



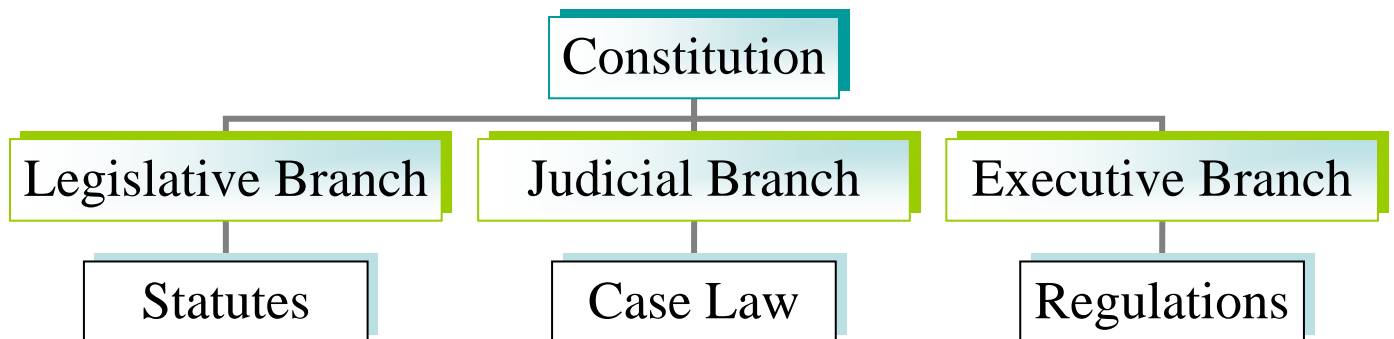
**Introduction to the Law Library & Legal Research Basics for  
Environmental Law  
September 20, 2006**

**Class Webpage:**

**<http://www.bu.edu/lawlibrary/training/classes/environmental.html>**

**Raquel M. Ortiz  
Head of Reference Services  
Boston University Law Library**

# The American Legal System of Government & Primary Sources of Law



## Federal Primary Sources of Law

Statutes

*Statutes at Large (Stat.)* → *United States Code (U.S.C.)*

Regulations

*Federal Register (F.R.)* → *Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.)*

Cases (selected sources)

*United States Reports, Federal Reporter, Federal Supplement*

## Tools for Deciphering Legal Citations

*Quick Tips for Deciphering Legal Citations*

<http://www.bu.edu/lawlibrary/research/guides/citation.html>

*Bieber's Dictionary of Legal Abbreviations*

Law Dictionaries K 89 B53 2001

## Finding Statutes

In addition to the United States Code, there are two “annotated” versions: *United States Code Annotated* and *United States Code Service*. These versions are preferred because they include citations to other sources.

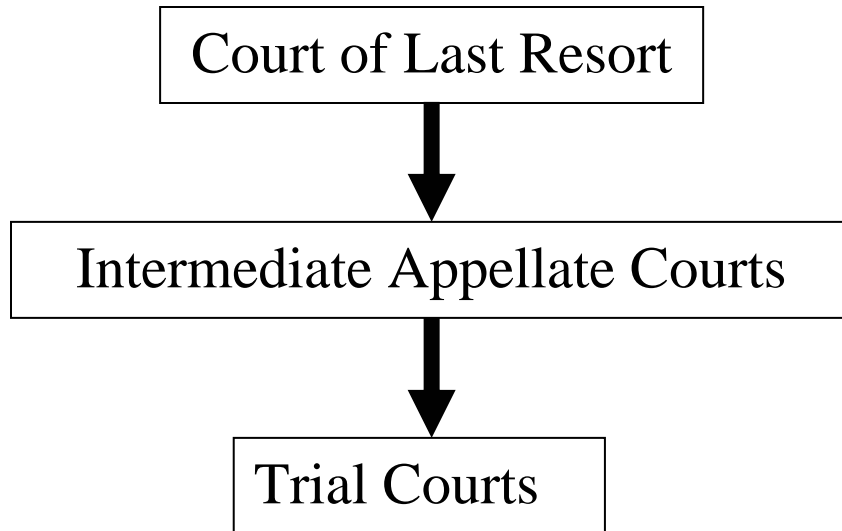
- By name: Popular Name Table
- By topic: General Index OR browse the title that covers your topic
- ONLINE by citation: In LexisNexis Academic, use the citation to do a Guided Search by Cite in Federal Code
- **Researching statutes online without a citation can be very frustrating, even to the experienced researcher. It is better to start with a secondary source to get a citation or use the code books.**

## Finding Regulations

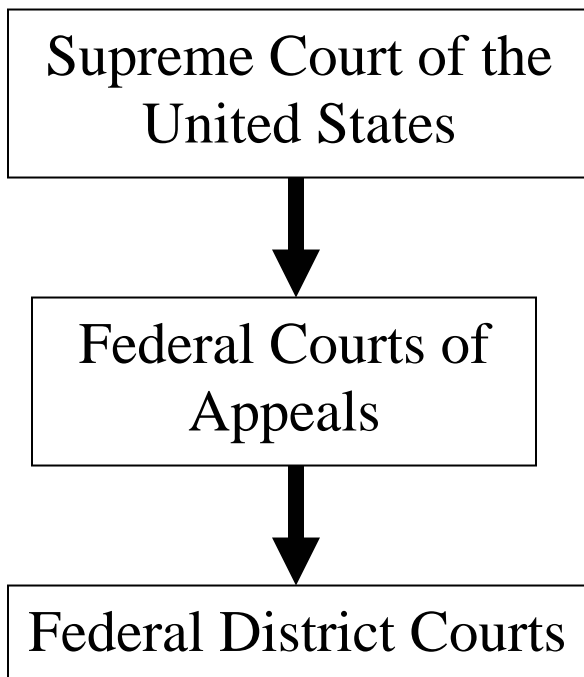
- By topic or agency: *West’s Code of Federal Regulations Index*
- ONLINE by citation: In LexisNexis Academic, use the citation to do a Guided Search by Cite in Federal Regulations
- **Researching regulations online without a citation can be very frustrating, even to the experienced researcher. It is better to start with a secondary source to get a citation or use the code books.**

## Case Law: Court Systems

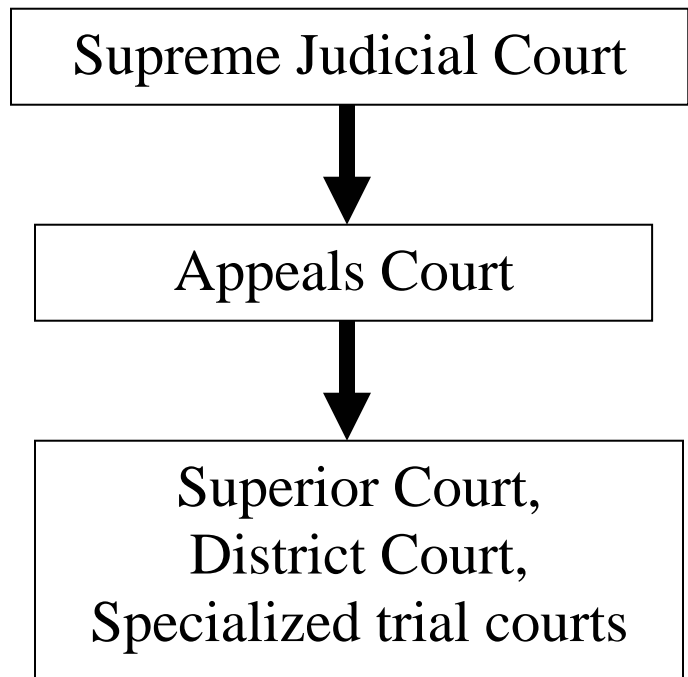
### Generally



### Federal Courts



### Massachusetts Courts



# **Federal Case Law Publications**

## **Supreme Court**

U.S. = United States Reports

S.Ct. = United States Supreme Court Reporter

L.Ed., L.Ed.2d = United States Supreme Court Reports, Lawyers' Edition

## **Courts of Appeals**

F., F.2d., F.3d = Federal Reporter

Fed.Appx. = Federal Appendix

## **Federal District Courts**

F.Supp, F.Supp.2d = Federal Supplement

## **Finding Cases**

- Finding Cases Using the West Key Number Digests
- Finding Cases Using the American Law Reports
- ONLINE by citation: Get a Case
- ONLINE by topic: Area of Law by Topic (Federal cases), State Case Law
- From a statute
- By updating a known case

## Updating Cases

- Updating Supreme Court Cases Online
- Updating other court cases

## Secondary Sources

- Using **Legal Encyclopedias** to Start Your Research  
<http://www.bu.edu/lawlibrary/research/guides/encyclopedias.html>
- Finding **Books**  
  
Using the BU Libraries Catalog: <http://library.bu.edu>  
Browsing the Reserve Collection
- Find **Articles in Legal Journals**  
<http://www.bu.edu/lawlibrary/research/databases/legalperiodicals.html>  
  
Use Indexes at BULaw  
Get Full Text from HeinOnline, LexisNexis Academic

**LexisNexis Academic:** <http://web.lexis-nexis.com/universe/>

- Instructions for home access at:  
<http://www.bu.edu/library/research/connecting3.html>