



CHARLOTTE SCHOOL *of* LAW

LEGAL RESEARCH GUIDE FOR NONLAWYERS

I. INTRODUCTION –

The Charlotte School of Law has among its collection a number of books geared toward the novice researcher. If you do not find the books you need our reference staff can show you additional books that might be more useful. Our Library's policies state the library staff cannot, however, do research for you or give you "legal advice". This means they cannot interpret the law for you or explain how the law would apply to your particular case.

If you are involved in a lawsuit, or are required to go to court, it is best to consult an attorney. Many attorneys offer free or inexpensive initial consultations. If you do not know the name of a lawyer, you can call the [North Carolina Lawyer Referral Service](#), a service of the [North Carolina Bar Association](#), at (800) 662-7660. It is also possible that you may qualify for representation by [Legal Aid of North Carolina](#). In Charlotte, call (704) 971-2621 (local) or (800) 738-3868 (toll-free).

This guide lists some of the books owned by our Library which are helpful for non-lawyers. Locations are given in parentheses after each book. Other books can be located by using our [online catalog](#).

II. GENERAL LEGAL RESEARCH

If you want a quick introduction on how to conduct legal research see [Legal Research in a Nutshell](#), *Morris L. Cohen, Kent C. Olson*, Thomson West (KF240.C54) 2010.

Another helpful book would be [North Carolina Legal Research Guide](#), *Jean Sinclair McKnight*, Fred B. Rothman Company (KFN7475 .M38) 1994.

III. SECONDARY SOURCES

If you are not familiar with a particular area of law, you may wish to begin your research with a secondary resource that provides background information and primary resources on your topic. A secondary resource can be a good starting place to begin your research because legal encyclopedias attempt to cover all legal topics in a broad fashion with many references to other resources. We have several encyclopedias which could be used by the non-lawyer doing research; such as [American Jurisprudence 2nd](#). Lawyers Co-Operative Publishing Company, 1962 (KF 154 .A42) and [Corpus Juris Secundum](#), Thomson West (KF 154 .C56).

IV. INTERNET LEGAL RESEARCH

Though you may be familiar with using a general web search engine such as Google or Yahoo, there are several more efficient places to begin searching for legal information on the Internet:

- [The Legal List: Research on the Internet](#), *Botluk, Diana*, West Group (REF KF 242 .A1 B68) 2009.
- Use law-related search engines such as [FindLaw](#).
- [ABA LawInfo](#).
- [Cornell Legal Information Institute](#): A useful resource that includes both secondary and primary information on a variety of legal topics.

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- [GPO Access](#): Web site of the Government Printing Office.
- [Thomas](#): Federal Legislative information and bill tracking.

V. GENERAL LEGAL PROBLEMS

Here are a few good starting points:

- [Judicial Process in a Nutshell](#), *William L. Reynolds*, (KF 8700 .Z9 R4) Thomson West, 2003. This book will give you a good overview of our judicial system.
- [Law for the Layperson](#), *Amber Hewette, and Diane Murley* (KF 1 .H68) 2006. This book lists references by subject, title and state laws.
- See Amjur. Legal forms (KF 170 B4 860) *Lawyers Co-Operative Publishing Company* for general forms and North Carolina forms.
- See [Douglas Forms](#) for Business Transactions, Civil Litigation, Family Law and Real Estate matters (KFN 7468 .D622) LexisNexis. 1997.

VI. SPECIFIC LEGAL TOPICS

To locate additional books available in our Library, please use our [catalog](#) or available at our online public computer terminals located near the Reference Desk.

- **AIDS/HIV** –
 - [Aids in a Nutshell](#), *Robert M. Jarvis*, Thomson West (KF 3803 .A54 A955) 1996. This book provides an overview of the various legal issues surrounding HIV and AIDS.
- **ANIMALS** –
 - [Animal law: welfare, interests, and rights](#), *David S. Favre*, Aspen Publishers, (KF 390.5 A5 F38) 2008.
- **BANKRUPTCY AND CONSUMER CREDIT** –
 - [How to file for bankruptcy](#), 6th ed., *Elias, Stephen, et al.* Nolo Press, (KF 1524.6 .E4) 1996. This book discusses procedures for filing for bankruptcy, how to handle the case in court and things that must be done after declaring bankruptcy.
- **BUSINESS LAW** –
 - [Business Associations in a Nutshell](#), *Joseph Shade* (KF 1355 .Z9 S52), Thomson West, 2010.
- **CITIZENSHIP/IMMIGRATION LAW** –
 - [Immigration Law and Procedure in a Nutshell](#), *David Weissbrodt, Laura Danielson*, (KF 4819.3 .W4), Thomson West, 2011.
- **COPYRIGHT, PATENT AND TRADEMARK** –
 - [Copyright law, basic and related materials](#), *Stanley Rothenberg*, (KF 2994 .R58), Clark Boardman Company, 1956.
 - [Patent law in a Nutshell](#), *Martin Adelman, Randall R. Rader, Gordon P. Klancnik*, (KF 3114.85 A340), Thomson West, 2008.
 - [Trademark Law](#), *Robert C. Lind*, 3rd edition, Carolina Academic Press, 2006 (KF 3180 .Z9 L56) This book covers the basics of trademark law.
- **CRIMINAL LAW** –
 - [Criminal law in a nutshell](#), *Arnold H. Loewy*, (KF 9219.3 .L63) Thomson West, 2009.
 - [North Carolina Crimes: A guide book on the elements of crimes](#), Institute of Government, (REF KFN 7966.8 N67) 2001, Carolina Press, 2009.

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- **EDUCATION LAW**
 - [Education law: First Amendment, Due Process, and Discrimination Litigation](#), *Ronna Greff Schneider*, (KF 4119 S.358), Thomson West, 2004.
- **ELDER LAW**
 - [Elder Law in a Nutshell](#), *Lawrence, A. Frolik, Richard L. Kaplan*, 5th ed. (KF 390 .A4 F752), Thomson West, 2010.
- **EMPLOYMENT LAW**
 - [Employment Law in a Nutshell](#), *Robert N. Covington* (KF 3455 .Z9 C68) 2009.
 - [North Carolina Workers' Compensation: Law and Practice, with Forms](#), *Leonard T. Jernigan, Jr.*, Harrison Company (KFN 7742 .J47) 1995.
 - [Federal Law of Employment Discrimination in a Nutshell](#), *Mack A. Player*, (KF 3464 .P538) Thomson West, 2009.
- **ESTATE PLANNING**
 - [Introduction To Estate Planning in a Nutshell](#), *Robert J. Lynn, Grayson M.P. McCouch*, (KF 750 .L9) Thomson West, 2004.
- **FAMILY LAW**
 - [Family Law in a Nutshell](#), *Harry D. Krause, David D. Meyer* (KF 505 .Z9 K7) Thomson West, 2007.
 - [Lee's North Carolina Family Law](#), *Suzanne Reynolds, Matthew Bender* (KFN 7494 .L43), 2000.
- **GAY AND LESBIAN ISSUES**
 - [A Legal Guide for Lesbians and Gay Men in North Carolina](#). *North Carolina Gay and Lesbian Attorneys*, 1996. This publication provides a summary of North Carolina laws and court decisions that affect lesbians and gay men. It covers topics such as AIDS, having children and dealing with child custody disputes, employment and housing discrimination, prosecution under the crime against nature laws, wills and estate planning, and domestic partnership issues.
- **LANDLORD TENANT**
 - [Landlord and Tenant Law in a Nutshell](#), *David S. Hill*, Thomson West (KF 590 .Z9 H45) Nolo Press, 2004.
- **LEGAL MALPRACTICE**
 - [Evaluating a Malpractice Case Against a Lawyer](#), *Boyd S. Lemon*, The Graduate Group, (KF 313 .L55) 2006. Factors to be considered when filing such a suit.
- **MEDIATION**
 - [Mediation in a Nutshell](#), *Kimberlee K. Kovach* (KF 9084 /Z9 K68) Thomson West, 2003. This book provides an overview of the mediation process.
- **NEIGHBOR LAW**
 - [Neighbor Law: Fences, Trees, Boundaries & Noise](#), *Jordan, Cora*, 6th edition, (REF KF 639 .Z9 J67), Nolo Press, 2008. This book covers general laws governing relations between neighbors and suggests how a neighbor can amicably settle problems. A section on mediation is included as are some state statutes.
- **PERSONAL INJURY**
 - [Personal Property in a Nutshell](#), *Burke D. Barlow* (KF 705 .Z9 B83) Thomson West, 2003.
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- **SMALL CLAIMS COURT**
 - [Everybody's Guide to Small Claims Court](#), Warner, Ralph, 13th edition, (REF KF 8769 .Z9 W37), nolo Press, 2010. This book covers small claims court procedures, and specific types of cases. In the back is a list of each state in which the state's basic rules for suing in small claims court is outlined.
- **TAXATION**
 - [U.S. Master Tax Guide](#), Commerce Clearing House, (KF 6369 .A1 C6), 2009. This is a basic one volume tax guide for individuals and contains sample tax forms which list items that could be deducted or for receiving tax credits, etc.