

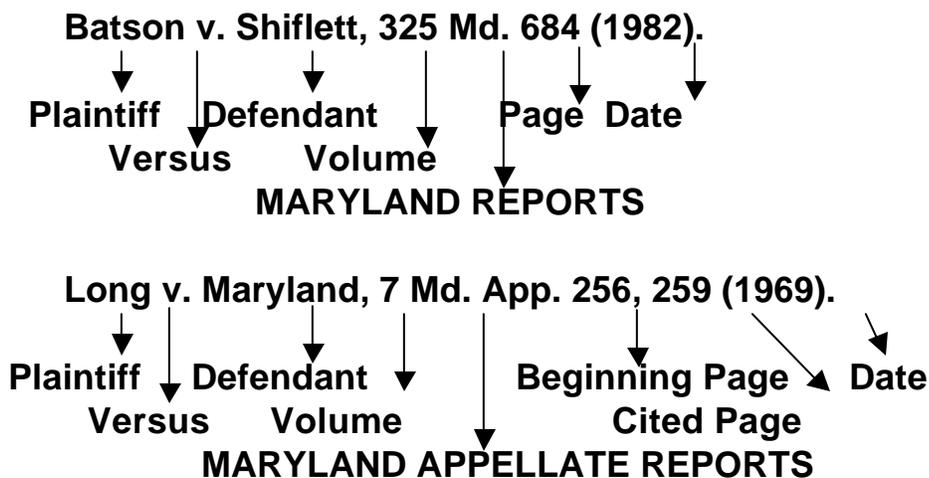
LEGAL CITATIONS FOR BEGINNERS

When judges and lawyers refer to the law or quote the law, they use references called legal citations. These citations are usually to a state or Federal statute (law), a court opinion, a regulation, or a well-known legal treatise. The diagrams and examples in this guide are designed to assist the beginning legal researcher in recognizing different types of legal citations.

You may ask the Baltimore County Circuit Court Law Library staff to help you find legal material. However, by law the Library staff can only provide access to legal information; the staff must never give legal advice or interpret legal materials. Therefore, for further assistance it would probably be best to consult an attorney.

MARYLAND LEGAL CITATIONS

REPORTED COURT OPINIONS – Court opinions are found in series of volumes called "reporters." They contain decisions from the highest courts of a state. Decisions from the Maryland Court of Appeals (the state's highest court) are located in the MARYLAND REPORTS, while decisions from the Court of Special Appeals (the state's second highest court) are contained in the MARYLAND APPELLATE REPORTS.



Garay v. Overholtzer, 332 Md. 339, 631 A.2d 429 (1993). – This case has a parallel citation, meaning that it can be found in 2 different volumes: Maryland Reports and the ATLANTIC REPORTER 2nd SERIES (another reporter which also contains Maryland decisions).

Blake v. Blake, No. 14, slip op. at 2 (Md. Jan. 25, 1996). – Some cases are too new to be in reporters, so they are found in looseleaf pages called slip opinions (kept at the Reference Desk). This citation, for example, refers to CASE NUMBER 14 of the Maryland Court of Appeals (abbreviated "Md.") and PAGE 2 of the opinion. Note that the FILING DATE of the opinion is also used.

ANNOTATED CODE OF MARYLAND – The Law Library provides 2 versions of the Code. The red and black colored volumes are published by Lexis. West publishes the predominately tan colored version. Both publishers arrange their series alphabetically by subject (see the first example). However, a few old-style black volumes officially remain. These volumes are organized by article number, rather than by subject (see the second example).

Md. Code Ann., Estates & Trusts § 2-102 (1991).
↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓
Maryland Code Volume Title-Subtitle Date

Md. Ann. Code art. 27, § 426 (1957, 1987 Repl. Vol.)
↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓
Maryland Code Article Section Most Recent Revision Date
Original Publication Date

MARYLAND RULES OF PROCEDURE -- The Maryland Rules are in two softbound volumes shelved after the Annotated Code.

Md. Rule 6-301.
↓ ↓ ↓
Title Chapter
Maryland Rules

Md. Rule BP7

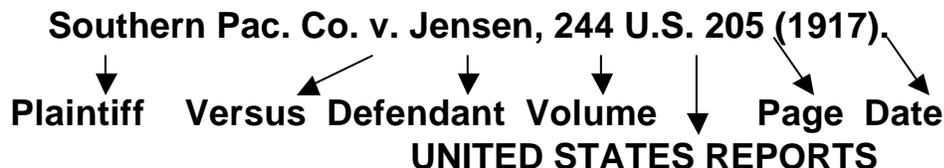
Some Maryland Rules have unusual numbers, such as the above citation. These Rules are located in Volume Two.

CODE OF MARYLAND REGULATIONS – Maryland state agency regulations, popularly known by the acronym COMAR, are kept in large red binders arranged by title number.

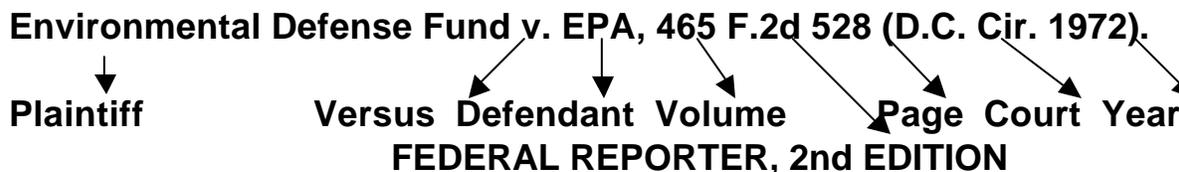
COMAR 10.07.03.24
↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓
Title Regulation
Code of Md. Chapter
Regulations Subtitle

FEDERAL LEGAL CITATIONS

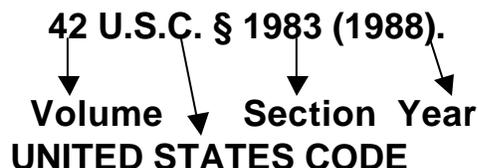
REPORTED COURT OPINIONS – U.S. Supreme Court cases, like the one below, may be listed in three different series or reporters: UNITED STATES REPORTS (abbreviated U.S., this is the official version of case decisions), SUPREME COURT REPORTER (S. Ct., this West publication includes the case decision as well as headnotes with references to West’s topic and Key number system), and UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT REPORTS, LAWYERS’ EDITION (L. Ed., this Lexis publication includes the original decision as well as headnotes leading to the ALR digest as well as counsel briefs). Recent decisions may be located in UNITED STATES LAW WEEK (U.S.L.W.) newsletter.



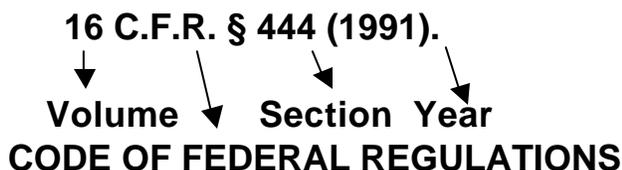
Federal Courts of Appeals cases are contained in the FEDERAL REPORTER 1st, 2nd, and 3rd editions. Federal District Court cases are reported in a series of volumes entitled the FEDERAL SUPPLEMENT (abbreviated F. Supp.).



UNITED STATES CODE – Federal statutes can be found in the unannotated UNITED STATES CODE (abbreviated U.S.C., published by the Government Printing Office) and in other code volumes which are privately published. The latter include the UNITED STATES CODE ANNOTATED (U.S.C.A., published by West) and the UNITED STATES CODE SERVICE (U.S.C.S., published by Lexis). These series are both annotated, meaning that they refer to other court cases and statutes which may be of interest.

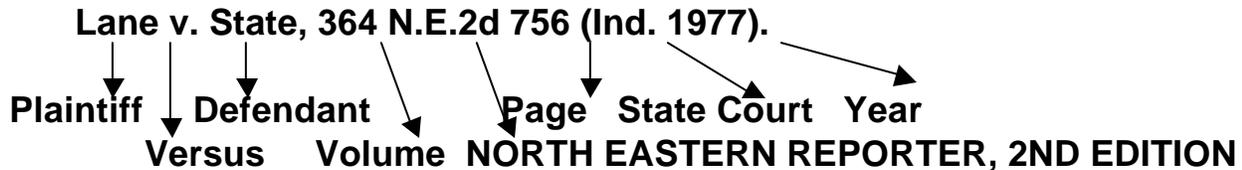


CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS – The Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) contains Federal agency regulations. New updates to the CFR may be found in the FEDERAL REGISTER (abbreviated Fed. Reg.) (shelved adjacent to the CFR).



OTHER LEGAL CITATIONS

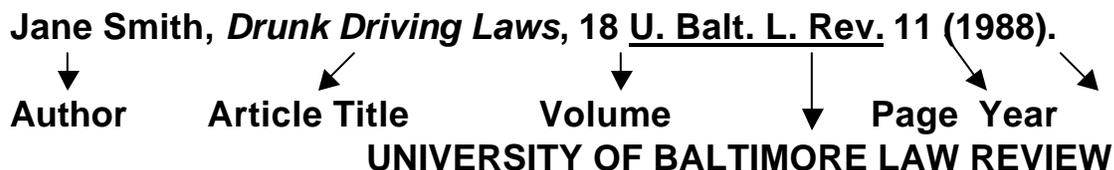
REPORTED COURT OPINIONS OF OTHER STATES – West Publishing Company collects court opinions from the highest state courts and produces regional reporters (which are now in their second editions), including the ATLANTIC REPORTER (abbreviated A.2d), NORTH EASTERN REPORTER (N.E.2d), NORTH WESTERN REPORTER (N.W.2d), PACIFIC REPORTER (P.2d), SOUTH EASTERN REPORTER (S.E.2d), SOUTHERN REPORTER (So. 2d), and the SOUTH WESTERN REPORTER (S.W.2d). The Baltimore County Circuit Court Law Library retains all of the above-mentioned volumes.



LEGAL TREATISES – Legal treatises are books about specific areas of the law which are helpful to the legal researcher.



LEGAL PERIODICALS – Law reviews published by law schools and other legal journals contain scholarly articles about specific legal issues. They are also helpful to the legal researcher.



OTHER CITATIONS – There are many other forms of citations--a brief guide such as this one can only provide the basics. Please feel free to ask the Library Staff any questions about legal research. Good luck!