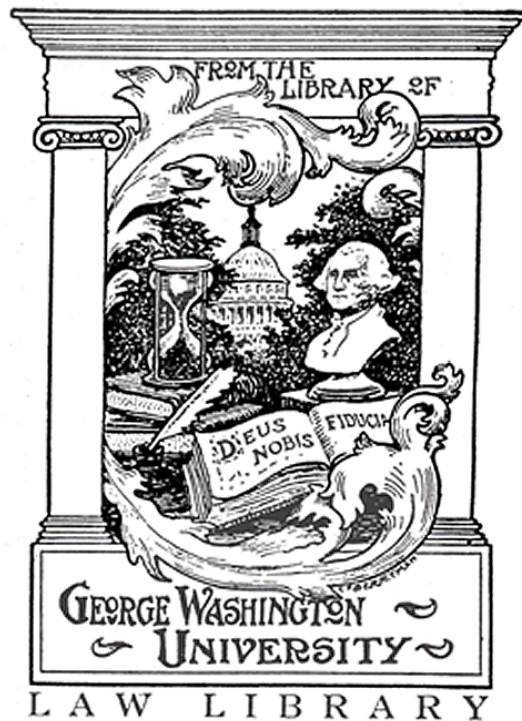




LEGAL RESEARCH GUIDE SERIES
BASIC RESEARCH GUIDE # 6

LEGAL RESEARCH GUIDE FOR THE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA



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LEGAL RESEARCH GUIDE FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

I. INTRODUCTION

There are two legislatures for the District of Columbia (D.C.): Council of the District of Columbia and the U.S. Congress.

Article 1, Section 8, clause 17, of the United States Constitution ("The Congress shall have Power . . . To exercise exclusive Legislation in all Cases whatsoever, over such District") has been interpreted by the U.S. Supreme Court as granting Congress control over the District of Columbia.

Since its incorporation under the Act of May 3, 1802 (2 Stat. 195, ch. 53), the District has been subject to several governance arrangements with varying degrees of local autonomy, culminating in the District of Columbia Self-Government and Governmental Reorganization Act ("Home Rule Act"), Pub. L. No. 93-198, 87 Stat. 744 (1973) (codified as amended at D.C. Code Ann. §§ 1-201 to 1-299.7 (1981)). The Home Rule Act established a "strong mayor" system with an elected City Council, granting the District a significant degree of control over local governmental affairs, including the power to legislate subject to review and approval by Congress.

This is a basic guide to legal research in D.C. The guide identifies print and online sources of D.C. statutory law, administrative law, case law, court and bar rules and secondary materials in the Jacob Burns Law Library.

To determine if a source listed in this guide is available through LexisNexis or Westlaw:

LexisNexis: Select the "**Find a Source**" tab; type the source in the search box

Westlaw: **Westlaw.com:** type the name of the source in the "Search for a database" box.

WestlawNext: type the name of the source in the search box and select the resource from the drop down list.

Example: **dc register** or **DCR**

For a more in-depth treatment of D.C. legal research consult:

"Chapter 1: Finding the Law" in Volume 1, *The District of Columbia Practice Manual*. Washington, D.C.: District of Columbia Bar, current. [RESERVE (1ST FL): KFD1281 .D576]

Georgetown Law Library. *District of Columbia Research Guide*:
<http://www.ll.georgetown.edu/states/dc-in-depth.cfm>

Law Library of Congress. *Guide to Law Online: States and Territories: District of Columbia*: <http://www.loc.gov/law/help/guide/states/us-dc.php>

Acosta, Luis M. "The Legal History of the District of Columbia Prior to Home Rule: A Bibliographic Essay" in *Prestatehood Legal Materials: A Fifty-State Research Guide, Including New York City and the District of Columbia*. NY: The Haworth Press, Inc., 2005. [REFERENCE (1ST FL): KF240 .P688 2005]

Legal Research in the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia, by Leah F. Chanin, Pamela J. Gregory and Sarah K. Wiant. 2d edition. [READY REFERENCE (1ST FL): KF240 .C47 2000]

II. DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA STATUTORY LAW

A. The Legislative Process

(<http://www.dccouncil.washington.dc.us/howabillbecomeslaw>)

The Council of the District of Columbia (D.C. Council) is the legislative body of the D.C. government. Legislation only can be introduced by a member of the D.C. Council. The Chairman of the Council may, as a courtesy, introduce a bill requested by the Mayor. Hundreds of bills are introduced in each Council Period (i.e., legislative session) for consideration.

The Council enacts five types of acts:

- Permanent Acts
- Emergency Acts
- Temporary Acts
- Charter Amendments Acts

This section focuses on **permanent acts**, the most common legislative actions of the D.C. Council.

When a bill is introduced, it receives a filing number (e.g., **B14-0032, Human Rights Genetic Information Amendment Act of 2001**) which is used to track the bill through the legislative process. In this example:

B designates the legislation as a bill

14 is the Council Period (similar to a "session" of the U.S. Congress)

0032 is a sequential number assigned to the bill

The Chairman assigns the bill to the proper standing committee or committees as designated by Council Rules. During consideration of the bill, the chairperson of the committee may schedule a

public hearing on the bill. A notice of a public hearing appears in the *D.C. Register* 15 days prior to the date of the hearing. When considering a bill, the committee examines the need for the legislation, reviews public comments, and determines the fiscal impact. The committee may mark up the bill and vote to recommend that the Council approve or disapprove the bill. Or, it may choose to take no action allowing the bill to die in committee.

If the bill is reported out of committee, the Council officers review the legislation and report to the Committee of the Whole whether the record is complete and in proper legal or technical order. Members of the Council do not debate the bill at this stage, but can ask for clarification or explanations. The Chairman places the bill on the agenda of the legislative meeting with approval of the Committee of the Whole.

At the legislative meeting, the bill receives a first reading. Members debate the bill and can offer amendments. If a majority of those present and voting approve the bill, it is scheduled for a second reading at another legislative meeting. Or, a majority may vote against the bill in which case it dies. Also, a majority can vote to table the bill or return it to committee for reconsideration.

After being passed by the Council and signed by the Mayor, the bill is called an "Act," assigned an Act number (e.g., DISTRACTED DRIVING SAFETY ACT OF 2004, **A15-0311**) and published in the *D.C. Register*. Congress has 30 legislative days (60 days for acts concerning criminal law and procedure) to review the legislation, after which it automatically takes effect, unless disapproved by a joint resolution of Congress which must be signed by the President.

It can take up to four months for an act to become law. An act passed by the Council after July usually will not become law until the following year due to congressional holidays and adjournments.

After the congressional review process, the act is given a D.C. law number (e.g., DISTRACTED DRIVING SAFETY ACT OF 2004, **L15-124**). A notice that the act has taken affect is then published in the *D.C. Register*. **The law is not reprinted in the *D.C. Register* because the text is identical to the previously published act, which is referenced in the notice.**

The Self-Government Act mandated that statutes and municipal regulations enacted by the D.C. Council be called "Acts." Some acts contain language on how they amend an existing statute, or their legislative history may indicate that they are intended for placement in the *D.C. Code*. Other acts may contain language explaining how they amend an agency rule, in which case they will be published in the *D.C. Municipal Regulations (DCMR)*.

B. D.C. Statutes: Sources

1. *Council of the District of Columbia Legislative Information Management System*
 - D.C. laws from the 13th Council Period (1999-2000) to date
 - Browse by number; Search by keyword, Council member or committee
 - World Wide Web:** <http://www.dccouncil.washington.dc.us/lims/>

2. *District of Columbia Register (DCR)*. Washington, D.C. : Government of the District of Columbia, 1955-.
 - Official publication of the D.C. government
 - Weekly
 - Contains D.C. acts and notices of D.C. laws
 - Cumulative indexes issued quarterly and annually
 - World Wide Web:**
 - D.C. Office of the Secretary, Office of Documents and Administrative Issuances*
 - DCR Online:* <http://www.dcregs.org/Gateway/IssueList.aspx> (2003-)
 - Commercial Databases**
 - LexisNexis* (includes D.C. Acts- 1998-)
 - WESTLAW* (1999- ; excludes the text of D.C. acts; D.C. acts available in DC-LEGIS database; Contract Appeals Board decisions appear in FGC-DCCAB)
 - HeinOnline:* Session Laws Library: DC Register, vols. 27, 1980-
 - Print:** STOCKTON (2ND FL)

3. *LEXIS District of Columbia Code Advance Service*
 - Commercial Databases:** *LexisNexis*
 - Print:** STOCKTON (2ND FL)

4. *District of Columbia Session Law Service*. Eagan, MN: West Group, 2002-.
 - Commercial Databases:**
 - WESTLAW:* DC-LEGIS (current)
 - DC-LEGIS-OLD (8th Council Session (1989-1990), beginning with Law 8-100, through the end of the 17th Council Session (2007-2008))
 - Print:** RESERVE (1ST FL); STOCKTON (2ND FL)

5. *District of Columbia Statutes-at-Large*
 - Published from 1975-1986
 - Contains D.C. laws, resolutions and Mayor's Orders
 - Includes source notes that are useful for tracing the legislative history
 - A subject index for each year is provided in volume 1

•**Print:** STOCKTON (2ND FL)

6. *District of Columbia Official Code, Volume 1:*
 - Contains statutes relating to cession and recession of lands to form D.C.
 - Includes surveys, boundaries and reorganization plans

•**World Wide Web:**
District of Columbia Official Code (current, unannotated):
<http://government.westlaw.com/linkedslice/default.asp?SP=DCC-1000>
 (Search using "natural language" or browse.)

•**Commercial Databases:**
WESTLAW : DC-ST-ANN (annotated)
 DC-ST (unannotated)

•**Print:** RESERVE (1ST FL); STOCKTON (2ND FL)

C. D. C. Code: Sources

1. *District of Columbia Official Code.* St. Paul: West Group, 2001-
 - Divided into titles, chapters and sections
 - Notes contain legislative history information, references to related statutes and case annotations
 - "Tables" volume provides parallel references to earlier codes and popular names list of D.C. laws
 - Subject index
 - Updated by annual pocket parts and cumulative interim pamphlets

•**World Wide Web:**
District of Columbia Official Code (current, unannotated):
<http://government.westlaw.com/linkedslice/default.asp?SP=DCC-1000>
 (Search using "natural language" or browse.)

•**Commercial Databases:**
WESTLAW: DC-ST-ANN (annotated)
 DC-ST (unannotated)

•**Print:** RESERVE (1ST FL); STOCKTON (2ND FL)

2. *LEXIS District of Columbia Code Annotated*. Charlottesville, Va.: LEXIS Publishing, 2001-.
 - Unofficial**
 - Divided into titles, chapters, and sections
 - Includes annotations, brief legislative history, references to related statutes
 - Subject index
 - "Tables" volume provides parallel references to earlier codes, popular names of laws and cross-references between the *D.C. Code* and the *D.C. Municipal Regulations (DCMR)*
 - Updated by pocket parts and advance pamphlets published semiannually

 - Commercial Databases:** *LexisNexis*: (DC; CODE)

 - Print:** STOCKTON (2ND FL)

 - Microform:** MICROFICHE (LL1): 112 DIST

3. *Previous official codifications of D.C. statutes*
 - Before the 1981 *D.C. Code* published by Michie, the *Code* was published by GPO under the direction of the Office of Law Revision Counsel, U.S. House of Representatives
 - Earlier editions of *D.C. Code*: 1901, 1929, 1940, 1951, 1961, 1967, 1973 & 1981

 - Print:** Check *JACOB*, the Library's online catalog (<http://jacob.nlc.gwu.edu>)

 - Microform:** MICROFICHE (LL1): 112 DIST

4. *Early Compilations of D.C. Laws: Pre-1929:*

An annotated list of pre-1929 compilations of laws of D.C. is found in the "Historical" section (pp. vii-xiii) of the *Code of the District of Columbia*. 1929 edition. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1930.

 - Microform:** MICROFICHE (LL1): 112 DIST

D. D.C. Code: Updating

1. *West's D.C. Session Law Service:*
 - Cumulative "Table of Sections Affected" for D.C. laws for current year
 - Arrangement is by *D.C. Code* section; lists action, law number, act number, section of the law or act and the *DCR* citation

 - Commercial Databases:** *Westlaw* (DC-LEGIS) (current)
(DC-LEGIS-OLD) (1990-)

 - Print:** RESERVE (1ST FL); STOCKTON (2ND FL)

2. *LEXIS District of Columbia Code Annotated Advance Legislative Service*
Charlottesville, Va.: LexisNexis Publishing, 2001-
 - Commercial Databases:** *LexisNexis* (DC; DCALS) (1990-)

3. *Shepard's/KeyCite*
 - Commercial Databases:**
LexisNexis (*Shepard's*)
WESTLAW (*KeyCite*)

 - Print:** *Shepard's District of Columbia Citations* [STOCKTON (2ND FL)]

E. D.C. Legislative History

1. **Legislative History Chronology**

The legislative history chronology provides information on the actions of the City Council, the Mayor, and Congress and citations to all the documents that constitute the preenactment record of action on a piece of legislation.

 - World Wide Web:**
Council of the District of Columbia, *Legislative Information Management System*: <http://www.dccouncil.washington.dc.us/lims/>
 - Chronology on D.C. Laws
 - 13th Council period (1999-2000) to date
 - Search by keyword, sponsor/co-sponsor, committee, bill number

District of Columbia Register (DCR):

<http://www.dcregs.org/Gateway/IssueList.aspx> (2003-2008)

- If only the act number or year is known, the "D.C. Acts" or "D.C. Resolutions" section of the appropriate annual index to the DCR should be consulted.

•**Commercial Databases:**

LexisNexis (DC; DCTRCK) (2005-)

WESTLAW (DC-BILLTRK) (current session only)

(DC-LH) (13th Council period, 1999-2000-)

•**Print:**

District of Columbia Register (DCR):

- Notices of D.C. Council hearings, legislative meetings, and other matters

- If only the act number or year is known, the "D.C. Acts" or "D.C. Resolutions" section of the appropriate annual index to the DCR should be consulted.

[STOCKTON (2ND FL)]

District of Columbia Official Code and LEXIS District of Columbia Code

- Notes following statutory section contain brief legislative history information

[RESERVE (1ST FL); STOCKTON (2ND FL)]

District of Columbia Statutes-at-Large

- 1975-1986: Selected legislative history information following text of law [STOCKTON (2ND FL)]

Subject Index to Bills of the D.C. Council

- 1981-February 2005

- Status of bills provided

[RESERVE (1ST FL)]

2. Sources of Legislative History Documents:

a. Bills:

•World Wide Web:

The Council of the District of Columbia, *Legislative Information Management System* <http://www.dccouncil.washington.dc.us/lims/>

- Text of all versions of D.C. legislation
- 13th Council Period (1999-2000)-
- Search by type of legislation, Council member, sponsor/co-sponsor, committee or keyword
- Browse by bill number
- PDF

•Commercial Databases:

LexisNexis (DC; DCTEXT) (2003-)

WESTLAW (DC-BILLTXT) (current session only)

- Full text of all available versions of bills

•Microform & Print:

D.C. Legislative Services Division

<http://dccouncil.us/legislativeservicescontact>

- 1975 to date:** Maintains D.C. Council legislative history files, including bills and amendments, recordings of legislative meetings and committee reports

b. Memoranda/Statements of Purpose:

- Memoranda stating purpose of legislation may be included in text of bill

c. Committee Hearings:

- Selectively audiotaped; rarely available in print

- 1975 to date** maintained by D.C. Legislative Services Division

<http://dccouncil.us/legislativeservicescontact>

- Files indexed by bill number, committee, subject and law number

d. Committee Reports:

- Prepared for every permanent piece of legislation acted upon by D.C. Council

- Contents:

-Background and Need

-Chronology

-Purpose and Effect

-Section by Section Analysis

-Summary of Testimony

- Fiscal Impact
- Impact on Existing Law
- Committee Action
- Attachments (for example: text of bill, committee print, testimony from hearing, additional comments on the bill)

•**World Wide Web:**

The Council of the District of Columbia, *Legislative Information Management System*

<http://www.dccouncil.washington.dc.us/lims/> (Selected)

•**Commercial Databases:**

WESTLAW (DC-LH-REP) (13th Council Period, 1999-2000-)

•**Print:**

D.C. Legislative Services Division: 1988- (index by bill number)

<http://dccouncil.us/legislativeservicescontact>

D.C. Code Legislative and Administrative Service (West)

- Library has: 1966, 1970-71, 1973-74, 1975-76
- Text of D.C. laws enacted by Congress and selected committee reports
- Popular names table and topical index in each volume [STOCKTON (2ND FL)]

•**Microform:**

D.C. Legislative Services Division: 1975-88 (index by bill number) <http://dccouncil.us/legislativeservicescontact>

e. **Floor Debates:**

•**Audio Only:**

D.C. Legislative Services Division: Index by bill number
(Note: 1993-1997/98 not on site; can be ordered in 7-10 working days.) <http://dccouncil.us/legislativeservicescontact>

f. **Transcripts of D.C. Council Meetings:**

•**Print:** D.C. Legislative Services Division
<http://dccouncil.us/legislativeservicescontact>

III. DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA ADMINISTRATIVE LAW

A. District of Columbia Regulations: Sources

Note: The *DCR* and the *DCMR* are published by:

D.C. Office of the Secretary, Office of Documents and Administrative Issuances

Web site: <http://os.dc.gov/os/cwp/view,a,1207,q,522504.asp>

1. *District of Columbia Register (DCR)*

- Official source for D.C. regulations, Acts and resolutions of the Council
- Weekly
- Includes notices of agency hearings and proposed rule-makings
- Annual indexes arranged by type of document and D.C. agency

•**World Wide Web**

DCR Online: <http://newsroom.dc.gov/list.aspx/agency/os/section/37>

(4/18/03-) and <http://www.dcregs.org/Gateway/IssueList.aspx> (2009-)

Search the DCR: <http://www.dcregs.org/Default.aspx>

•**Commercial Databases:**

LexisNexis (DC;DCRGST) (1998-)

WESTLAW (DC-ADR) (selected; 1999-)

•**Print:** STOCKTON (2ND FL)

2. *District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (DCMR)*

- Official code of current D.C. regulations
- Organized by subject into titles

•**World Wide Web:** <http://os.dc.gov/os/cwp/view,a,1207,q,522392.asp>

(Official): **Search the DCMR:** <http://www.dcregs.org/Default.aspx>

•**Commercial Databases:**

LexisNexis (DC; DCREGS)

WESTLAW (DC-MR)

•**Print:** RESERVE (1ST FL) (older editions)

3. *Code of D.C. Municipal Regulations*. Augusta, Maine : Weil, 1999-.
 - Unofficial** version of the *DCMR*
 - Updated monthly; more current than the official *DCMR*
 - Includes a subject index, a regulation number index, and a table of authorities

•**Print:** RESERVE (1ST FL)

4. *D.C. Rules and Regulations (DCRR)*. Washington, D.C.: D.C.,Office of Documents, 1960-81. (Note: Library has only selected titles)
 - Predecessor to the *DCMR*
 - Contains some but not all agency regulations
 - Some regulations were incorporated by reference so text not published in DCRR
 - Titles had irregular format, infrequent supplementation, varying degrees of reliability and did not include Mayor's or Commissioner's Orders

•**Print:** Use *JACOB*, the Library's online catalog (<http://jacob.law.gwu.edu/>)
Conduct a "title" search: **d.c. rules and regulations**

B. District of Columbia Regulations: Updating

1. *D.C Municipal Regulations and D.C. Register* website:
<http://www.dcregs.dc.gov/>
 - The "Search the D.C. Municipal Regulations (DCMR)" section of this website provides the current, codified text of a DC regulation

2. *WESTLAW* (DC-MR)

3. *Code of D.C. Municipal Regulations* (published by Weil)
 - The current text of D.C. regulations
 - Print:** RESERVE (1ST FL)

C. District of Columbia Regulations: Regulatory History

<http://www.dcregs.org/History.aspx>

1. *D.C Municipal Regulations and D.C. Register* website:
<http://www.dcregs.dc.gov/>
 - History of a regulation is provided from **April 2009-**; includes citations to and original text of a regulation from the *D.C. Register*

2. *WESTLAW*: D.C. Municipal Regulations database (DC-MR)
 - "Currentness" link indicates currency of DCMR section

- Keycite* link provides history information, including proposed DC legislation affecting a DCMR section

3. "*List of Amendments to the D.C. Municipal Regulations*" (a section of the *D.C. Register*)
 - Ceased publication after January 9, 2009** (56 *D.C. Register* 383 (2009))
 - Cumulative list of amendments since the revision date of the *DCMR* title

D. D.C. Interstate Compacts and Agreements

- D.C. legislation authorizing the Mayor to enter into an interstate compact or agreement is codified in the *D.C. Code* under the title and chapter pertaining to the topic
- Text of compact or agreement itself is reprinted after the *D.C. Code* section containing the authorizing act, usually in a note
- Interstate agreements or compacts require:
 - text of compact or agreement
 - act of Congress giving consent
 - act of participating states and D.C. authorizing Chief Executive to enter into the agreement

E. Administrative Agencies' Orders, Decisions, and Opinions

D.C. agencies contact information:

- World Wide Web**

D.C. Government website: <http://dc.gov/agencies/index.asp>

- Commercial Database:**

[*Leadership Library on the Internet*](#)

1. **(D.C.) Attorney General Opinions**

Office of the Corporation Counsel renamed the Attorney General for the District of Columbia in May 2004; Conducts all law business for D.C. and handles all suits made by and against the government

- Commercial Databases:**

LexisNexis (DC; DCAG) (April 1976 - August 1999)

- Print:**

Opinions of the Corporation Counsel. (April 1976-1982)
[HISTORIC (LL2): KFD1640.A553]

2. **Contract Appeals Board (CAB) Decisions:**

•**World Wide Web:**

D.C. Contract Appeals Board website: <http://cab.dc.gov/cab/site/default.asp>

•**Commercial Databases:**

LexisNexis (DC; DCBCA (1989-))

WESTLAW (FGC-DCCAB (1988-))

•**Print:**

D.C. Register:

•Contains full text CAB decisions and orders

•Annual *D.C. Register Index* lists the decisions and orders under "Other Actions by Boards, Commissions, and Agencies" and provides the *DCR* citation

[STOCKTON (2ND FL)]

Decisions of the Government of the District of Columbia Contract Appeals Board. Washington, D.C.: District of Columbia Contract Appeals Board. [SL3: KFD1351.5 .A55: v.1(1986-1987) - v. 3(1989-1990)]

3. **Department of Health and Department of Mental Health:**

Office of Administrative Hearings orders and decisions:

•**World Wide Web**

Office of Administrative Hearings website:

<http://oah.dc.gov/oah/cwp/view,a,3,q,593414,oahNav,33003|.asp> (PDF, 2000-)

•**Commercial Databases:**

LexisNexis (DC;DCOAH) (2000-)

WESTLAW (DCOAH (2000-))

4. **Department of Insurance, Securities and Banking (DISB): Orders**

Administrative orders enforcing legal requirements in regulated industries of insurance, securities and banking

•**World Wide Web**

DISB website:

http://disb.dc.gov/disr/cwp/view,a,11,q,577734,disrNav_GID,1629.asp

<http://disb.dc.gov/disr/site/default.asp>

•**Commercial Databases:**

LexisNexis (DC;DCSEC) (Commissioner's and interpretative opinions, decisions, no-action letters and releases; 1991-)

WESTLAW (District Of Columbia Department Of Insurance, Securities and Banking Bulletins (DC-FINBUL; 2001-) and District of Columbia Department of Insurance, Securities and Banking Newsletters (DC-FINNL; 2004-))

•**Print:**

D.C. Register

The annual *D.C. Register Index* lists orders by number under "Other Actions by Boards, Commissions, and Agencies" and provides the *DCR* citation.

[STOCKTON (2ND FL)]

5. **Mayor's Orders:**

Through these orders, the Mayor implements a specific statutory function or delegates authority to another executive officer. The orders are published in the *D.C. Register*.

A list of Mayor's Orders by number appears in the annual *D.C. Register Index* and provides the *DCR* citation.

Citation: M.O. 2001-23 (2001=year)

•**World Wide Web**

Office of the Secretary: Mayor's Orders and Memoranda:

<http://os.dc.gov/os/site/default.asp> > *Administrative Issuances* (2005-)

Search Mayor's Orders (Sept. 2009-): <http://www.dcregs.org/Default.aspx>

•**Commercial Databases:**

LexisNexis (DC;DCRGST) (1998-)

WESTLAW (DC-ADR) (selected; 1999-)

•**Print:** *D.C. Register* [STOCKTON (2ND FL)]

6. **Office of Administrative Hearings:**

•Formerly: Office of Adjudications and Hearings

•Established March 2004

•Office has 3 administrative law judges

•Handles nearly all litigation stemming from D.C. agency decisions

•**Commercial Databases:**

LexisNexis (DC; DCOAH) (2000-)

WESTLAW (DCOAH) (2000-)

7. **Office of Employee Appeals:**
The annual *D.C. Register Index* lists the decisions and orders under "Other Actions by Boards, Commissions, and Agencies" and provides the *DCR* citation.
- World Wide Web:**
<http://newsroom.dc.gov/list.aspx/agency/oea/section/36/year/2008> (2005-)
 - Commercial Databases:**
LexisNexis (DC;DCRGST) (1998-)
WESTLAW (DC-ADR) (selected; 1999-)
 - Print:**
D.C. Register [STOCKTON (2ND FL)]
8. **Office of Employment Services: Workers' Compensation:**
- Commercial Databases:**
LexisNexis (DC; DCWORK) (decisions and orders; 1996-)
WESTLAW (DCWC-ADMIN) (1982-)
9. **Office of Police Complaints:**
- Formerly: *Office of Citizen Complaint Review* and *Citizen Complaint Review Board*
 - Decisions resolving police misconduct complaints
 - World Wide Web**
Office of Police Complaints website:
<http://www.policecomplaints.dc.gov/occr/site/default.asp>
 - Commercial Databases:**
LexisNexis (DC;DCPOCO) (2004-)
WESTLAW (DCOPC-ADMIN) (April 2003-)
10. **Office of the Corporation Counsel:** See "(D.C.) Attorney General" above
11. **Public Service Commission Decisions:**
- World Wide Web**
<http://www.dcpsc.org/commorders/commorder.asp>
 - Commercial Databases:**
LexisNexis (DC;DCPUC) (9/30/99-)
WESTLAW (DC-PUR) (Orders of the D.C. Public Service Commission that have appeared in the *Public Utility Reports (PUR)*; 1953-)

12. **Public Employee Relations Board:**

•**World Wide Web**

Public Employee Relations Board website:

<http://perb.dc.gov/perb/site/default.asp>

•**Commercial Databases:**

WESTLAW (DCLB-ADMIN)

•**Print:**

D.C. Register:

The annual *D.C. Register Index* lists the opinions by number under "Other Actions by Boards, Commissions, and Agencies" and provides the *DCR* citation.

[STOCKTON (2ND FL)]

13. **Worker's Compensation:** See "Office of Employment Services: Worker's Compensation" above

14. **Zoning Commission:**

•**World Wide Web**

D.C. Zoning Commission website: <http://dcoz.dc.gov/main.shtm>

•**Print:**

D.C. Register:

The annual *D.C. Register Index* lists the orders by number under "Other Actions by Boards, Commissions, and Agencies" and provides the *DCR* citation

[STOCKTON (2ND FL)]

15. **Historical Records of the District of Columbia:**

•**World Wide Web**

U.S. National Archives and Records Administration (NARA): Record Group 351: Records of the Government of the District of Columbia: 1791-1978:

<http://www.archives.gov/research/guide-fed-records/groups/351.html>

(D.C.) Office of the Secretary, Office of Public Records:

[http://os.dc.gov/os/cwp/view,a,1207,q,522721,osNav,31374\].asp](http://os.dc.gov/os/cwp/view,a,1207,q,522721,osNav,31374].asp)

(historical D.C. government documents)

IV. DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA CASE LAW

The D.C. court system has undergone numerous changes since Washington, D.C., was created in 1800. A discussion of the history of the D.C. court system can be found in:

“Chapter 1: Finding the Law” in Volume 1, *The District of Columbia Practice Manual*. . Washington, D.C.: District of Columbia Bar, current. [RESERVE (1ST FL): KFD1281 .D576]

Inside the Courts, Government and Law Libraries of the District of Columbia [(READY REFERENCE (1ST FL): KFD1708 .A19I57)]

Legal Research in the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia, by Leah F. Chanin, Pamela J. Gregory and Sarah K. Wiant. 2d edition. [READY REFERENCE (1ST FL): KF240 .C47 2000]

History of the D.C. Courts, District of Columbia Courts website:
<http://www.dccourts.gov/dccourts/about/history.jsp>

The current District of Columbia court system was established in 1971. The two D.C. courts of local jurisdiction are the District of Columbia Court of Appeals and the Superior Court of the District of Columbia.

District of Columbia Courts website: <http://www.dccourts.gov/dccourts/index.jsp>

For a list of D.C. Court reporters and their coverage, consult:

“Table 1: United States Jurisdictions: District of Columbia (DC).” *The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation*. 19th edition. [RESERVE (1ST FL): KF245 .B58]

A. Courts & Opinions

1. **District of Columbia Court of Appeals (formerly the Municipal Court of Appeals)**
 - The Municipal Court of Appeals was created in 1942.
 - The District of Columbia Court of Appeals, the court of last resort in the District of Columbia, was created by the District of Columbia Court Reform and Criminal Procedure Act of 1970 (Public Law 91-358, 84 Stat. 473)
 - Reviews all appeals from the Superior Court, appeals from decisions and orders issued by D.C. government administrative agencies, orders of the Mayor and City Council, and lawyer disciplinary actions
 - Final judgments reviewable by U.S. Supreme Court
 - Issues published and unpublished opinions
 - Signed opinions and per curiam opinions are published
 - “Memorandum Opinions & Judgements (MOJs) not published; they are binding on the

parties but have no precedential value and may not be cited as authority

Note: Prior to 1943, appeals from the trial court level went to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit and its predecessors. Also, the D.C. Court of Appeals has ruled that opinions prior to 1971 from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit are binding on the D.C. courts unless overruled by an *en banc* opinion of the D.C. Court of Appeals (see *Map v. Ryan*, 285 A.2d 310 (D.C.1971)).

Opinions:

•World Wide Web

D.C. Court of Appeals web site:

http://www.dcappeals.gov/dccourts/appeals/opinions_mojs.jsp

- Signed opinions and per curiam opinions (1998-)
- Monthly lists of MOJs issued (September 1999-)

•Commercial Databases:

LexisNexis (DC; DCAPP)

- Municipal Court of Appeals & D.C. Court of Appeals
- 1925 to date

WESTLAW (DC-CS)

- Municipal Court of Appeals & D.C. Court of Appeals
- 1942 to date

[Law.com](http://www.law.com) (July 28, 2010-) (Digests of selected opinions)

•Print:

Atlantic Reporter 2d (1943-)
[BURNS (2ND FL)]

Maryland Reporter (1943-)
[BURNS (2ND FL)]

Daily Washington Law Reporter (selected)
[RESERVE (1ST FL): Current issues; LL2: K4 .A35]

National Law Journal (*Legal Times* became part of the *National Law Journal*)
•Digests of selected opinions
[RESERVE (1ST FL): Current issues; LL1: Microfiche #71 & Microfilm #70; 1978-2008]

Orders & Notices:

•World Wide Web

D.C. Court of Appeals web site:

<http://www.dcappeals.gov/dccourts/appeals/orders.jsp> (Nov. 2001-)

Briefs:

•Commercial Databases

LexisNexis (Click on “Find a Source”; type: District of Columbia Briefs and Motions) (2000-)

WESTLAW (DC-COA-BRIEF) (selected, 2004-)

Court Rules:

•World Wide Web

<http://www.dcappeals.gov/dccourts/appeals/rules.jsp>

•Commercial Databases

LexisNexis (DC; DCRULE) (current)

WESTLAW (DC-RULES) (current)

•Print:

District of Columbia Official Code: District of Columbia Rules of Court: District. St. Paul: West Group. Annual. [RESERVE (1ST FL); STOCKTON (2ND FL)]

District of Columbia Court Rules Annotated. LEXIS Law Publishing. Annual. [STOCKTON (2ND FL)]

D.C. Court Rules Service. Chevy Chase, Md. : Rules Service Co., 1971-. [RESERVE (1ST FL); KFD 1729 .A23]

Oral Arguments:

•World Wide Web

D.C. Court of Appeals web site:

<http://www.dcappeals.gov/dccourts/appeals/calendar/index.jsp>

•Real time broadcast of current oral arguments

•Prior arguments not accessible

Practice Guides:

District of Columbia Court of Appeals Citation and Style Guide (Sept. 2009)

•**World Wide Web**

D.C. Court of Appeals web site: Reference Materials:

<http://www.dcappeals.gov/dccourts/appeals/reference.jsp>

From the Ground Up: The Fundamentals of Practice in the D.C. Court of Appeals

•**World Wide Web**

D.C. Court of Appeals web site: Reference Materials:

<http://www.dcappeals.gov/dccourts/appeals/reference.jsp>

2. **Superior Court of the District of Columbia**

- District of Columbia's trial court of general jurisdiction
- Authority to hear most civil or criminal cases that originate in the District and do not fall under the jurisdiction of the federal courts

Opinions:

•**Commercial Databases**

LexisNexis (DC;SUPER) (2001-)

•**Print**

Daily Washington Law Reporter (selected)

[RESERVE (1ST FL): Current issues; SL1: K4 .A35]

Superior Court clerk's office:

<http://www.dccourts.gov/dccourts/superior/clerk.jsp>

Briefs:

•**Commercial Databases**

LexisNexis (Click on "Find a Source"; type: District of Columbia Briefs and Motions) (2000-)

Dockets:

•Commercial Databases

Westlaw (DOCK-DC-SUPERIOR)

(selected civil dockets filed in the District of Columbia, Superior Court;
Covers cases filed 1/1/2000 - 1/20/2011)

Administrative Orders:

•World Wide Web

Superior Court of D.C. web site:

http://www.dccourts.gov/dccourts/superior/admin_orders/admin_orders.jsp (2001-)

Court Rules:

•World Wide Web

Superior Court of D.C. web site:

http://www.dccourts.gov/dccourts/superior/admin_orders/rules.jsp

•Commercial Databases

LexisNexis (DC; DCRULE) (current)

WESTLAW (DC-RULES) (current)

•Print:

District of Columbia Official Code: District of Columbia Rules of Court: District.
St. Paul: West Group. Annual [RESERVE (1ST FL); STOCKTON (2ND FL)]

District of Columbia Court Rules Annotated. LEXIS Law Publishing. Annual.
[STOCKTON (2ND FL)]

D.C. Court Rules Service. Chevy Chase, Md. : Rules Service Co., 1971-.
[RESERVE (1ST FL): KFD 1729 .A23]

B. Digests & Finding Tools for D.C. Court Opinions

1. *District of Columbia digest, 1658 to date: A Complete Digest of the District of Columbia Reports, Including Decisions of the Circuit Court, the early Maryland cases, as well as Decisions of the United States Supreme Court in Cases Appealed from the District of Columbia Courts*
 - Brief summaries of facts and holdings in opinions of D.C. Court of Appeals and its predecessors, as well as cases relating to the District decided in federal court

- Covers all reported District of Columbia cases, including decisions of the Circuit Court, and early Maryland cases, as well as decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court in cases appealed from the D.C. courts
- Organized by West's topic and key number system
- Updated by annual pocket parts and semiannual pamphlets
- Includes a Descriptive Word Index
- "Words and Phrases" volumes provide access to cases that define particular terms
- "Table of Cases" volumes provide access to cases by party name

•**Commercial Databases**

WESTLAW (DC-CS) (Use "Custom Digest")

- Print:** STOCKTON (2ND FL)

2. *Atlantic Digest 2d*

- Covers D.C. cases
- Includes cases from other states covered by the *Atlantic Reporter 2d*
- Covers cases only reported since 1932

- Print:** BURNS (2ND FL)

3. *Superior Court Digest*

- Published by the D.C. Bar Association
- Selected
- 1988-1996

- Print:** SL3: KFD1251.1 .S87

4. *Compendium of Published Memorandum Opinions of the D.C. Superior Court in the Daily Washington Law Reporter, 1971-2002: Citations, Cross-References, and Comprehensive Index Celebrating Over Thirty Years of Judicial Scholarship.* Washington, D.C.: Daily Washington Law Reporter, 2003-

- Print:** RESERVE (1ST FL): KFD1251.1 .D57 2003

C. Legal Encyclopedia

There is no up-to-date legal encyclopedia for the District of Columbia. Researchers should consult the sources referenced in the section on "Secondary Sources" below.

D. Citators

1. *Shepard's District of Columbia Citations*

- Use to determine the authority of a case

•Use to find recent cases or secondary sources citing the case at hand

•**Commercial Databases**

LexisNexis (Shepard's)

WESTLAW (KeyCite)

•**Print:** STOCKTON (2ND FL)

2. *Shepard's Atlantic Reporter Citations*

•Use to determine the authority of a case; provides treatment of D.C. cases by courts of other states

•**Commercial Databases**

LexisNexis (Shepard's)

•**Print:** BURNS (2ND FL)

3. *WESTLAW (KeyCite)*

E. Court Directories

1. *BNA's Directory of State and Federal Courts, Judges, and Clerks.* Washington, D.C. : Bureau of National Affairs. annual.

•**Print:** READY REFERENCE (1ST FL): KF8700.A19 B52

2. [*Leadership Library on the Internet*](#). New York, NY : Leadership Directories, Inc. (Online access includes *State Yellow Book & Municipal Yellow Book* information)

V. DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT RULES AND ETHICS OPINIONS

District of Columbia Rules of Court. District. St. Paul, Minn. : West Pub. Co., Annual.

•Part of the *District of Columbia Official Code*

•**Commercial Databases:**

WESTLAW (DC-RULES)

•**Print:** RESERVE (1ST FL) & STOCKTON (2ND FL)

District of Columbia Court Rules Annotated. Charlottesville, Va. : LexisNexis. annual.
•Part of the *LEXIS D.C. Code*

•**Commercial Databases:**
LexisNexis (DC; DCRULE)

•**Print:** STOCKTON (2ND FL)

D.C. Rules of Professional Conduct. Washington, D.C.: District of Columbia Bar, 1990-
•Ethics rules and opinions of the D.C. Bar Legal Ethics Committee
•1990-2010

•**World Wide Web:** http://www.dcbar.org/for_lawyers/ethics/legal_ethics/ (1990-)

•**Print:** RESERVE (1ST FL): KFD 1276.5 .A2 A3 1990

Code of Professional Responsibility and Opinions of the D.C. Bar Legal Ethics Committee. Washington, D.C.: District of Columbia Bar, 1991.
•Ethics committee opinions prior to 1990

•**Print:** RESERVE (1ST FL): KFD 1276 .A2 D57

Daily Washington Law Reporter. Washington, D.C.: Washington Law Reporter Co., 1959-.
•Reprints selected D.C. Bar ethics committee opinions

•**Print:** RESERVE (1ST FL): Current; LL2: Older issues: K 4 .A35

National Reporter on Legal Ethics & Prof. Responsibility. Bethesda, MD:
University Publications of America, 1992-.

•**Commercial Databases:**
LexisNexis ((DC; DCETOP)(DC bar formal and informal opinions on legal ethics and professional responsibility) (Opinion No. 210, 1990-)

•**Print:** SL2: KF306.Z95 N372 1992

D.C. Bar's website:

•**World Wide Web**
D.C. Rules of Professional Conduct (Current):
http://www.dcbar.org/for_lawyers/ethics/legal_ethics/

D.C. Ethics Opinions (1990-): http://www.dcbar.org/for_lawyers/ethics/legal_ethics/

VI. SELECTED SECONDARY SOURCES

Listed below are practice manuals, treatises, law journals and legal newspapers relating to D.C. law. Additional materials can be located by searching *JACOB, the Library's online catalog* (<http://jacob.law.gwu.edu/>). Search by "Keyword" or "Subject" (suggested subject terms: **law washington(d.c.)** or **law washington(d.c.) periodicals**).

A. Practice Manuals and Treatises:

The District of Columbia Practice Manual. Washington, D.C.: District of Columbia Bar, updated annually.

- A guide to the major areas of practice in D.C.
- Excellent starting point for research because it leads the researcher to key sources, including statutes, regulations, court rules, cases and forms.

•**Print:** RESERVE (1ST FL): KFD 1281 .D576

Bar Association of the District of Columbia. Young Lawyers' Section. *Standardized Civil Jury Instructions for the District of Columbia*. Washington, D.C.: Young Lawyers Section, Bar Association of the District of Columbia, 2002-.

•**Commercial Databases:**

LexisNexis (MATBEN; JURCDC)

•**Print:** RESERVE (1ST FL): KFD1742.6 .A65B373

Brenneman, Diane M. and Linda J. Ravdin. *Domestic Relations Manual for the District of Columbia*. Newark, NJ: LexisNexis, 2002-.

•**Commercial Databases:**

LexisNexis (MATBEN;DCDOMR)

•**Print:** RESERVE (1ST FL): KFD1294 .B74

Criminal Jury Instructions for the District of Columbia, edited by Barbara E. Bergman; Young Lawyers Section of the Bar Association of the District of Columbia. [Albany, NY]: LexisNexis, Matthew Bender, 2002-.

•**Commercial Databases:**

LexisNexis (DC;DCJICR)

•**Print:** RESERVE (1ST FL): KFD1783 .A65 B353

Cunningham, Lynn E., editor. *Neighborhood Legal Services Program Manual of Landlord and Residential Tenant Law and Court Practice and Procedure*. Washington, D.C. : District of Columbia Neighborhood Legal Services Program, 1992.

•**Print:** RESERVE (1ST FL): KFD1317 .N45 1992

The Deborah T. Creek Criminal Practice Institute Practice Manual. Washington, D.C. : Public Defender Service, 2005/06-.

•**Print:** RESERVE (1ST FL): KFD1779 .C732

District of Columbia Tax Reporter, State and Local: All Taxes, all Taxables. Chicago, IL: Commerce Clearing House, 1955-.

•**Commercial Databases:**

CCH IntelliConnect: <http://www.law.gwu.edu/Library/Research> > Database Subscriptions

•**Print:** SL3: KFD1670 .A6C65 1955

Graae, Steffen W. and Brian T. FitzPatrick. *The Law of Evidence in the District of Columbia*. 5th edition. Washington, D.C. : Bar Association of the District of Columbia, 2002-.

•**Commercial Databases:**

LexisNexis (MATBEN;DCEVID)

•**Print:** RESERVE (1ST FL): KFD1740 .G723

Karpoff, Julian. *Landlord and Tenant Law in the District of Columbia, with Practice Manual*. Alexandria, Va. : Potomac Law Pub. Co., 1977-. Current to 1996.

•**Print:** RESERVE (1ST FL): KFD1317 .K37

District of Columbia. City Council. Office of the General Counsel. *Legislative Drafting Manual*. Washington, DC: Council of the District of Columbia, 2001.

•**Print:** SL3: KFD1621.5 .B5D57 2001

Mallow, Michael L. *Civil Practice in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia*. Washington, DC : Bar Association of the District of Columbia, 1995-.

•**Print:** RESERVE (1ST FL): KFD1715 .M25

Pearlstein, Paul D., editor. *Real Estate Practice in the District of Columbia, Maryland and*

Virginia. Washington, D.C. : Bar Association of the District of Columbia, 2002-.

•**Print:** RESERVE (1ST FL): KF2042.R4 R44

RIA State and Local Taxes: District of Columbia

•**Commercial Databases:**

Thomson Reuters Checkpoint

<http://www.law.gwu.edu/Library/Research> > Database Subscriptions

WESTLAW (RIA-DC)

Stein, Jacob A. *Trial Handbook for District of Columbia Lawyers*. St. Paul, MN: West Group, 1994-.

•**Commercial Databases:**

WESTLAW (DCPRAC-TRH)

•**Print:** RESERVE (1ST FL): KFD1738 .S74

Ward, Nicholas D. et al. *Wills, Trusts & Estates for the D.C. Area Practitioner*. Newark, NJ: LexisNexis, 2004-.

•**Commercial Databases:**

LexisNexis (MATBEN;DCAWTE)

•**Print:** RESERVE (1ST FL): KF755 .W28

B. Law Journals and Legal Newspapers:

Daily Washington Law Reporter. Washington, D.C.: Washington Law Reporter Co., 1959-.
(**Note:** From 1874-1959, the title was *Washington Law Reporter*)

•**Print:** RESERVE (1ST FL): Current issues; LL2: K4 .A35

BLT: Blog of the Legal Times

BLT is a legal news blog written primarily by *Legal Times* reporters and editors

•**Commercial Databases:**

LexisNexis (Click: "Find a Sources" tab; type: blt; 3/31/2011-)

[Law.com](http://www.law.com)

Legal Times. Washington, D.C.: Legal Times, 1982-2009 .
(2009-: Continued as a pull-out section in: *National Law Journal*)

•**Commercial Databases:**

LexisNexis (Click: “Find a Sources” tab; type: legal times)(3/1/82 - 4/27/09)

•**Print:** RESERVE (1ST FL): Current issues

•**Microform:** MICROFILM (LL1): Film #70 (Older issues)

National Law Journal. New York : New York Law Publ. Co.

•**Commercial Databases:**

WESTLAW (NLJ) (1983-)

[Law.com](http://www.law.com)

•**Print:** RESERVE (1ST FL): Current issues

•**Microform:** MICROFILM (LL1): Film #71 (Older issues)

University of the District of Columbia Law Review. Washington, D.C. : University of the District of Columbia School of Law, 1998- .

•**Commercial Databases:**

HeinOnline: <http://www.law.gwu.edu/Library/Research> > Database Subscriptions (PDF)

LexisNexis (DC; UDCLR) (Vol. 7, no.1 (Spring 2003)-)

WESTLAW (UDCLR) (Vol. 3, (1995-))

Washington Lawyer. Washington, D.C.: District of Columbia Bar, 1986- .

•**World Wide Web:**

http://www.dcbbar.org/for_lawyers/resources/publications/washington_lawyer/index.cfm (2000-)

•**Print:** RESERVE (1ST FL): Current issues; LL2: Older Issues: K27 .A83