I. ABOUT THE “LAW”

United States law includes both statutory law (law made by the legislature) and common law (law made by the courts – also called case law). A statute is the codified statement of a law that has been approved by the legislature. A statute may also be called an act or have the word act in its name. Federal statutes are published in the United States Code, and state statutes are published by their individual state legislatures. Michigan statutes are published in the Michigan Compiled Laws. A good way to find a statute in both the federal and state codes is to browse by popular name (this is an option at both of the websites listed below).

Federal statutes can be found at: http://uscode.house.gov
Michigan statutes can be found at: http://www.legislature.mi.gov/
Case law and statutes can also be accessed via the library’s subscription to the Westlaw database.

While statutory law outlines what the law is in writing, common law (case law) is created when judges interpret statutory law for individual fact patterns through the court system. When a judge issues an opinion in court, the judge’s interpretation of the particular statutory law in question becomes binding precedent on future decisions of lower courts in the same jurisdiction. When researching a legal issue, it is often necessary to find not only the statute that governs the issue, but also to find legal opinions (cases) that show how judges have interpreted the statute in your jurisdiction. Particularly, you want to find opinions of the court that address the statutory law in a similar context or fact pattern to the situation you are researching. In some instances, there is not a statutory law governing an issue. In those instances, the common law (case law) is the only source of law.

Example: If you are researching the rights of a person denied FMLA leave to give birth to a child, you’ll want to find the statutory law that applies to FMLA leave (Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993), as well as court cases in Michigan state and/or federal court that discuss denying FMLA leave to pregnant women. An example of such a case is Smith v. Goodwill Industries of Western Michigan, 622 N.W.2d 337 (Mich. Ct. App. 2000).

II. FORMATTING RESOURCES

Contains sample APA references for commonly used legal documents. Print copies of the manual are available at all GVSU library branches at call number BF76.7.P83 2010 in the reference section.

The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation
The reference examples in the APA Publication Manual’s Appendix 7.1 are drawn from The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation. The Bluebook contains the system of legal citation and the primary style guide used by legal scholars and practitioners. If you cannot find the formatting information you need in the APA Style Publication Manual’s appendix, follow the Bluebook style as closely as you can. The Bluebook is available for use in the Steelcase Library at KF245.B58 2015 (reference collection).

The Indigo Book
The Indigo Book is a free and open source version of the Uniform System of Citation. It is the same system that is outlined in the Bluebook, except it is available free to all online. Access the Indigo Book online here: https://law.resource.org/pub/us/code/blue/IndigoBook.html.
III. CITING FEDERAL STATUTES

There are five pieces of information that you need when creating a reference for a federal statute: (1) Name of the statute, (2) Title number (3) Abbreviation of the source (code name) (4) section number(s) you are referring to, and (5) The year of the source in which you found the statute was published. Note, the date in the citation is the year the statutory code was last published in print, it is not the date the statute was enacted or last amended. In print versions of the code the publication year is found on the spine of the book, title page, or the copyright page. If you are citing a current statute from an online version of the United States Code the year will be 2012. The U.S.C. is codified once every six years, and at this time 2012 is the last available printed version. This information is found in Indigo Book Rule 16 and Bluebook Rule 12.1.1. Abbreviations for federal publications are found in the Indigo Book Table 1.

Name of the Statute, Title number Source (Code Name) § Section number(s) (Year).


\[
\begin{array}{cccccc}
\text{Name of the Statute} & \text{Title number} & \text{Source (Code Name)} & \text{§} & \text{Section number(s)} & \text{(Year)} \\
1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 \\
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, 42 U.S.C. § 18001 (2012).}
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{42 U.S.C.}
\text{United States Code 2010 Edition}
\text{Title 42 - THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELFARE}
\text{CHAPTER 157 - QUALITY, AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE FOR ALL AMERICAN}
\text{SUBCHAPTER I - IMMEDIATE ACTIONS TO PRESERVE AND EXPAND COVERAGE}
\text{Sec. 18001 - Immediate access to insurance for uninsured individuals with a preexisting condition}
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{§18001. Immediate access to insurance for uninsured individuals with a preexisting condition}
\text{(a) In general}
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{Not later than 90 days after March 23, 2010, the Secretary shall establish a temporary high risk health insurance pool program to provide health insurance coverage for eligible individuals during the period beginning on the date on which such program is established and ending on January 1.}
\end{array}
\]

REFERENCES IN TEXT


The date on which such amendments take effect, referred to in subsec. (c)(2)(C)(i), is the date on which the amendments by Pub. L. 111–148 to section 300gg of this title take effect, which is Jan. 1, 2014. See section 1255 of Pub. L. 111–148, set out as an Effective Date note under section 300gg of this title.

SHORT TITLE

Pub. L. 111–148, §1(a), Mar. 23, 2010, 124 Stat. 119, provided that: “This Act [see Tables for classification] may be cited as the ‘Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act’.”

1. Name of the Statute (found in the Short Title section at the end of the section)
III. CITING STATE STATUTES

There are three pieces of information that you need when creating a reference for a state statute: (1) The abbreviation for the title of the state code (2) section number (3) year published. This information is available online in Indigo Book Rule 17 or Bluebook Rule 12.1.2. Abbreviations for state publications, including state codes, are found in Indigo Book Table 3. Note, the date in the citation is the year the statutory code was last published in print, it is not the date the statute was enacted or last amended.

Abbreviation for State Code  Section number (Year)

1  2  3

The official Michigan state code is the Michigan Compiled Laws (1979), available online at http://legislature.mi.gov/doc.aspx?chapterindex. The current edition of the Michigan Compiled Laws was published in 1979, so unless a new copy is printed, the year of publication in your reference will always be 1979.

The format for your Michigan statute reference is:

Mich. Comp. Laws § section number (1979)

Examples:
Mich. Comp. Laws § 37.1102 (1979)

1. State Code Name
2. Section Number
3. Year. 1976 is the year the law was proposed/enacted, but the year the code was published is 1979. You will use 1979 as the year in your citation.
V. CITING CASES – INDIGO BOOK SECTION B

The six pieces of information you need for a case reference are: (1) case name (2) volume number (3) reporter name (4) page number (5) court (6) year. See the Indigo Book Section B for a full explanation of case citation, or the Bluebook Rule 10.1. Note, in law, books that contain cases are called “reporters” because they are reporting the cases of the court. Michigan case reporter abbreviations are found in the Indigo Book Table 3. Court name abbreviations are found in the Indigo Book Table 9.

Case Name (name v. name) Volume Number Reporter Abbreviation Page Number (Court Year)


V. CITING OTHER DOCUMENTS

Both the Bluebook and the Indigo Book have extensive tables of contents that will direct you to citation instructions and appropriate legal abbreviations for many different kinds of legal documents. Look up the resource you would like to cite in either of these legal style guides for further citation instructions.