORNIA STATUTES

Researching California law usually includes a search for relevant statutes. A good starting point for such research is secondary sources such as treatises, practice guides, and law review articles, which often include references to applicable code sections. This guide is intended to assist the user in locating and updating California statutes.

NOTE: When using LexisNexis, you can search for the appropriate database by using the database menus in that system or by using the “shortcut” database names provided below. To use these shortcuts, click on the “Search” tab in LexisNexis, then on the “by Dot Command” link (on the red bar), next type the source names into the search box exactly as listed and then click the “Go” button. You can then search as you normally would.

I. PUBLICATION OF CALIFORNIA STATUTES

California statutes are published in two different ways:

- (1) Chronologically as session laws; and
- (2) Topically (arranged by subject) in Codes. The Codes are the standard working tool for researching statutory law.

Print publication: California statutes are first officially published as *Chapter Laws* (individual pamphlets containing the text of new legislation). Then at the end of each Legislative Session, the *Chapter Laws* are compiled and published as the *Statutes of California and Digests of Measures* (bound as *California Statutes and Amendments to the Codes*). Since California does not publish an official printed code, publication of California codes are provided by two commercial publishers, West and Deering (LexisNexis). Both versions of the codes follow the same arrangement of 29 Titles subdivided by section.

Internet publication: California Statutes and Codes are available on the Web (see below) and are usually more up-to-date than any print publication.

A. Codes

1. *West's Annotated California Codes* provides a subject arrangement of the general and permanent legislative law of California and includes court rules and uncodified laws of general interest. In addition to the text of California laws, West's provides annotations to judicial decisions, law reviews, attorney general opinions, the *California Code of Regulations*, other West publications such as *Corpus Juris Secundum* (C.J.S.), and to the “key number” system.





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LOCATION:

- Library:** KFC 30.5 W4
(Reference Reading Room & California Collection, Level 2)
- Westlaw:** CA-ST-ANN and CA-ST
(unannotated code)

2. *Deering's California Codes, Annotated* also provides a subject arrangement of general and permanent California laws and includes court rules and important uncodified acts. Annotations to judicial decisions, Legislative Counsel Opinions, attorney general opinions, the *California Code of Regulations*, as well as other publications such as *California Jurisprudence (Cal Jur)*, and *Witkin's Summary of California Law*, are included. Deering's annotations are not entirely duplicative of West's so you should check both sources for complete coverage of the code section.

LOCATION:

- Library:** KFC 30.5 D4
(California Collection, Level 2)
- LexisNexis:** STATES;CACODE or CAL;CODE

3. An unannotated version of the Codes is available on the Internet.
Internet: <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/calaw.html>
4. For the convenience of practitioners, various publishers produce individual code titles as well as sets of selected codes. These codes are usually unannotated and are issued annually. Please see Daniel Martin, *Henke's California Law Guide*, 8th ed. (LexisNexis, 2006), pp. 52 - 60, for a list of available unannotated codes.

B. California Code Updates

The printed Codes are updated only once a year through supplementary pocket parts. For changes that have occurred since the date of the last pocket part, and for newly passed legislation, you must turn to printed advance legislative services. For more timely updates, LexisNexis and Westlaw update the code frequently as do the Web sites for current legislative materials. New legislation goes into effect the January after enactment unless it is enacted as emergency legislation.

1. *Chapter Laws* (session laws or statutes) are published throughout the Legislative Session by the California Legislature and include the summary digest as well as the text of newly passed statutes. Each individual *Chapter Law* indicates its effect on a Code or a Code section (i.e. addition, amendment, etc.). In addition, a *Table of Sections Affected* can be found in the *Legislative Index* published yearly. The *Table of Sections Affected* indicates the effect of pending and recently passed legislation on Code sections and will direct you to the appropriate bill number. These tables and indexes are on the Web and are far more current than the print materials.

LOCATION:

- Internet:** *Chapter Laws*—<http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/statute.html>
(1993-present)





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Library: *Legislative Index/Table of Sections Affected*—
<http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/legpubs.html>
Chapter Laws
 KFC 25 A2 (Calif. Collection, Level 2)
Legislative Index/Table of Sections Affected—(for current session)
 KFC 14 L43i (Reference)

2. *West's California Legislative Service* is published throughout the year and contains the text of any new Chapter Laws passed by the California Legislature. It includes tables indicating Code sections affected by new legislation, Senate and Assembly bills chaptered into law, and changes in the *California Rules of Court*. A cumulative subject index is published in each volume and a final cumulative index is published at the end of the legislative session.

LOCATION:

Library: KFC 30.5 W4
 (Reference & Calif. Collection, Level 2)
Westlaw: CA-LEGIS (current session);
 CA-LEGIS-OLD (1987- previous session)

3. *Deering's California Codes Advance Legislative Service* is also issued continuously throughout the year and contains the text of new Chapter Laws. It includes tables indicating Code sections affected by new legislation, Senate and Assembly bills chaptered into law, and changes in the *California Rules of Court*. A cumulative subject index is published in each volume and at the end of the legislative session.

LOCATION:

Library: KFC 30.5 D4 A128
 (Ref. & Calif. Collection, Level 2)
LexisNexis: CAL;CAALS (1987 - current session)

II. FINDING CALIFORNIA CODES AND STATUTES

A. **By Code Citation:** With a citation to a Code section, you can find the text of the law (as well as annotations in either West or Deering). Code citations use the name of the code subject and the section number, e.g., *Cal Penal Code §190.3*.

1. **LexisNexis:** The GET A DOCUMENT feature allows you to view the Deering version of a California code section. Click on the GET A DOCUMENT tab, then type the code name and section number to retrieve the statute.

EXAMPLE: CA Penal 190.3

2. **Westlaw:** The FIND A DOCUMENT feature, accessible from FIND & PRINT, allows you to view the West version of a California code section. Click on the FIND & PRINT link and then type the code name and section number in FIND A DOCUMENT to retrieve the statute.





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EXAMPLE: CA Penal 190.3

- 3. **Internet:** <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/calaw.html>
(Web version is unannotated)

B. **By Chapter Number:** When you know the Chapter number of a law, you can go directly to *Statutes of California and Digests of Measures* (bound as *California Statutes and Amendments to the Code*). The Chapter number will indicate in which part of the Code the law appears. Session law citations use the session year and the specific page in the *California Statutes and Amendments to the Code* on which the chaptered law begins, e.g., *1994 Cal. Stat. 5675*.

LOCATION:

- Library:** KFC 25 A2 (California Collection, Level 2)
- LexisNexis:** CAL;CAALS (1987-present)
Add the year as a search term.
- Westlaw:** CA-LEGIS-OLD (1987-previous session)
- Internet:** <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/statute.html>
(1993-present, searchable)

C. **By Topic:** Many of the sources for California statutes include detailed subject indexes.

- 1. *Statutes of California and Digests of Measures* (bound as *California Statutes and Amendments to the Codes*) contains a subject index for each Legislative session, which provides references to the appropriate Chapter.
- 2. West's and Deering's Codes each contain a general subject index covering all 29 titles of the California Code as well as subject indexes for each individual title. The *Advance Legislative Services* also provides subject indexes.
- 3. *LARMAC Consolidated Index to Constitution and Laws of California* is a one-volume index providing detailed subject access to the entire set of California Codes. *LARMAC* also includes a listing of statutorily defined terms under the heading "Defined Terms," with references to the appropriate defining sections.

LOCATION:

- Library:** KFC 40 L3
(Reference & California Collection, Level 2)
- 4. **LexisNexis and Westlaw:** Both online systems allow access to their versions of the code by keyword and tables of contents. In addition, Westlaw also allows access by index and popular name. Searching the tables of contents or Westlaw's online index may be more fruitful than keyword searching.
 - Westlaw:** CA-ST-IDX contains the West Code Index
 - LexisNexis:** CAL; CATOC (The Deering's California Code Annotated Table of Contents is presented each time you search the code in LexisNexis. Click the "plus" sign by each heading to expand that topic.)





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5. **Internet:** The Internet version is searchable by topic and contains a Table of Contents to the Code.
Internet: <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/calaw.html>
- D. **By Popular Name:** When you have the name by which legislation is commonly known, rather than a citation or subject, you can turn to Popular Name Tables.
1. *West's* and *Deering's Annotated Codes* both include **Popular Name Tables** in their indexes. These tables list California statutes alphabetically by their common names and provide citations to the appropriate title and section.
 2. *LARMAC* also contains an alphabetical **Popular Name Table** (located under heading "Popular Titles") which lists California statutes by their common names.
 3. *Shepard's Acts and Cases by Popular Name: Federal and State* provides constitutional and statutory references to the common names of both federal and state statutes and cases. Because of its comprehensive nature, *Shepard's Acts and Cases by Popular Name* often lists several citations for a particular name and states are clearly identified along with the appropriate Code and section reference.
LOCATION:
Library: KF 90 S52 (Reference Desk)

III. FINDING CALIFORNIA INITIATIVES AND REFERENDA

The initiative is the power of the voters to propose laws and to enact or reject them independently of the legislature. The referendum is the power of the voters to approve or reject statutes or parts of statutes passed by the Legislature.

- A. *Statutes of California and Digests of Measures* (bound as *California Statutes and Amendments to the Codes*) contains the text of both initiatives and referenda in the "Propositions Submitted to the Vote of the Electors" section. A particular initiative and referendum can be found by consulting the subject index for the year in which the measure was passed by the voters.
- B. *California Secretary of State, Amendments to the Constitution and Proposed Statutes* is a microfiche set of the ballot pamphlets sent to voters each election. The microfiche sets are arranged by election year and include the text of all propositions submitted to the voters along with the arguments for and against their passage. Each pamphlet contains a table of contents which can be used to locate propositions when the year is known.
LOCATION:
Library: Microfiche KFC 20 C35
(1st Floor, Microform Room)
Internet: *California Secretary of State* http://www.ss.ca.gov/elections/elections_i.htm (1996-current)





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- C. *West's Annotated California Codes* incorporates the text of initiative measures into the Codes. For example, the text of the *Chiropractic Act* is found in the *Business & Professions Code*. Initiatives can be found through either the general index or the indexes to the individual titles of the Code. Annotations to initiatives are included after the text.
- D. *Deering's California Codes, Annotated* incorporates the text of initiatives which have been codified or which affect Code sections in the main volumes of the Code. These initiatives can be found in the General Index by subject. In addition, Deering's includes a separate volume entitled *Uncodified Initiative Measures and Statutes* which contains the text of uncodified initiatives except for the *Chiropractic Act* and the *Osteopathic Act* (included as appendices to the *Business & Professions Code*) as well as various Water District Acts. Uncodified initiatives are not included in the General Index. You must consult the index to the *Uncodified Initiative Measures and Statutes* in order to find the text of these initiatives. Annotations are included for both codified and uncodified initiatives.
- E. **Westlaw and LexisNexis:** Westlaw includes the text of initiatives within its CA-ST and CA-ST-ANN databases. LexisNexis includes the text of initiatives published within the Deering edition of the Code.
- F. **Internet:** Hastings Law Library offers comprehensive searchable databases of information on California ballot propositions and initiatives from 1911 to the present: <http://library.uchastings.edu/library/> (Click "research databases" button at the top, then "CA ballot measures").

IV. FINDING REFERENCES TO CALIFORNIA STATUTES

LexisNexis' Shepard's and *Westlaw's KeyCite* citators provide citations to cases, attorney general opinions, legal periodical articles and some legal texts which have referred to a particular code or statute. California Codes can be Shepardized or KeyCited by their title and section numbers or, for uncodified sections, by their year and Chapter number.

- A. *LexisNexis' Shepard's California Citations, Cases and Statutes* (See Research Guide No. G4, *Tips on Using Shepard's Citations* for more information).

LOCATION:

Library: The Web version is available on public computers 1 & 2 in the Reference Reading Room. For public user login, see detailed instructions next to these computers.

LexisNexis: Shepard's on LexisNexis

- B. *Westlaw's KeyCite* KeyCite also provides citations to selected secondary sources, such as *American Law Reports* annotations and the *Witkin's* publications.

LOCATION:

Westlaw: KeyCite

