

Locating Legal Information on the Internet

By Meg Martin, Wyoming State Law Library

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Goals

- To familiarize you with legal system in general, online legal websites
- To provide guidance through some online legal websites.
- To discuss what you can and can't do for patrons looking for legal help or information

Overview of the United States Legal System

Familiarizing Yourself with Legal Abbreviations

Cardiff Index to Legal Abbreviations <http://www.legalabbrevs.cardiff.ac.uk>

Overview of the United States Government

The United States was set up to have fourteen separate governments: the federal government, well as a government for each state. The United States Constitution grants specific, enumerated powers to the federal government, but any powers not granted to the federal government are reserved for the states under the Tenth Amendment. While each state has its own government, the federal constitution is considered to be the supreme law of the land, and therefore no state law can conflict with the U.S. Constitution. U.S. Const. art. VI, sec. 1, cl. 2.

There are 3 branches of government for the federal government and each of the states. Each branch creates its own type of law. The legislative branch creates statutes. The executive branch creates regulations and the judicial branch creates case law.

Types of Legal Authority

When you do legal research, you are searching for authority to back up your position. Authority can be primary or secondary. Primary authority is actual law. Examples of primary authority are constitutions, cases, administrative regulations, statutes and court rules. Secondary authority is material that describes, explains or helps you find the law.

Primary Authority

Constitutions

Constitutions set forth the functions and powers of a government, and guarantee rights to its citizens. Constitutions may be written or unwritten, and they may be made up of a single document or several. In the United States we have a written federal constitution that is generally considered to be the oldest in the world. A copy of the U.S. Constitution can be found at the beginning of the federal statutes. It is also reprinted in most state statutory compilations and in the back of Black's Law Dictionary.

In addition, each state has its own constitution that defines the powers of the state. The state constitutions tend to be longer and more detailed than our relatively short U.S. Constitution. No state law or constitution can contradict the federal constitution. However, a state may convey more rights to its citizens than the federal government does. You can find state constitutions in the state's statutory compilation. Note that constitutions exist on a city and county level as well. These are called charters.

Statutes

Statutes are legislative law. They exist on a state and federal level. The federal statutes are grouped in 50 Titles. Each title represents a broad subject area. For example, all of the statutes in Title 7 pertain to

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Agriculture. Each Title is further broken down into sections. A typical citation to a federal statute appears as: 7 U.S.C. § 401 (year). The 7 represents the Title and the 401 represents the section within that Title. You can access the U.S. Code on the web at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/uscode/index.html>

Wyoming statutes are grouped into 42 numerical titles with a separate Title, #99, for Water Projects. Each title covers a different subject. Each title is broken into separate chapters and further into articles as necessary. A typical citation for a Wyoming statute appears as: Wyo. Stat. Ann. § 30-1-101 (year). To locate this statute you would go to the volume that contains Title 30 and look for your chapter. You can access Wyoming Statutes on the web at <http://legisweb.state.wy.us/titles/statutes.htm>. To search the Wyoming statutes, select Wyoming Statutes from the Home Page and then select "Search Options" located in the upper left corner of the page.

Legislative law also exists at the city and county level. These are called **ordinances**. Most law libraries and many large public libraries will collect local ordinances in print. Many Wyoming ordinances are available on the internet at <http://www.courts.state.wy.us/LawLibrary/wyoleg.aspx>.

Court Rules

Court rules set forth the procedure of the courts. They cover details such as time limitations, formats for pleadings, and who can be party to a case. They exist on a federal, state and sometimes local level. Court rules are generally created by the highest court of the state, or on the federal level, by the U.S. Supreme Court. However, they are generally subject to amendment by the legislature. In addition to the general rules created by the highest court, each court is entitled to make its own rules, provided they do not conflict with the general rules. These are called local or special rules. It is crucial that legal researchers are aware of the rules, so they don't miss important deadlines.

Wyoming Court Rules

In Wyoming, there are several sets of general rules. These include:

- Wyoming Rules of Civil Procedure - govern the procedure for civil cases in the district (trial) courts.
- Wyoming Rules of Criminal Procedure – govern the procedure for criminal cases in the district (trial) courts.
- Wyoming Rules of Evidence – govern proceedings in the courts of Wyoming.
- Wyoming Rules of Appellate Procedure – govern procedure in the Supreme Court and Court of Appeals in civil appeals.
- Uniform Rules for the District Courts of the State of Wyoming – govern procedure in the district courts of Wyoming.

You can locate Wyoming court rules in the print version of the Wyoming Statutes. In addition, you can find the rules on the web at <http://www.courts.state.wy.us/CourtRules.aspx>.

Federal rules of court – As with the state, there are several sets of general rules for the federal court. These include:

- Federal Rules of Civil Procedure
- Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure
- Federal Rules of Evidence
- Federal Rules of Appellate Procedure

In addition, there are separate local rules for the U.S. Supreme Court, each federal Court of Appeal, each U.S. District Court, and each of the U.S. Bankruptcy Courts.

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Cases

Overview of Court System

Sometimes a case may involve state and federal issues. Where you bring a case depends on what court has jurisdiction.

You can bring a case in federal court:

- if it arises under federal law
- if the case involves parties from 2 different states and the amount in controversy exceeds \$75,000

Federal Court Structure

Trial courts (U.S. District Court – each state has at least 1)

Intermediate Appellate Court - Circuit Courts of Appeal – hear appeals from trial court

Court of last resort - U.S. Supreme Court

Otherwise, you bring the case in state court. State courts generally have the same structure as the federal system.

In Wyoming:

- The District Court is a trial court of general jurisdiction. A district court exists in all 23 counties and is organized into 9 judicial districts. Felony criminal cases, large civil cases, and juvenile and probate matters are decided in the district court.
- The Circuit Courts are located in all 23 counties. The civil jurisdiction of the circuit courts covers cases in which the damages or recovery sought does not exceed \$7,000. It hears all misdemeanor criminal cases and smaller civil cases.
- The Supreme Court is the highest level of court in the state. It hears appeals from decisions of the district courts and all decisions are published.
- In addition, municipal courts operate in all incorporated cities and towns and have jurisdiction over violations of municipal ordinances.

Wyoming Supreme Court decisions are available on the web including decisions from 1990 to present.

<http://wyomcases.courts.state.wy.us/>

- There is one federal district in Wyoming. It is called the United States District Court, District of Wyoming. This is a federal trial court. Cases are heard in Cheyenne and Casper.
<http://www.ck10.uscourts.gov/wyoming/district/htmlpages/courtinfo.html>
- The 10th Circuit Court of Appeals includes Wyoming. (See circuit map at <http://www.law.emory.edu/FEDCTS/>.) Cases from the U.S. District Court in Wyoming are appealed to the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals. Some of these decisions are published, but most are not. Recent decisions of the federal courts of appeal can be found online at the courts' websites. See <http://www.uscourts.gov/> for links.
- The United States Supreme Court is the court of last resort. Cases from the federal circuit courts of appeal and state courts can be appealed to this court. Review is discretionary; the U.S. Supreme Court agrees to hear a very small percentage of the requests for appeal it receives. All U.S. Supreme Court cases are published. You can find these decisions online at <http://www.findlaw.com/casecode/supreme.html>.

See also the Court's website at <http://www.supremecourtus.gov/>.

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Regulations

Administrative regulations (also called rules) are created by administrative agencies. Agencies are given their rule making power by the legislature. Agencies are given this power because the legislature doesn't have the time or expertise to create all of the details needed to govern what the agencies do. Generally the legislature will enact a law about a subject (such as water pollution). Then it will grant an agency (such as the EPA) rule making power over that area. The agency can then fill in the details that the statute does not include. Regulations exist on a state and federal level.

The Wyoming Secretary of State is the registrar of rules for state agencies. Rules are updated daily in the Rules Database located on the web page. It can be accessed on the web at <http://soswy.state.wy.us/rules/rules.htm>.

The Rules are grouped together by topic in the Weil's Code of Wyoming Rules. This set is updated monthly. Use the index volume at the end of the set to locate regulations on a particular topic.

Federal regulations are first published in the Federal Register. It is published every business day. In addition to final regulations, it includes proposed regulations, presidential documents and notices. The Federal Register (back to 1994) can be accessed online at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/index.html>

Federal regulations are codified (grouped by topic) in the Code of Federal Regulations. They can be accessed online at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/index.html>.

Secondary Authority

Secondary sources are materials written about the law. They may explain, describe or help you locate the law. Secondary sources are the best place to start your legal research if you are unfamiliar with the topic or issue. Examples of secondary sources are:

- Law dictionaries
- Legal encyclopedias
- Legal periodicals

You will not find much secondary authority on the free web. A few places where you can look for legal periodical articles are:

- Law Reviews Online <http://www.loc.gov/law/guide/lawreviews.html>
- University Law Review Project <http://www.lawreview.org/>

Mandatory and Persuasive Authority

As you do legal research, you need to be aware of what type of legal authority a judge must follow and what type of authority he/she can choose to follow. Primary authority is mandatory for a judge to follow it comes from the same jurisdiction and it deals with the same or similar facts and legal issues. If there is no authority from your jurisdiction that is "on point", you can go outside of your jurisdiction. You can cite to a case or statute from another state, but it can only be persuasive authority. The judge can choose to follow it, but does not have to. Secondary authority can only be persuasive, never mandatory for a judge to follow.

Typical Legal Information Requests in Public Libraries

Patrons use public libraries to answer many legal questions. The greatest number of requests falls into the following areas:

- Family law—divorce, marriage, custody, visitation, guardianship, paternity, grandparent's rights

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- Traffic law—tickets, driver's licenses, DUI/DWI
- Real estate law—landlord/tenant, purchasing real estate, title searches
- Estate Planning—probate, wills, trusts, estates, power of attorney, living will, health care directive
- Employment law—worker's compensation, Family and Medical Leave Act, wrongful termination
- Business/consumer law—incorporation/corporation, tax, consumer complaints
- Court procedures in general—small claims court, subpoena, motions, judgments
- Criminal law—theft, assault, harassment

Typical search strategies are a starting point in responding to these types of requests and include the following familiar types of resource—the only difference is the legal content of the tool:

- Dictionaries: Black's Law Dictionary; nolo.com's online legal dictionary
- Encyclopedias: West's Encyclopedia of American Law; nolo.com's online legal encyclopedia; Zimmerman's legal encyclopedia available at lexisone.com
- Books: library catalogs; nolo.com; sphinxlegal.com
- Periodicals: Law Reviews Online <http://www.loc.gov/law/guide/lawreviews.html>
- University Law Review Project <http://www.lawreview.org/>
- Pamphlets: Wyoming Law Help website <http://www.wyominglawhelp.org/WY/index.cfm>
- Primary and Secondary legal sources: see other sections of this guide

KEY MESSAGE: Patrons may press a librarian for "answers"; librarians can offer information sources and referrals.

What/When to Refer a Question To a Law Library and/or Attorney

What a Librarian CAN Do

- Perform legitimate reference activities
 - If someone knows the name or subject or other identifying characteristics of a case, you can assist with retrieval
 - If someone knows a citation or topic or other identifying characteristic of a statute, you can assist with retrieval
 - If someone knows the name of a particular form, you can assist with retrieval
 - Show where the statutes are; explain how an index works; keep a list of handy URLs
- Adhere to general principles and ethics of library reference services (From the ALA Code of Ethics)
 - Provide the highest level of service to all library users
 - Provide accurate, unbiased, and courteous responses to all requests
 - Protect each library user's right to privacy and confidentiality
 - Distinguish between our personal convictions and professional duties

Remember that you are the expert in *retrieving information*, not in the meaning of the information itself.

What a Librarian CANNOT Do

- Anything that would harm a patron
- Advise on legal matters
 - You don't prescribe controlled substances; you shouldn't prescribe legal remedies
 - You don't explain the lymphatic system to a patron; you shouldn't try to teach divorce law
- Involve oneself with the legal problems of patrons
- Act as an expert on any area of law
 - Even if you just bought a house, got a divorce, collected a judgment....
 - We cannot select which form
 - We cannot assist with completing a form

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- We cannot determine which statute
- We cannot interpret a case
- Engage in situations where there is a potential conflict of interest
 - If both parties (on opposite sides) to a legal situation seek your assistance, they must be able to count on your information seeking assistance
 - A lawyer can generally only assist one party; a librarian must stand ready to assist any patron.

The nearest we may come to offering legal advice is to suggest that the patron may wish to consult a lawyer or, if a government entity is involved, the agency issuing the rule.

Referrals

Rules and Regulations Interpretation

Wyoming Agencies: <http://wyoming.gov/government.asp>

Law Libraries (for additional resources, NOT legal advice)

- University of Wyoming George William Hopper Law Library: <http://uwadmnweb.uwyo.edu/LawLib/>
- Wyoming State Law Library: <http://library.courts.state.wy.us/>

Legal Services (to find a lawyer)

- Lawyers Referral Service (Wyoming State Bar Association): <http://www.wyomingbar.org/>
- Law Help Wyoming, a website providing help to low-income citizens with civil legal problems: <http://www.wyominglawhelp.org/WY/index.cfm>.

Attorney Information

- Martindale-Hubbell: <http://www.martindale.com/xp/Martindale/home.xml>
- Find Law: <http://www.findlaw.com>

Identifying and Retrieving Online Documents with a Citation

How to Read a Legal Citation

Citation	Document/Publication	Volume/Title	Page/Section
Roe v. Wade, 410 U.S. 113	U.S. Supreme Court Case / U.S. Reports	410	113
42 U.S.C. § 1983	U.S. Statute / United States Code	42	1983
26 C.F.R. § 1.501(c)(3)-1	Federal Regulation / Code of Federal Regulations	26	1.501 (search to the section)
Wyo. Stat. Ann. § 6-7-102	Wyoming Statute	2/6	6-7-102
Fed. R. Civ. P. 12	Federal Rules of Civil Procedure		12
W.R.C.P. 56	Wyoming Rules of Civil Procedure	Wyoming Court Rules Annotated	56

Where to Find Documents

Statutes, Codes and Legislation

United States Constitution: <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/constitution/browse.html>

Federal Statutes

- Official U.S. Code: <http://uscode.house.gov/search/criteria.shtml>

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- Legal Information Institute: <http://www4.law.cornell.edu/uscode/>

Federal Legislation: <http://thomas.loc.gov/>

Wyoming Statutes, Legislation, and Constitution: <http://legisweb.state.wy.us/>

Courts and Case Law

Federal courts

- United States Supreme Court: <http://www.supremecourtus.gov/>
- Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals: <http://www.kscourts.org/CA10/>
- U.S. District Court Wyoming: <http://www.ca10.uscourts.gov/>

Wyoming Courts: <http://www.courts.state.wy.us/>

Federal and State Case Law

- LexisOne (free registration): <http://www.lexisone.com/caselaw/freecaselaw>
- Findlaw: <http://www.findlaw.com/casecode/>

Agencies and Administrative Law

- Federal Agencies: <http://www.washlaw.edu/doclaw/executive5m.html>
- Code of Federal Regulations: <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr> OR <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/ecfr/> (beta site—more current)
- Federal Register: <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr>

Wyoming Agencies: <http://wyoming.gov/government.asp>

Wyoming Rules: <http://soswy.state.wy.us/rules/rules.htm>

Municipal Ordinances

- Wyoming: <http://www.courts.state.wy.us/LawLibrary/wyoleg.aspx>
- Other states: <http://www.bpcnet.com/codes.htm> OR http://www.spl.org/default.asp?pageID=collection_municodes

Find a Document by Citation

Federal statute	Your patron wants to see the federal civil rights statute: 42 USC 1983.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">Go to http://uscode.house.gov/search/criteria.shtmlEnter title 42 and section 1983 in search boxesRead section
Federal legislation	Your patron wants to read the Medicare prescription drug bill — Public Law No: 108-173 .	<ol style="list-style-type: none">Go to Thomas http://thomas.loc.gov/Choose Public LawsChoose 108-151—108-199Scroll down to 173
Federal court rule	Your patron has just been handed a motion to dismiss according to Fed. R. Civ. P. 12	<ol style="list-style-type: none">Go to Federal Rules of Civil Procedure (Cornell) http://www.law.cornell.edu/rules/frcp/overview.htmScroll down to Rule 12Click on the link to the text of the ruleNote the advisory comments—right column: Notes
Federal case	Your patron wants to see the	<ol style="list-style-type: none">Go to FindLaw

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	opinion for <i>Roe v. Wade</i> , 410 U.S. 113	<p>http://www.findlaw.com/casecode/supreme.htm OR LexisOne (LexisOne requires a free registration)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Scroll down on the page and enter the cite 3. Open the case
Federal administrative rule	Your patron wants to see what a "501-c-3" organization is. 26 C.F.R. § 1.501(c)(3)-1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Go to the regular CFR site: http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/index.html 2. Select "Retrieve by CFR Citation" link 3. Enter title 26; part 1; section 501 <p>Sometimes this works; sometimes not.</p> <p><i>BETTER:</i> If you want an up-to-date version...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Go to http://www.gpoaccess.gov/ecfr/ 2. Select Title 26 from the browse list 3. Select 1.501-1.640 4. Check the third line of the results
State statute	Your patron wants to read the conceal/carry statute: Wyo. Stat. Ann. 6-8-104	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Go to the Wyoming Legislature page: http://legisweb.state.wy.us/titles/statutes.htm 2. Choose Statutes 3. Choose Title 6, Chapter 8, Section 104
State legislation	Your patron wants to look at legislative session bill information for 2006 Budget Session	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. On the same Wyoming Legislature page: http://legisweb.state.wy.us/sessions/legsess.htm 2. Scroll down to Session Information - Archives 3. Select the Budget Session. 4. Choose Bill Information for 2006 Budget Session. 5. Choose the Category that you are interested in (status, by sponsor name, by subject index).
State court rule	Your patron has just received a notice that the other side has filed for summary judgment: W.R.C.P. 56	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Go to the Wyoming Court page: http://www.courts.state.wy.us/CourtRules.aspx 2. Choose Wyoming Rules of Civil Procedure 3. Scroll down to Rule 56 and click on the link
State case	Your patron wants to read the opinion for a fairly recent (1990-present) Wyoming Supreme Court case.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Go to http://library.courts.state.wy.us/ 2. Select WY Supreme Court Cases 3. Select Wyoming Supreme Court Cases - expand. 4. Select the year of the case. 5. Open link for the title of the case you are interested in.

Starting Point for Retrieving Legal Information

There are many great websites out there that provide links to primary authority. Instead of trying to remember them all, try just one – the state law library web page. Go to <http://library.courts.state.wy.us/>. There are several links on this page you may find useful.

- Select **WY Statutes**. Then click on **Wyoming Statutes**, then **Search Options**. From this page you can do a keyword search through the statutes. Let's say you wanted to locate the statute that requires cars to stop for pedestrians. What would you search for? Try a sample search. In the text field type "pedestrian rights" OR "pedestrian yield". The correct statute is 31-5-6.

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- Go back to the law library webpage <http://library.courts.state.wy.us/>. Select **WY Supreme Court Cases**. This time select **Wyoming Supreme Court Cases – expand**. Select Advanced Search. Here you can search using Boolean connectors, natural language, words and phrases, and wildcards. (Check the help info.) Click on Execute Query after you have entered your search terms.
- Go back to the law library webpage <http://library.courts.state.wy.us/>. This time click on **WY Municipal Codes**. Select a municipality and follow the format for each Code (they are inconsistent in format.)
- Go back to the law library webpage <http://library.courts.state.wy.us/>. This time select **eCFR**. This version is the CFR as current in force, though it is still in beta format. For older versions of the CFR, you must choose **Code of Federal Regulations** from the taskbar on the left side of the **eCFR** page. You will have a choice of searching current data or 1996 through the current year.
- Go back to the law library webpage <http://library.courts.state.wy.us/>. Select **U.S. Code**. Try a sample search. (You may want to click on “help” to show how searches are put together here.) In the search box type ‘law library’ (using quotation marks) and click Search. Click on 2 USC sec. 137 to see who can use the law library.
- See also the **Legal Research Guides** available on the law library webpage <http://www.courts.state.wy.us/LawLibrary/general.aspx>.

Interesting Legal Websites

Name	What’s so great about it
Statistical Resources on the Web	http://www.lib.umich.edu/govdocs/stats.html <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Provides searchable databases of statistics RE: consumers, health, housing, education, environment, etc.▪ (Sample search: Select Environment and scroll down to ‘environmental maps,’ search for your zip code.)
Directory of Federal Government Agencies	http://www.lib.lsu.edu/gov/fedgov.html <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Searchable portal for all federal agency websites
Oyez Project	http://www.oyez.org/oyez/frontpage <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ US Supreme Court multimedia website. Listen to US Supreme Court oral arguments.
Patent Café	http://www.patentcafe.com/ <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Patent Information for new inventors and small businesses
Wyoming Sex Offender Registration	http://attorneygeneral.state.wy.us/dci/so/so_registration.html <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Search for offenders by county
Wyoming Department of Health - Aging Division	http://wdhfs.state.wy.us/aging/ <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Organization that helps seniors find community services (e.g., transportation, housekeeping and home care)
Wacky and/or Obscure Patents	http://www.patent.freeserve.co.uk/ OR http://www.delphion.com/gallery <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Select <i>Contents</i> at the top for a list of funny patents
Directory of Wyoming Government Agencies	http://wyoming.gov/government.asp <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Select local, state or federal agencies from this page. Or, scroll down to choose from the list of WY state agencies.
Open Secrets.org	http://www.opensecrets.org/ <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Research on campaign finance issues for the news media, academics, activists, and the public at large.▪ Campaign contributions tracked by industry and candidate.

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Employment Labor

<http://www.worksonwork.irc.umn.edu/>

- WorksOnWork currently indexes over 70,000 employment-related books, journal articles, working papers, proceedings, and web. Information may be accessed via author, title, keyword, or by unique subject headings developed by the Reference Room staff.

Helpful Websites

Miscellaneous

- Bankruptcy: <http://www.bankruptcyaction.com/>
- Daily life information: <http://www.abalawinfo.org/>
- Department of Corrections: <http://doc.state.wy.us/corrections.asp>
- Family Law issues
 - Child Support Enforcement: <http://dfsweb.state.wy.us/csehome/cs.htm>
- Department of Family Services: <http://dfsweb.state.wy.us/>
- Wyoming Children's Access Network: <http://www.wycan.org/>
- DivorceNet Wyoming: <http://www.divorcenet.com/states/wyoming>
- Elder Issues: <http://wdhfs.state.wy.us/aging/>
- Medicare: <http://www.medicare.gov/>
- Forms (Wyoming only has one Wyoming-specific form—divorce packets which are available from district court clerks only)
 - <http://www.alllaw.com/forms/>
 - <http://www.ilrg.com/forms/index.html>
 - Findlaw: http://public.findlaw.com/?lid=Public_button
 - Legal Information Institute (Cornell): <http://www.law.cornell.edu/>
 - LexisOne: <http://www.lexisone.com/>
 - Nolo Press: <http://www.nolo.com/>
 - Zimmerman's Guide: <http://www.lexisone.com/zimmermanguide>
- Housing
 - Mortgages: <http://www.mortgage-x.com>
 - Property values: <http://www.realtor.org/research.nsf/pages/MetroPrice?OpenDocument>
- Laws of other states: <http://www.legalengine.com/lawsearchstatelocal2.html>
- Lawyer Referral Service: <http://www.wyomingbar.org/> and then select "need a lawyer?"
- LawHelpWY.org: <http://www.wyominglawhelp.org/WY/index.cfm>
- Statistics: <http://www.lib.umich.edu/govdocs/stats.html>
- Taxes (federal): <http://www.taxesos.com/>

Other Useful Sources

Wyoming Law Library and Library Associations

- American Association of Law Libraries (AALL): <http://www.aallnet.org/index.asp>
- University of Wyoming – George William Hopper Law Library: <http://uwadmnweb.uwyo.edu/LawLib/>
- Wyoming State Law Library: <http://library.courts.state.wy.us/>
- Special Libraries Association (SLA) Legal Division: <http://units.sla.org/division/dleg/>

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Forms and Print Materials

Forms

Court Forms and Legal Forms

Court forms relate to procedures when parties take matters before the court. Legal forms relate to matters that don't come before the court but which have full legal effect between the parties involved. Court transactions require parties to act/not act—failure to comply can result in contempt. Non-court transactions can be between individuals, individuals and businesses—by agreement, legal effect is imposed upon the parties; failure to comply may result in a cause of action or lawsuit.

What they call themselves:

- Court forms (motion, affidavit, petition, summons, complaint, judgment, decree)
- "Out of court" forms (will, codicil, power of attorney, lease, purchase agreement)

Free Forms Sites: <http://www.lectlaw.com>

Commercial vendors

Miller Davis: <http://www.millerdavis.com>

Kemske/Oswald—1-800-782-3532

Strategy—Patrons must decide upon the form they need and select accordingly. The librarian cannot give advice regarding the proper form a patron should choose. Forms relate to procedures determined by the court as well as statutory authority.

Print Materials

Reference Materials

- Legal Research: How to Find and Understand the Law (Nolo Press)
- Legal Research Made Easy (Sphinx Press)
- National Survey of State Laws (Thomson/Gale)
- Black's Law Dictionary

History and Overviews of the Law

- American Law in the Twentieth Century – by Lawrence M. Friedman from the Yale University Press. 2002
- Famous Trials – <http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/ftrials.htm> (University of Missouri-Kansas City Law School)
- Wyoming Historical Blue Book: a legal and political history of Wyoming

General – Self-help Materials

Nolo titles

- Beat Your Ticket
- Criminal Law Handbook
- Dog Law
- Every Landlord's Legal Guide
- Every Tenant's Legal Guide
- Everybody's Guide to Small Claims Court

Locating Legal Information on the Internet

By Meg Martin, Wyoming State Law Library

- Neighbor Law
- Nolo's Simple Will Book
- Represent Yourself in Court
- Social Security, Medicare & Government Pensions

Sphinx titles

- Grandparents' Rights
- How to File Your Own Divorce

Any of the "Nutshells" series from West

- American Indian Law in a Nutshell
- Constitutional Law in a Nutshell
- Criminal Procedure in a Nutshell
- Employment Law in a Nutshell
- Personal Property in a Nutshell
- Real Property in a Nutshell