

COMPUTER-ASSISTED STATUTORY RESEARCH GUIDE

I. INTRODUCTION

This brief guide is designed to offer effective methods for locating Maine statutes, annotations, opinions, and rules on computers located in county law libraries. This guide will enable you to find Maine statutes, cases citing to Maine statutes, Maine court rules, opinions and orders, and legislative history documents.

This guide includes blue underlined hyperlinks whenever possible. Clicking on these blue underlined website links while the computer is connected to the Internet will automatically open the webpage when viewing this document on your computer. The website addresses can also be typed into the address field at the top center of the computer screen when you are using the Internet Explorer or Firefox programs.

Please note that annotations are only available through Lexis because the Maine Revised Statutes Annotated (MRSA) are no longer maintained by the county law library system. These volumes have been replaced with the Maine Revised Statutes Compact Edition.

If you require more assistance with signing onto Lexis please contact Tracie Lammers, State Court Library Coordinator at (207) 822-0718 or Court.Library@maine.gov. If you need research assistance try contacting the research staff at the following libraries for assistance:

- Cleaves Law Library <http://www.cleaves.org>
- Maine State Law and Legislative Law Library <http://maine.gov/legis/lawlib/>
- Garbrecht Law Library at the University of Maine School of Law <http://mainelaw.maine.edu/library/>

II. RESEARCHING STATUTES

A. Finding Statutes on the Website of the Revisor's Office

The Office of the Revisor of Statutes for the State of Maine provides, among other things, easily accessible electronic versions of the Maine Revised Statutes. There are several methods to find statutes:

- If you know the statutory citation, click on the following link: <http://janus.state.me.us/legis/statutes/search.asp>

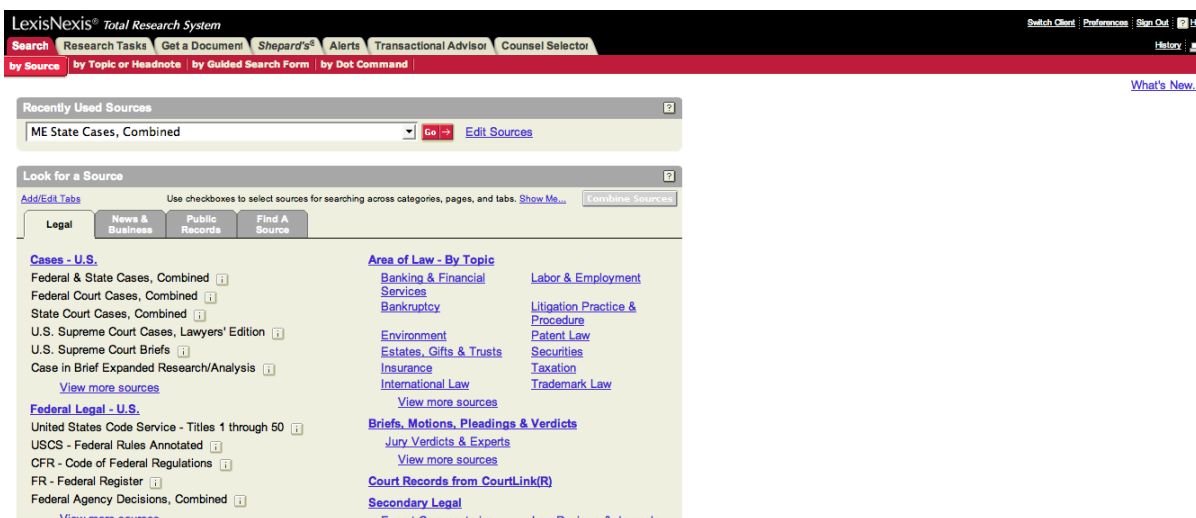
- If you wish to browse by title, chapter, and subchapter, click on the following link:
<http://janus.state.me.us/legis/statutes/>

If you are aware that a statute has been amended since it was posted on the Revisor's website, follow the instructions in part VI of this guide.

B. Finding Statutes on Lexis

The Lexis computer legal research service also provides easily accessible electronic versions of the Maine Revised Statutes. The statutes can be found by following the instructions below:

- Click on the Lexis icon on the desktop. You will be directed to a screen that looks like this:



- If you already have the statutory citation, click on the “Get a Document” tab near the top of the screen, the third tab from the left. If you need assistance finding this tab, contact your law clerk. Type the citation in the “Get by Citation” box. To retrieve 1 M.R.S.A. § 1, or 1 M.R.S. § 1 in the new Maine Revised Statutes volumes, type “1 mrsa 1” or “1 mrs 1.”
- If you do not have the statutory cite, but you do have language from the statute, you can search one of the statutes databases.

- Click on the light tan “Search” tab at the top of the Lexis web page. (The tab will be red if you are on the correct screen.) The “Sources” tab below it should be highlighted in a box.
- Look down the screen to the next set of tabs and click on “Find A Source” (Gray tab with white letters). Type in the “Find a Source” box: “ME Maine Revised Statutes Annotated” or “ME Maine Statutes Constitution.”
- Click on either ME - Maine Statutes, Constitution, Court Rules & ALS, Combined or ME - Maine Revised Statutes Annotated by LexisNexis.
- After clicking on one of these databases, enter the language or search terms.
- If you do not know language from the statute, or wish to look up the statute from the table of contents:
 - Click on the light tan “Search” tab at the top of the Lexis web page. (The tab will be red if you are on the correct screen.) The “Sources” tab below it should be highlighted in a box. Look down the screen to the next set of tabs and click on “Find A Source” (Gray tab with white letters).
 - Type in the “Find a Source” box: “ME Maine Revised Statutes Annotated” or “ME Maine Statutes Constitution.”
 - Click on either ME - Maine Statutes, Constitution, Court Rules & ALS, Combined or ME - Maine Revised Statutes Annotated by LexisNexis.
 - The next screen appears like this:

LexisNexis® Total Research System

Search | Research Tasks | Search Advisor | Get a Document | Shepard's® | Alerts

View: TOC

1-81 of 81

FAST Print | Print | Download | Fax | Email | Text Only

Source: [Maine](#) > [Statutes & Regulations](#) > ME - Maine Statutes, Constitution, Court Rules & ALS, Combined

Maine Statutes, Constitution, Court Rules & ALS, Combined

Terms and Connectors Natural Language

Search:

Full-text of source documents Table of Contents (TOC) only

Search Selected Only

[Clear All Selections](#) | [Hide Book Headers](#)

TITLE 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

TITLE 2. EXECUTIVE

TITLE 3. LEGISLATURE

TITLE 4. JUDICIARY

TITLE 5. ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES AND SERVICES

TITLE 6. AERONAUTICS

TITLE 7. AGRICULTURE AND ANIMALS

TITLE 8. AMUSEMENTS AND SPORTS

TITLE 9. BANKS AND FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

TITLE 9-A. MAINE CONSUMER CREDIT CODE

TITLE 9-B. FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

TITLE 10. COMMERCE AND TRADE

TITLE 11. UNIFORM COMMERCIAL CODE

TITLE 12. CONSERVATION

TITLE 13. CORPORATIONS

TITLE 13-A. MAINE BUSINESS CORPORATION ACT [REPEALED]

TITLE 13-B. MAINE NONPROFIT CORPORATIONS ACT

- Click on the (+) next to the Title, and the chapters will appear below. If you wish to view subchapters or sections, click on the (+) next to the chapter.
- When you find the right section, click on the statute you wish to see and Lexis will retrieve it for you.
- If you are looking for a statute that was in effect in a specific year, it is possible to find prior versions of statutes on Lexis. Lexis has archived Maine statutes from 1991 forward. To search within these databases:
 - Click on the light tan “Search” tab at the top of the Lexis web page. (The tab will be red if you are on the correct screen.)
 - Click on the “Sources” tab just below the “Search” tab. (It will be highlighted in a red box if you are on the correct screen.)
 - Type into the “Find a Source” box: “ME – Maine Revised Statutes, 1991.” For other years, just insert the year you wish to search in place of “1991.”
 - At the next screen, click on the blue link that reads ME – Maine Revised Statutes, 1991.

- Enter the terms you wish to find in a statute in the white box and click the red “Search” button.
- Lexis will retrieve the statutes meeting the parameters of your search.

III. “ANNOTATIONS” TO THE MAINE REVISED STATUTES

There are a few ways to find Maine cases citing to the Maine Revised Statutes. The easiest and generally best means to locate “annotations” is on the Lexis computer legal research service. Use the following methods to find such case annotations:

A. Finding Annotations Using Lexis

- Locate the statutory cite, *e.g.*, 17-A M.R.S.A. § 13-A, if you have not already done so.
- Go to the “Get a Document” screen on Lexis. The tan “Get a Document” tab is located at the top middle of the initial Lexis screen. If you need assistance finding this tab, contact your law clerk.
- Enter the statutory cite in the blank on the “Get a Document” screen. Lexis can usually locate the document even if the citation is entered without proper punctuation or in lower case. For instance, the above cite can be entered as 17-A M.R.S.A. § 13-A, *or* 17-A M.R.S.A. 13-A, *or* 17-a mrsa 13-a, *etc.* The screen that comes up will appear like this:

view: [Text](#) | [Full](#) | [Summary](#)

[Book Browse](#) | [More Like This](#) | [More Like Selected Text](#) | [Shepardize®](#)

1 M.R.S. § 1 (Copy w/ Cite)
1 M.R.S. § 1 (2005)

Pages: 2

§ 1. Extent of sovereignty and jurisdiction

The jurisdiction and sovereignty of the State extend to all places within its boundaries, subject only to such rights of concurrent jurisdiction as are granted by the State over places ceded by the State to the United States. This section shall not limit or restrict the jurisdiction of the State over any person or with respect to any subject, within or without its boundaries, which jurisdiction is exercisable by reason of citizenship, residence or for any other reason recognized by law.

LexisNexis (R) Notes:

Case Notes:

- [Criminal Law & Procedure > Jurisdiction & Venue > Venue](#)
- [Criminal Law & Procedure > Trials > Burdens of Proof > Prosecution](#)
- [Tax Law > State & Local Tax > Income Tax > Individuals, Estates & Trusts](#)

[Criminal Law & Procedure > Jurisdiction & Venue > Venue](#)

1. In a criminal prosecution for rape, the State was required to demonstrate beyond a reasonable doubt that the crime was committed within its territorial jurisdiction in order to establish its right to prosecute defendants. State v. [Baldwin](#), 305 A.2d 555, 1973 Me. LEXIS 300, 67 A.L.R.3d 979 (Me. 1973).

[Criminal Law & Procedure > Trials > Burdens of Proof > Prosecution](#)

2. In a criminal prosecution for rape, the State was required to demonstrate beyond a reasonable doubt that the crime was committed within its territorial jurisdiction in

- At this time, *some* of the statutes have Lexis annotations listed at the bottom of the web page. It should be noted that these annotations are *different* than the West annotations from the red Maine Revised Statutes Annotated books. Lexis editors selected them and, for the most part, fewer opinions are listed.
 - However, the opinions listed can be a helpful starting point. If the opinion name is a link in [blue](#), then simply click on the case name and you will be brought to the opinion.
 - Lexis will sometimes have sections called “Treatises and Analytical Materials” as well, some of which you may click on to retrieve the documents.
- If the statutory cite does not have case annotations, click on the blue *Shepardize* link in the above center of the screen. This will bring you to a page with all cases citing to the statute. Click on one of the blue links, and you will be brought to cases that cite to the particular statute or section of the statute. Please note that some of the cases will basically be junk because the case will just mention the statute and not contain any analysis.
- To return to the *Shepards* list after retrieving a document, click on the blue link above the body of the case that says, “Return to *Shepards*.”

- Another approach to finding the “annotations,” or to supplement annotations you may have found, is to enter the statute’s title and section numbers with a search in the ME State Cases, Combined database or, if you seek to include federal cases, the ME Federal and State Cases, Combined database. The recommended “Terms and Connectors” search would be the title number within the same sentence as the section number, *e.g.*, 17-A /s 13-A. If you do not get any results, check to be sure the circle before “Terms and Connectors” is checked, not the “Natural Language” circle.

B. Finding Cases that Cite to a Statute Using the Maine Judicial Branch Website

Cases citing to a specific statute may also be found using the Judicial Branch website:

- By searching for a statutory citation in the Maine Supreme Judicial Court website, it is possible to find cases that cite to the statute you are researching:

http://www.courts.state.me.us/court_info/opinions/index.shtml

Type the desired citation into the “Opinions and Orders Search” box. Recommended search formats are: “22 m.r.s.a. 4055” (or “22 m.r.s. 4055” for cases following the publication of the first M.R.S. volumes in 2005).

IV. OPINIONS AND ORDERS

Opinions and orders may be found on Lexis, the Judicial Branch website, and the University of Maine School of Law Garbrecht Law Library website. These documents, including those on the Judicial Branch website, can be copied and pasted onto a Word document.

- Lexis allows searches of Maine Supreme Judicial Court opinions and has the largest searchable set of Superior Court opinions:
<http://www.lexis.com/>

If you have created a Maine tab as indicated on pages 5 and 6 of this guide, click on the Maine tab and click on either Maine State Cases, Combined to search Law Court and Superior Court cases, or ME Federal & State Cases, Combined to include Maine federal cases in your search. Enter your search terms in the box provided to pull up relevant cases.

If you haven't created a Maine tab, type in the "Find a Source" box: "ME State Cases, Combined" and click on Maine State Cases, Combined to search Law Court and Superior Court cases, or ME Federal & State Cases, Combined to include Maine federal cases in your search.

Lexis has certain advantages. For instance, Lexis provides signals indicating the status of a retrieved case and will warn if the case has been overruled. It is also possible to Shepardize any case by clicking on the blue "*Shepardize*" link at the top of the screen when the case is open on the screen.

- Opinions of the Maine Supreme Judicial Court from 1997 forward may be printed and downloaded from the Judicial Branch website. The website lists the opinions from October 2001 forward and provides links to lists of older cases:
http://www.courts.state.me.us/court_info/opinions/supreme/index.shtml
- The following link may be used for searching for terms in Maine Supreme Judicial Court opinions and administrative orders from 1997 to the present:
http://www.courts.state.me.us/court_info/opinions/index.shtml

- The following link allows you to search for Supreme Judicial Court opinions and the Superior Court orders:
http://www.courts.state.me.us/court_info/opinions/superior/index.shtml
- Some Superior Court decisions are also available through the website of the Garbrecht Law Library at the School of Law:
<http://webapp.usm.maine.edu/SuperiorCourt/>
- All currently effective Judicial Branch Administrative Orders are available through the Judicial Branch website:
http://www.courts.state.me.us/court_info/opinions/admin_orders.shtml

V. RULES OF COURT

The most accurate and comprehensive set of the Maine Court Rules is available on the Judicial Branch website.

- Click on the following link:
http://www.courts.state.me.us/court_info/rules/rules.html
- There are links available on the website to access the following Maine Rules:
 - Civil Procedure
 - Criminal Procedure
 - Appellate Procedure
 - Evidence
 - Guardians ad Litem
 - Small Claims Procedure
 - Probate Procedure
 - Rules of the Family Division
 - Bar Rules
 - Bar Admission Rules
 - Rules for Maine Assistance Program for Lawyers
 - Rules for the Lawyer's Fund for Client Protection
 - Code of Judicial Conduct
 - Rules for the Committee on Judicial Responsibility and Disability
 - Rules for the Maine Civil Legal Services Fund Commission

There are separate links to access four sets of rules that include advisory notes to the rules.

The Maine Rules of Civil Procedure with Advisory Notes includes the complete Civil Rules and Advisory Notes for rules amendments adopted since 1980 and sections of commentary on some rules, with the commentary sections listed in the introduction to the document.

The Maine Rules of Criminal Procedure with Advisory Notes includes the complete Criminal Rules and all Advisory Notes for amendments to the Criminal Rules.

The Judicial Branch website also includes links to recent rules amendments that may not have yet been incorporated into the regular text of the rules.

VI. SEARCHING FOR LEGISLATIVE DOCUMENTS

Use the following portion of the guide if you are interested in finding legislative documents from the current or prior legislative sessions.

A. Finding Bills and Legislative History on the Maine State Legislature's Website

- For legislative history from the past few years' sessions, visit the website of the Maine State Legislature: <http://janus.state.me.us/legis/>
- If you know the Public Law (P.L.) number of your session law and it is from the 118th – 123rd Legislatures:
<http://janus.state.me.us/legis/ros/lom/lomdirectory.htm>
- If you want the bill, the statement of fact, and amendments to the bill for the present/most recent session:
<http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/>
- You may search by Legislative Document (L.D.) number or words in the bill text.
- If you want bill, the statement of fact, and amendments to the bill for the 119th – 122nd Legislatures:
http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/past_sessions.asp

- If you do not know when a bill was passed, go to the Revisor of Statutes lookup page, plug in your section number and check the latest revision date:
<http://janus.state.me.us/legis/statutes/search.asp>
- If you have heard that there is a bill coming down the pike, but the session has not yet started: <http://janus.state.me.us/legis/lio/>
Select “Publications” and then “Accepted Bills.”
- You can always check a bill’s status:
<http://janus.state.me.us/legis/LawMakerWeb/search.asp>
Remember that this website is often out of date because of the backlog when in session. You can always get current information on any bill by calling the Office of Legislative Information at 287-1692. You can also ask your law clerk to contact the Office of Policy and Legal Analysis to discuss the bill’s progress through committee with the analyst assigned to that committee.
- From the list, select ME Bill Tracking and Full-Text Bills to search for both the “bill tracking,” which will tell you the status of the bill, and “full-text bills,” which provide the language of the bill.
- If you wish to search for bills affecting a specific statute, click on the “Terms and Connectors” button then type in the title of the statute, or specific language from it. If there are pertinent bills, a list of bill text and bill tracking documents will appear and you can click on the sources to call them up. *Note: Searching by title and section of the M.R.S.A. is, unfortunately, not terribly effective.*
- If you are looking for bills affecting a field of law more broadly, click on the “Terms and Connectors” button and enter a broader term, such as “workers compensation” or “divorce.” A longer list of bill text and bill tracking documents will appear and you can click on the sources to call them up.