



LEGAL RESEARCH

Today, most of the resources you would need to do your legal research are available online using the Findlaw Law Crawler (search engine) at <http://lawcrawler.findlaw.com/>. With Findlaw, you have access to federal case law, United States constitutional and code law as well as state code and case law. There are a number of easy ways to search the Findlaw databases including searching by citation, party name and full text key words. You can also do a Cite Check to *Find Cases Which Cite another case*.

Because the resources available through Findlaw are so extensive, free of charge and continually updated, the costly print copies of these legal resources are being phased out of our library. For teaching and historical purposes, however, a selected list of legal research materials is listed below. With the exception of *West's California Reporter* and *California Legal Secretary*, the updating services for these print resources have been discontinued.

Legal Dictionaries

<i>Oxford companion to American Law</i>	Ref KF154.O96 2002
<i>West's Encyclopedia of American Law</i>	Ref KF154.W47 1998
<i>Black's law dictionary</i>	Ref KF156.B53 2004
<i>Legal thesaurus</i>	Ref KF156.B856 1992
<i>Encyclopedia of the American constitution</i>	Ref KF 4548.E53 2000
<i>Supreme Court Drama: Cases that Changed American Law</i>	Ref KF 4550.Z9B73 2001

Primary Legal Sources (Codes & Case Law)

<i>United States code annotated (search topics in Gen. Index)</i>	Ref KF62.U5 (to 2002)
<i>United States code congressional and administrative news</i>	Ref KF 63.U5 (to 2002)
<i>United States Supreme Court reports lawyers' edition</i>	Ref KF101.L3 series 1&2 (to 2002)
<i>The Constitution of the United States of America:</i>	Ref KF 4527.J39 1973
<i>West's annotated California code (search topics in Gen. Index)</i>	Ref KFC 30.A40W5
<i>California reporter Pacific 2d Series (cases 1931-1959)</i>	Ref KFC 50.P3 2d series
<i>West's California reporter</i>	Ref KFC 50.W4 series 1&2& 3 (current)
<i>Bay area local court rules (superior courts)</i>	Ref KFC 968.A29B39 2003

Secondary Legal Sources

<i>Digest of U.S. Supreme Court reports</i>	Ref KF101.1.L3 (to 1994)
<i>Corpus Juris Secundum</i> (U.S. legal encyclopedia)	Ref KF154.C62 (to 1994)
<i>United States patents quarterly</i>	Ref KF 2975.3.U55 series 1&2 (to 1996)
<i>McCarthy on trademarks and unfair competition</i>	Ref KF 3180.M29 1992
<i>California jurisprudence 3d</i> (CA legal encyclopedia)	Ref KFC 80.C29 (to 2002)
<i>West's California digest 2d</i> (topical guide to CA case law)	Ref KFC 38.W4 2d series (to 2003)
<i>Summary of California law 9th edition</i>	Ref KFC 80.W5 1987 (to 1995)
<i>California Legal Secretary</i>	Ref KFC 77. H39 (current)
<i>Witkin combined index</i> (summary of CA law)	Ref KFC 80.W584 1991

(Secondary Legal Sources continued)

<i>Witkin combined table of statutes & rules</i> (CA law)	Ref KFC 80.W583 1991
<i>Witkin combined table of cases</i> (CA case law)	Ref KFC 90.W584 1991
<i>California civil practice</i>	Ref KFC 310.B36 (to 1992)
<i>California civil procedure before trial</i>	Ref KFC 995.C34 1990
<i>California forms of pleading & practice</i>	Ref KFC1010.A65C3 (to 1998)
<i>Effective Introduction to Evidence in California</i>	Ref KFC 1030.E352 (to 2005)
<i>California criminal law (Witkin)</i>	Ref KFC 1100.W57 1988

Directories

<i>Martindale Hubbell law directory</i>	REF KF190.M38 1995
<i>American bar reference handbook</i>	REF KF190.A43 1992

Finding Precedent Cases in Printed References

Case Method:

Find specific cases that interest you in the United States or California case reporters. Let's say you are looking at an old California case regarding damages for injuries sustained by a motorist in a collision with a Southern Pacific Company passenger train. The case is *Nelson v. Southern Pacific Company*. The citation given is 67 p.2d 682. This tells you that you will find the case in volume 67 of the California Reporter covering cases reported in Pacific Reporter Second Series beginning on page 682. (Ref KFC 50.P3 Ser. 2 v. 67-68.)

As you look at the case, you will see key numbers associated with subject specific head notes. For example you will see **4. Railroads 350(11)**. The head note indicates that this key item deals with the speed of the train on its right of way and lets you know that if you go to West's California Digest (Ref KFC 38.W4 2d v. 37) containing the subject RAILROADS and look up key item 350(11) you will find summaries of other cases dealing with a similar point of law.

Statutes/Codes Method:

You will also find references to precedent cases as you read through statutes or codes. For example, if you were looking for codes dealing with forgery with intent to defraud, you might begin with the West's Annotated California Codes General Index (Ref KFC30.A40W5 General Index D-I). Under the subject **Forgery**, you will be referred to **Pen 475**. Find the **Penal Code** (Ref KFC30.A40W5 v.48A) and look up section 475. You will be given the text of the code followed by useful references if you are looking for precedent cases. Notice that under **Library References** you are referred to key digest item **Forgery 7** where you can find precedent cases. You will also notice that a section called **Notes of Decisions** is included in the code volume. These numbered notes provide summaries of precedent cases and the citations needed to look the cases up.

Help Available at the County Law Library

If you need the help of a professional law librarian contact the Santa Clara County Law Library at (408) 299-3568 or on the web at www.sccll.org