Publication of Federal Statutory Law

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Publication of Federal Statutory Law

This presentation will explain the publication process of federal statutory law.

Understanding how federal statutory law is published is key to understanding how to research federal law.

After the President signs a bill into the law, the law is published in three steps:

1. Issued as a single public law called a slip law.
2. Published chronologically as session laws.
3. Published permanently through consolidations.

Slip Laws

After the President signs a bill into law, it is first published as a single public law in a pamphlet called a slip law.

A slip law is published using the public law number.

The public law number is the session of Congress that passed the law and the order in which Congress passed the law.

The law may also be known by a popular name.

EXAMPLE: The Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006 is also known as PL 109-248 because it was the 248th law passed by the 109th Congress.
Publication of Federal Statutory Law

Newly passed public laws are located electronically on Lexis, Westlaw, and for FREE on GPO Access.

www.gpoaccess.gov or Thomas

http://thomas.loc.gov

Session Laws

- At the end of each session of Congress, all the slip laws Congress passed during that session are compiled and published in chronological order as session laws.
- There are official and unofficial versions of federal session laws.
- The official government publication of federal session laws is the United States Statutes at Large.

Session Laws- The United States Statutes at Large

- Session laws are also given a citation within the Statutes at Large. For example, the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006, passed as public law 109-248, has a Statutes at Large citation of 120 Stat. 537 (2006).
- The United States Statutes at Large also provide references and citations to legislative history materials.
- The United States Statutes at Large are bound in order to 2 volumes of the Government Imprint.
- The United States Statutes at Large are bound electronically on microfiche, for free on GPO Access.

www.gpoaccess.gov or Westlaw (limited coverage).
Session Laws – U.S.C.A.N.


U.S.C.A.N. also includes legislative history information for public laws as well as full legislative history documents for select laws.

In print, U.S.C.A.N. is updated faster than the official United States Statutes at Large.

The print version is located on 2 South of the Gallaher law library and the first floor of the Tampa Law Center Library.

Located entirely on Westlaw.

Codification

- When a public law is enacted, it may contain legislation that covers more than one topic of law or more than one area of government.
- When a public law is codified, it is reorganized according to subject in the United States Code.
- The United States Code is divided into 50 Titles and each Title addresses a different subject area.

- The provisions relating to punishing sexual offenders are codified in the United States Code under Title 18: Crimes and Criminal Procedure, while the provisions relating to child protection and safety are codified under Title 42: Public Health and Welfare.
Codification

The United States Code (U.S.C.) is the official governmenal publication of federal law.
Annexed codes for federal law are unofficial and provide the full text of the law and research references. These research references are called annotations.

The Federal Court publication provides descriptions and indexes for the official and unofficial versions of the federal code.

When researching federal statutory law, most of your research will be done using a code rather than a case law.

Understanding the various citations and publications that are offered in federal statutory law can assist you in locating the code provisions you need.

Questions?
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