



# Bills, Laws, and Regulations as Legal References

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This fact sheet is designed to help individuals use legal references that contain statutes and government regulations. Better understanding of these laws can be very useful for government officials, business managers, and individuals. Because of the technical nature of statutes and regulations, however, the reader may be better served by obtaining the advice of legal counsel rather than relying solely on personal interpretation.

Legal references may be generally classified into the following categories:

1. State and federal statutes,
2. Rules and regulations of state and federal agencies,
3. Case reporters,
4. Digests of cases,
5. Attorney general opinions,
6. Legal encyclopedias and treatises,
7. Shepards Citations, and
8. Legal periodicals.

Each of these types of reference has its own indexing system. Some of the references have multiple indexing systems. This fact sheet will discuss only statutes and regulations and the documents leading to their creation.

Oklahoma state law is compiled in a multiple volume set called the Oklahoma Statutes. This fact sheet explains how the Oklahoma Statutes are arranged and how to find a law or other information within any volume. Other legal resources identified and discussed are: Oklahoma senate and house bills, Oklahoma Session Laws, state agency rules and regulations in Oklahoma, federal statutes, and federal regulations.

## Oklahoma Senate and House Bills

New laws, amended laws, and repealed laws are processed by actions originating within either the Senate Chamber or House Chamber. The process involves several steps:

1. A bill is drafted in the chamber of origin.
2. A summary ("title") of it is read before the whole chamber.
3. It is sent to a committee(s) within the chamber for study and recommendations.
4. It is returned to the chamber for a "do pass" vote or a vote to send it back to the committee for further study.

A bill given a "do pass" by the chamber of origin is sent to the other chamber for consideration. If it is amended by the other chamber, then it may be brought before a conference committee made up of both senators and representatives. Amendments may be made by the conference committee. The original or amended bill becomes a law when passed by both chambers and signed by the governor.

One or more laws may be created, amended, or repealed by a bill. Each law is codified with a unique title number and a section number(s). These numbers identify a law and show where it will be placed in the Oklahoma Statutes. The legislature sometimes passes resolutions. Some resolutions do not become law but rather express the opinion of one or both houses.

The notation for senate and house bills and resolutions is defined as follows:

- SB or HB (Senate or House Bill)—becomes law when passed by both houses and signed by the governor.
- SJR or HJR (Senate or House Joint Resolution)—has the effect of law when passed by both houses and signed by the governor but is short lived and expires when its content is completed. A joint resolution may be used to add to or amend the state constitution by initiating a state referendum. The change occurs when approved by a simple majority of the votes cast by the eligible voters. The joint resolution itself expires when the state referendum is carried out. The legislature also uses a joint resolution to ratify a proposed amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Oklahoma law requires that the ratification proposal include an expiration date.
- SCR or HCR (Senate or House Concurrent Resolution)—does not become law but officially records the joint opinion of both houses when passed by both and signed by the governor.
- SR or HR (Senate or House Resolution)—does not become law but officially records the opinion of the house of origin when passed only by it.

All bills and resolutions are consecutively numbered as introduced during the legislative year. Senate bills and resolutions begin with the number one (e.g., SB I, SJR I, SCR I, and SR I). House bills and resolutions are given a four-digit number starting with 1001 (e.g., HB 1001, HJR 1001, HCR 1001, and HR 1001).

## Session Laws

Laws and resolutions passed during a legislative session are published in the Oklahoma Session Laws (year of session). Each bill is given a heading that corresponds to the subject matter within it and a chapter number that is chronologically assigned by the date it was approved by the governor or filed with the secretary of state. A chapter heading and chapter number from Oklahoma Session Laws 1985 is shown.

Taxation-County Sales Tax-Elections  
Chapter 1  
S.B. No. 2  
(Approved Feb 4, 1985)

A table entitled "Alphabetical Table of Laws and Resolutions" alphabetically lists the subject matter and corresponding chapter and page numbers. From 1931 to 1961 only a page number was used. Other information included in the Session Laws publication are:

1. Table of Senate and House Bills enacted into law, and Joint and Concurrent Senate and House Resolutions that passed.
2. Table of laws amended, repealed, or otherwise affected by the newly enacted legislation.
3. Table showing status of state question initiatives and referendums.
4. A list of executive officers and members of the legislature (with addresses).

A subject index is located in the back of each Session Laws volume.

As bills are passed during a legislative session, they are printed in a paperback copy of the Oklahoma Sessions Laws. There will be several different paperback copies printed throughout the legislative session to include additional bills as they are passed by the legislature. A hardbound copy is printed within a few months after the legislature adjourns and contains all of the bills passed during the session. Until the annual supplement to the Oklahoma Statutes is printed, it is important to refer to the paperback or hard bound copies of the current Oklahoma Session Laws to determine the status of laws recently added, amended, or repealed.

## Oklahoma Statutes

A multiple volume set of Oklahoma Statutes is published every 10 years. It contains all of the currently valid Oklahoma Statutes as of the date of publication.

The most recent decennial edition is a seven volume set entitled Oklahoma Statutes 2001. Volume 1 of the Oklahoma Statutes 2001 includes the Constitution of the State of Oklahoma, as well as the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States. Volume 1 also includes the Magna Charta, the Organic Act, which established the Oklahoma Territory in 1890, the Enabling Act of 1906 that admitted Oklahoma and Indian Territory as a state, and the Proclamation of Statehood of 1907. Volumes 1 through 6 contain the statutory laws. Volume 7 has an index of Volumes 1 through 6 and tables that show where laws passed in previous years appear in the 2001 decennial edition of the Oklahoma Statutes.

A supplement is published annually to show legislative changes since the last decennial edition was published. Each year's supplement is an accumulation of the laws enacted, amended, and repealed during that year's legislative session and since the last decennial set of Oklahoma Statutes. For example, Oklahoma Statutes 2001 Supplement will contain the laws enacted, amended, and repealed during the 2002 Legislative Session and subsequent supplements will contain an accumulation of additions and changes from 2002 to the year of publication. Thus, the latest supplement must be consulted along with the most recent decennial edition of the Oklahoma Statutes and the session laws to determine the current status of a law. A Supplement is published within six months after each regular legislative session ends. The last supplement for the Oklahoma Statutes 2001 will be published in the year 2010. In the year 2011, a new decennial edition will be published.

## Organization of the Oklahoma Constitution by Articles

The Constitution of the State of Oklahoma is organized by articles. The articles are preceded by the preamble and followed by adschedule (additions to the Constitution). There are 29 articles. Each article is identified by a Roman numeral and a descriptive heading. The articles are listed in front of the Constitution in ascending order, as shown in Table 1 in the back of this fact sheet. Each Article is organized by sections. The sections are the topics within an article. A list of sections is provided at the beginning of each article. An example is shown below.

ARTICLE X.—REVENUE AND TAXATION  
GENERAL PROVISIONS  
Sec. 1. Fiscal year  
2. Tax to defray state expenses

As shown above, Article X begins with the heading "GENERAL PROVISIONS." Section 1 addresses the topic "Fiscal year," and section 2 addresses "Tax to defray state expenses." Not all articles will begin with a heading.

## Organization of the Statutes by Title

The Oklahoma Statutes are alphabetically arranged by major subject. Each major subject section is called a title. A list of all titles can be found in Table 2 at the end of this fact sheet. A table of contents in the front of each volume of the statutes lists the titles within the volume. Titles are numbered consecutively throughout the statutes. Some titles listed in the table of contents of Volume 1 are as follows:

Title	Page
1. Abstracting	213
2. Agriculture	215
12A. Civil Procedure	1583

Title 2 of the Oklahoma Statutes 2001 refers to the laws under the heading "Agriculture." Title 2 begins on page 215 of Volume 1. Title 12 refers to laws related to Civic Procedure. Title 12 begins on page 1583, Volume 1. Pages are numbered

**Table 1. Table of Contents of Oklahoma Constitution**

Article
Preamble
I. Federal Relations.
II. Bill of Rights.
III. Suffrage.
IV. Distribution of Powers.
V. Legislative Department.
VI. Executive Department.
VII. Judicial Department.
VIII. Court on the Judiciary
IX. Corporations.
X. Revenue and Taxation.
XI. State and School Lands.
XII. Homestead and Exemptions.
XII-A. Homestead Exemption from Taxation.
XIII. Education.
XIII-A. Oklahoma State System of Higher Education.
XIII-B. Board of Regents of Oklahoma Colleges.
XIV. Banks and Banking.
XV. Oath of Office.
XVI. Public Roads, Highways, and Internal Improvements.
XVII. Counties.
XVIII. Municipal Corporations.
XIX. Insurance.
XX. Manufacture and Commerce.
XXI. Public Institutions.
XXII. Alien and Corpotate Ownership
XXIII. Miscellaneous.
XXIV. Constitutional Amendments.
XXV. Social Security.
XXVI. Department of Wildlife Conservation.
XXVII. Oklahoma Alcoholic Beverage Control Board. (Repealed)
XXVIII. Alcoholic Beverage Laws and Enforcement Schedule. Prohibition Ordinance. (Repealed)
XXIX. Ethics Commission.

consecutively throughout all volumes. Although, Volume 1 ends on page 1943 and Volume 2 begins on 1945.

A subject covered extensively in one title may also be found under another title. For example, an assessor is a county officer. The laws addressing the duties performed by the county assessor are found in Title 68. Other laws affecting the county assessor as well as other county officers are found in Title 19.

**Subdivision of Title by Chapters and Sections**

Each title in the statutes is subdivided into chapters. The chapters are divided into sections. The sections, begin with the number one, are consecutively numbered throughout a title. The chapter numbers, chapter headings, and the first section number in a chapter are listed directly under the title number and title heading. For example, Title 19, Counties and County Officers, is listed as shown below.

TITLE 19	
Counties and County Officers	
Chapter	Section
1. Status and Power of Counties	1
2. Creation and Alteration of Counties...	11
35. Emergency Med. Service Dist. Act	1701

Each chapter begins with a complete list of the section headings and section numbers. For example, Title 19, Chapter 1 contains 8 sections as shown.

**CHAPTER 1. STATUS AND POWER  
OF COUNTIES**

Section	
1. Powers in general	
2. Property in county	
8. Public works contracts	

The chapter number is not noted when referring to a statute. Only the title number and section number are noted. Legal convention dictates the section number symbol § be used as an abbreviation for section. For example, Title 19, section 131 of the Oklahoma Statutes 2001 is written as 19 O.S.2001, §131. Two §§ are used when more than one section is referenced. An example is 19 O.S. 1991, §§131 and 131.1.

One or more notes are added at the end of each section to summarize the law’s history. Information conveyed in the footnotes includes the year the statute was added and years that it was amended or repealed, if any. For example, R.L. 1910 stands for revised laws (of 1910), C.S. 1921 means compiled statutes (of 1921), St. 1931 means the Oklahoma Statutes of 1931, and Laws 1985 refers to the Session Laws of 1985 or the year specified.

All legislation becomes law 90 days after the legislative session ends unless otherwise stated in the bill. The notation “emerg. eff.” stands for emergency effective and means the bill that added, amended, or repealed this law had an emergency clause. Legislation with an emergency clause becomes law as soon as the governor signs the bill or on a date specified in the bill. Operative and “eff.” (effective) are used interchangeably to indicate the date the legislation became law. For example, Title 25, §35 was added to the Oklahoma Statutes 1993 Supplement with the following footnote: “Laws 1993, 226 §1, emerg. eff. May 26, 1993.” Thus, this law was amended in 1993, is found in Chapter 226 section 1 in Oklahoma Session Laws 1993, and went into effect when signed by the governor on May 26, 1993.

Court cases are also cited as footnotes. These footnotes are organized according to the subject of the case. Cases that deal with the validity or interpretation of the statute are listed under “Validity” or “Construction and application.” Other cases may be listed under additional subjects. A case citation such as 451 P2d 1453 would refer to volume 451 of the Pacific Reporter, second series, page 1453.

## Organization of Title 68, Revenue and Taxation

The organization of Title 68, Revenue and Taxation, slightly differs from what was described above. Title 68 is organized first by chapters, second by articles, and third by sections. The sections are still numbered consecutively and indicate where chapters and articles begin. The table of contents for Title 68 begins as follows:

TITLE 68 REVENUE AND TAXATION	
Chapter	Section
1. Tax Codes	101
2. Miscellaneous Tax Provisions	50001

The article number is the first numeral in the section number. An example is shown for Chapter 1.

CHAPTER 1. - TAX CODES	
Article	Section
1. Oklahoma Tax Commission	101
2. Uniform Tax Procedures	201
28. Ad Valorem Tax Code	2801
60. Aircraft Excise Tax	6001

In the example, Article 1, Oklahoma Tax Commission, begins with section 101; Article 2, Uniform Tax Codes, begins with section 201, and so on. Volume 5 of the Oklahoma Statutes 2001 cross references repealed and renumbered sections.

## Alphabetical Index

The Index to the Oklahoma Statutes 2001 is in Volume 7. It is organized by subject matter. Following each major heading is an alphabetical list of topics. Some topics may be divided into subtopics. Following each topic and subtopic is a title and section number. For example, to find the statutes addressing duties of county assessors, locate the major heading "Tax Assessors" and search the alphabetical list underneath for "Powers and Duties." This example appears in the Index as follows:

TAX ASSESSORS	
Powers and Duties,	
Abstracts of assessment rolls, 68 § 2867	
Destruction of records, 19 § 155.1	

Thus statutes addressing powers and duties of tax assessors are in Title 19, section 155.1; Title 68, section 2867; and other Titles that follow. The abbreviation O.S. for Oklahoma Statutes is not included with the title and section number in the index. Notation used in the index is defined as follows:

- This index—this topic is a major heading else where in the index.
- Generally, this index—the topic or some form of it is a major heading elsewhere in the index.
- Generally, ante—the subtopic is also a topic earlier in this index under the same major heading.
- Generally, post—the subtopic is also a topic later in this index under the same major heading.

- Et. seq.—this follows the section number and implies this section number and several section numbers that immediately follow.

## Tables

Table 1 in Volume 7 cross references the Session Laws publications from 1931 to 2001 within Oklahoma Statutes 2001. This table shows if a law enacted prior to 2001 has been amended, repealed, or recodified. It is organized by years with four columns under each year. Columns one and two refer to the prior Session Laws publications and columns three and four apply to Oklahoma Statutes 2001. The first column is labeled "page" for years 1931 to 1961 but "Chap." thereafter. An example is given below.

LAWS 1980			
		O.S. 2001	
Chap.	Sec.	Title	Sec.
1	1	59	1004
	2	59	1008

The procedure for using Table 1 is as follows:

1. Locate the year of enactment (for example, 1980).
2. Go down the "Chap." column to the appropriate chapter number "1."
3. Move across to column 2 "Sec." and down to the appropriate section number "2."
4. Move across the "Title" and "Section" columns "Title 59," "section 1008."

The title and section number may be used to locate the law in Oklahoma Statutes 2001. The latest supplement should then be consulted to determine if there have been changes since 2001.

Table 2 shows where to find the Revised 1910 Laws in Oklahoma Statutes 2001. Tables 3 and 4 do the same for the Compiled Laws of 1921 and Oklahoma Statutes 1931, respectively.

## Oklahoma Statutes Annotated

The Oklahoma Statutes Annotated contain not only the text of the statutes, but also paragraph summaries of cases that interpreted or applied each section. These case listings are much more complete than the ones found in the Oklahoma Statutes. For each case there is a one or two-sentence statement of the court ruling. The set of Oklahoma Statutes Annotated contains a multi-volume index of the statutes. A new set is not published every 10 years as is done with the Oklahoma Statutes. Changes in the laws or additions are included in paperback supplements which are inserted in a pocket on the back cover of each volume. Periodically individual volumes are updated.

## Rules and Regulations of State Agencies: The Oklahoma Administrative Code

The secretary of state has responsibility for compilation of the Oklahoma Administrative Code. This code contains the rules and regulations of state agencies. Effective January 1, 1992, any permanent state agency rule not included

in the Oklahoma Administrative Code was declared void and of no effect. The secretary of state was directed to index and publish all codified agency rules by July 1, 1992. After January 1, 1992, new rules may be adopted by publication in the Oklahoma Register. If properly adopted, these rules will be valid even though they are not in the current code or supplement.

The Office of Administrative Rules within the Office of the Secretary of State is responsible for publishing the Oklahoma Register and the Oklahoma Administrative Code. The rules are currently compiled in loose leaf notebooks. Each agency has been assigned an individual Code title number. The State Department of Agriculture is Title 35 and the Oklahoma Tax Commission is Title 710. A list of all title numbers and agencies is published in the Oklahoma Register. A table of contents can be found at the front of each title. The titles are subdivided into chapters, subchapters, and sections.

## Federal Statutes

Federal statutes may be found in the U.S. Code (USC), the U.S. Code Annotated (USCA), or the U.S. Code Service (USCS). The differences are summarized as follows:

1. USC—codified version of the federal statutes.
2. USCA—codified version of the federal statutes which includes footnotes of the cases.
3. USCS—exact language of the federal statute as originally enacted.

The USCA and the USCS are much like the Oklahoma Statutes Annotated. They include not only the laws but also paragraph summaries of cases that have interpreted or applied the law. The USCS contains the exact language of the statutes before codification. The USC is just like the USCA except it does not include the case summaries.

The same title and section numbers apply in all references. A reference to 7 USCS Sec. 87, refers to Title 7, section 87. Each reference set contains a multivolume index set. A table of contents is located at the beginning of each volume of USCA. These tables of contents list the chapter headings and beginning page of each chapter. USCA then has a section and subsection listing at the beginning of each chapter.

A table of contents is also found in the beginning of each volume of the USCS. The table of contents identifies the beginning section of each chapter. USCS also has a title index at the end of each title.

## The Code of Federal Regulations

Federal agency regulations can be found in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). This is a multivolume paperback set of books organized according to the title of the U.S. Code that contains the underlying legislation. Department of Agriculture rules are found in Title 7. Title 9 contains regulations dealing with animals and animal products. Title 40 deals with protection of the environment. In many cases, several volumes are required for a title. In 2002, 15 volumes were required for Title 7 regulations.

A new set of regulations is published each year, containing prior regulations that remain in effect as well as regulations adopted in the previous year. Each year's CFR set includes a one-volume index. An example of the index is shown below. A four-volume index of the CFR is also available at some libraries. When new regulations are proposed, they are published in the Federal Register. Individuals are usually given an opportunity to comment on the rules before they become final regulations.

### Pesticides and pests

See also plant diseases and pests

Aquatic plant control, 33 CFR 273

Certification of usefulness of pesticide chemicals, 40 CFR 163

Worker protection standards, 40 CFR 170

## Supplements (Pocket Parts)

It is usually important in legal research to have the most up-to-date information possible. Laws and regulations are modified over time and new court interpretations may be developed as cases arise. In using the Oklahoma Statutes Annotated, the U.S. Code Annotated, and the U.S. Code Service, it is important to check the pocket parts (supplements inserted in a pocket in the back of the hard-bound volume) to see if a statute has been modified, repealed, or interpreted since the hard-bound volume was published. These supplements are generally published once a year, contain only the changes, and are organized by title and section just like the main volume. An index may be found in the back of each supplement.

**Table 2. Table of Contents of Oklahoma Statutes**

Title	Topic	Title	Topic
1.	Abstracting (See Tit. 74)	43.	Marriage & Family
2.	Agriculture	43A.	Mental Health
3.	Aircraft and Airports	44.	Militia
3A.	Amusements and Sports	45.	Mines & Mining
4.	Animals	46.	Mortgages
5.	Attorneys and State Bar	47.	Motor Vehicles
6.	Banks and Trust Companies	48.	Negotiable Instruments (See Tit. 12A)
7.	Blind Persons	49.	Notanes Public
8.	Cemeteries	50.	Nuisances
9.	Census (See Tit. 14)	51.	Officers
10.	Children	52.	Oil and Gas
11.	Cities and Towns	53.	Oklahoma Historical Societies and Associations
12.	Civil Procedure	54.	Partnerships
12A.	Commercial Code	55.	Pledges (See Tit. 12A)
13.	Common Carriers	56.	Poor Persons
14.	Congressional and Legislative Districts	57.	Prisons & Reformatories
14A.	Consumer Credit Code	58.	Probate Procedure
15.	Contracts	59.	Professions & Occupations
16.	Conveyances	60.	Property
17.	Corporation Commission	61.	Public Buildings & Public Works
18.	Corporations	62.	Public Finance
19.	Counties and County Officers	63.	Public Health & Safety
20.	Courts	64.	Public Lands
21.	Crimes and Punishments	65.	Public Libraries
22.	Criminal Procedure	66.	Railroads
23.	Damages	67.	Records
24.	Debtor and Creditor	68.	Revenue and Taxation
25.	Definitions & General Provisions	69.	Roads, Bridges & Ferries
26.	Elections	70.	Schools
27.	Eminent Domain	71.	Securities
27A.	Environment and Natural Resources	72.	Soldiers and Sailors
28.	Fees	73.	State Capital and Capitol Building
29.	Game and Fish	74.	State Government
30.	Guardian and Ward	75.	Statutes and Reports
31.	Homestead and Exemptions	76.	Torts
32.	Husband and Wife (See Tit. 43)	77.	Townships and Township Officers (See Tit. 11 and 19)
33.	Inebriates (see Tit. 63)	78.	Trademarks and Labels
34.	Initiative and Referendum	79.	Trusts and Pools
35.	Insane & Feeble Minded Persons (see Tit. 43A)	80.	United States
36.	Insurance	81.	Warehouses (See Tit. 12A)
37.	Intoxicating Liquors	82.	Waters and Water Rights
38.	Jurors	83.	Weights and Measures
39.	Justices & Constables (See Tit. 12 and 22)	84.	Wills and Succession
40.	Labor	85.	Workers' Compensation
41.	Landlord & Tenant		
42.	Liens		

## The Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service Bringing the University to You!

The Cooperative Extension Service is the largest, most successful informal educational organization in the world. It is a nationwide system funded and guided by a partnership of federal, state, and local governments that delivers information to help people help themselves through the land-grant university system.

Extension carries out programs in the broad categories of agriculture, natural resources and environment; family and consumer sciences; 4-H and other youth; and community resource development. Extension staff members live and work among the people they serve to help stimulate and educate Americans to plan ahead and cope with their problems.

Some characteristics of the Cooperative Extension system are:

- The federal, state, and local governments cooperatively share in its financial support and program direction.
- It is administered by the land-grant university as designated by the state legislature through an Extension director.
- Extension programs are nonpolitical, objective, and research-based information.
- It provides practical, problem-oriented education for people of all ages. It is designated to take the knowledge of the university to those persons who do not or cannot participate in the formal classroom instruction of the university.
- It utilizes research from university, government, and other sources to help people make their own decisions.
- More than a million volunteers help multiply the impact of the Extension professional staff.
- It dispenses no funds to the public.
- It is not a regulatory agency, but it does inform people of regulations and of their options in meeting them.
- Local programs are developed and carried out in full recognition of national problems and goals.
- The Extension staff educates people through personal contacts, meetings, demonstrations, and the mass media.
- Extension has the built-in flexibility to adjust its programs and subject matter to meet new needs. Activities shift from year to year as citizen groups and Extension workers close to the problems advise changes.

Oklahoma State University, in compliance with Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Executive Order 11246 as amended, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and other federal laws and regulations, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, age, religion, disability, or status as a veteran in any of its policies, practices, or procedures. This includes but is not limited to admissions, employment, financial aid, and educational services.

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