

## Reading a Legal Citation

### Basic Format

Most legal citations consist of three parts:

- Volume number;
- Abbreviation of the name of the source; and
- Page or section number ( § denotes section ).

For example, **163 U.S. 537** consists of the following:

163 = volume #	U.S. = <i>United States Reports</i> (source publication)	537 = starting page
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### Court Cases

"Reporters" publish the opinions issued by a court in an ongoing series of volumes. While court cases are usually referenced by name (e.g. *Roe vs. Wade*), most legal materials also include a legal citation indicating where the decision is found in a specific reporter.

Example: **344 U.S. 1** cites the "*Brown v. Board of Education*" decision as published in *United States Reports*.

### Parallel Citations

Citations to the same law or opinion published in different sources are called **parallel citations**. Many legal citations include references to several different sources. The first cite is considered the official or primary cite. The subsequent cites reference additional sources published by private companies which include additional editorial features.

Example: **Roe v. Wade (410 U.S. 113; 93 S. Ct. 705; 35 L. Ed. 2d 147)**

<u>Source Publication:</u>	<u>Parallel Cite</u>
<i>United States Reports</i> (US)	<b>410 U.S. 113</b>
<i>Supreme Court Reporter</i> (S.Ct.)	<b>93 S. Ct. 705</b>
<i>Lawyer's Edition</i> (L.Ed.)	<b>35 L. Ed. 2d 147</b>

### Law Codes (Statutes, Regulations)

Codes arrange all laws (e.g. statutes) or regulations by subject, and are cited by section (instead of page number). Section numbers are denoted by the § symbol.

<b>34 CFR §300.300 =</b>	<b>20 USC §1400 =</b>
Volume 34	Volume 20
<i>Code of Federal Regulations</i>	<i>United States Code</i>
Section 300.300	Section 1400

## Abbreviations for Common Legal Sources

Abbreviation	Name of Source Publication	Type of Material
Cal.	<i>California Reports</i>	California Supreme Court Opinions
Cal. App. Cal. App. 2d., etc.	<i>California Appellate Reports</i>	California Appellate Court Opinions
Cal. Rptr. Cal. Rptr. 2d., etc.	<i>California Reporter</i>	California Supreme and Appellate Court Opinions
C.C.R.	<i>California Code of Regulations</i>	California State Regulations
C.F.R.	<i>Code of Federal Regulations</i>	U.S. Regulations by subject
C.J.S.	<i>Corpus Juris Secundum</i>	Encyclopedia of Federal Law
F., F.2d, F.3d	<i>Federal Reporter</i>	U.S. Appellate Court Opinions
F.R.	<i>Federal Register</i>	U.S. Regulations (when 1 <sup>st</sup> written)
F. Supp., F. Supp. 2d, etc.	<i>Federal Supplement</i>	U.S. District Court Opinions
L. Ed. L. Ed. 2d	<i>U.S. Supreme Court Reporter, Lawyer's Edition</i>	U.S. Supreme Court Opinions
P., P.2d	<i>Pacific Reporter</i>	State Supreme Court Cases (California & others)
S. Ct.	<i>Supreme Court Reporter</i>	U.S. Supreme Court Opinions
Stat.	<i>Statutes at Large</i>	U.S. Laws (as written when passed)
U.S.	<i>United States Reports</i>	U.S. Supreme Court Opinions
U.S.C.	<i>United States Code</i>	U.S. Law Code (statutes by subject)
U.S.C.A.	<i>United States Code Annotated</i>	U.S. Law Code (statutes by subject)
U.S.C.S.	<i>United States Code Service</i>	U.S. Law Code (statutes by subject)

**Series Note:** *2d* indicates second series, *3d* indicates third series, etc.

**Getting the text:** *LexisNexis Academic* (a database available via the library website) and *Find Law* (a free website, <http://findlaw.com/>) include the text of most of these sources.

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### For more information on legal citations see:

Harvard Law Review Association. *The Bluebook : A uniform system of citation.* (17th ed.)  
Cambridge, MA: Harvard Law Review Association. Available in the Library's Reference and Reserve collections shelved under call #: KF245 .B58



## Legal Citations to California Codes

California codes contain state law (statutes) in 29 separate series, each covering a general topic (e.g. - Education, Insurance, etc.). Some legal citations use the full name of the code, while others use abbreviations. For sources published outside of California, it is common to add "California" or "Cal" to the code or abbreviation, e.g. Cal Pen Code § 11164.

<b>California Code Name</b>	<b>Common Abbrev.</b>	<b>LexisNexis Abbrev.</b>
<i>Business and Professions</i>	Bus. & Prof. Code	Cal Bus & Prof Code
<i>Civil</i>	Civil Code	Cal Civ Code
<i>Code of Civil Procedure</i>	Civ. Proc. Code	Cal Code Civ Proc
<i>Commercial</i>	Com. Code	Cal U Com Code
<i>Corporations</i>	Corp. Code	Cal Corp Code
<i>Education</i>	Educ. Code	Cal Ed Code
<i>Elections</i>	Elec. Code	Cal Elec Code
<i>Evidence</i>	Evid. Code	Cal Evid Code
<i>Family</i>	Fam. Code	Cal Fam Code
<i>Financial</i>	Fin. Code	Cal Fin Code
<i>Fish and Game</i>	Fish & Game Code	Cal Fish & G Code
<i>Food and Agriculture</i>	Food & Agric. Code	Cal Food & Agr Code
<i>Government</i>	Gov't. Code	Cal Gov Code
<i>Harbors and Navigation</i>	Harb. & Nav. Code	Cal Harb & Nav Code
<i>Health and Safety</i>	Health & Safety Code	Cal Health & Saf Code
<i>Insurance</i>	Ins. Code	Cal Ins Code
<i>Labor</i>	Lab. Code	Cal Lab Code
<i>Military and Veterans</i>	Mil. & Vet. Code	Cal Mil & Vet Code
<i>Penal</i>	Penal Code	Cal Pen Code
<i>Probate</i>	Prob. Code	Cal Prob Code
<i>Public Contract</i>	Pub. Cont. Code	Cal Pub Contract Code
<i>Public Resources</i>	Pub. Res. Code	Cal Pub Resources Code
<i>Public Utilities</i>	Pub. Util. Code	Cal Pub Util Code
<i>Revenue and Taxation</i>	Rev. & Tax. Code	Cal Rev & Tax Code
<i>Streets and Highways</i>	Sts. & High. Code	Cal Sts & Hy Code
<i>Unemployment Insurance</i>	Unemp. Ins. Code.	Cal Unemp Ins Code
<i>Vehicle</i>	Veh. Code	Cal Veh Code
<i>Water</i>	Water Code	Cal Wat Code
<i>Welfare and Institutions</i>	Welf. & Inst. Code	Cal Wel & Inst Code

**Getting the text:** Several online resources, including the State of California website as well as *LexisNexis Academic* (a database available via the library website) include the full-text of each California Code.

