

Reading Citations

Finding Cases and Statutes by Citation

Any reference to any primary law source – case or statute – has a citation. The basic format of a citation is standardized, and generally includes a volume number, an abbreviation of the title of the publication in which the law appears, a page or section number, and a date.

Cases

Court cases are often published by more than one publisher, so there can be more than one citation appearing after the name of the case. Usually the first citation given is to the official reports for a particular court, and is called the “official citation.” The official reports are printed by the publisher with which that court has contracted to distribute cases.

In California the official reports of California Supreme Court cases are published in the *California Reports* (1st – 5th series) and the official reports of Courts of Appeal cases are published in the *California Appellate Reports* (1st – 5th series).

The other citations given in a string are known as “unofficial” or “parallel” citations. The text of the opinion is the same in all sources, whether they are “official” or “unofficial.”

The following are examples of citations to the California Supreme Court and the California Court of Appeals’ cases.

California Supreme Court

CALIFORNIA SUPREME COURT		
<u>Names of the Parties</u>	<u>Official Citation</u>	<u>Parallel Citations</u>
Smith v. Jones	20 Cal. 3d 640	7 P.2d 206, 154 Cal. Rptr. 198 (1987)

Volume 20 ↑ Page 640

California Reports 3d Series ↑ Pacific Reporter 2d Series

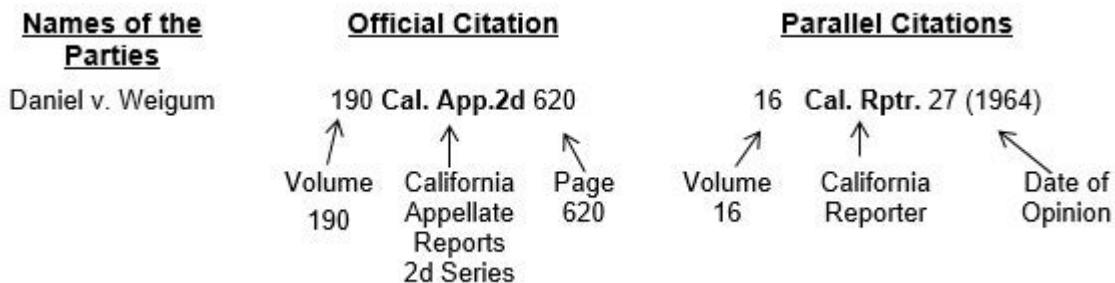
↑ ↑ ↑

California Reporter Date of Opinion

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California Court of Appeals

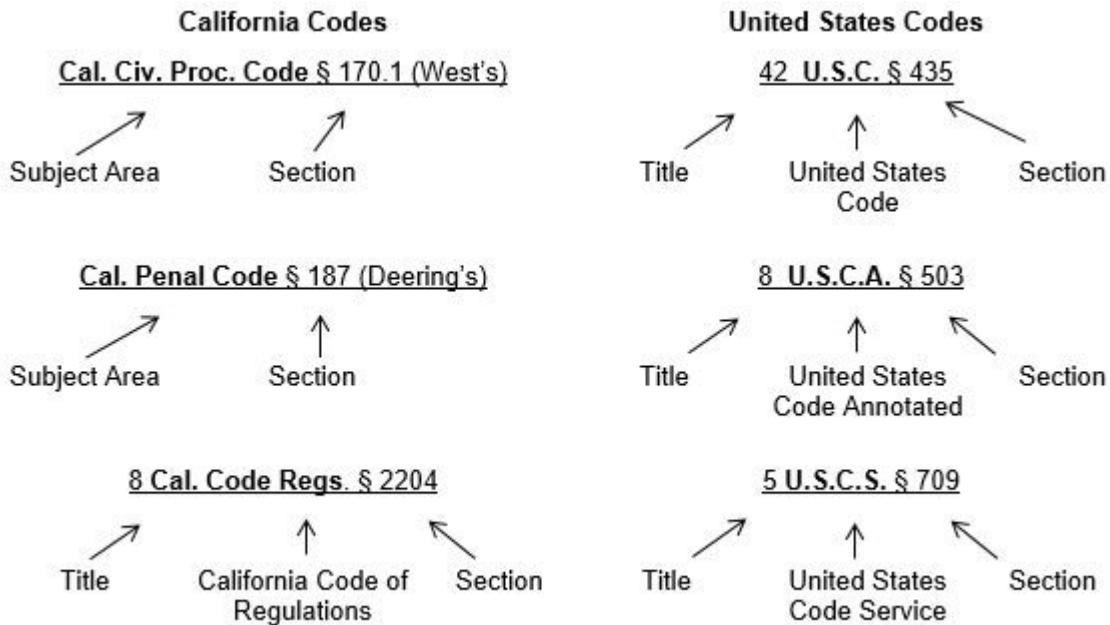
California Supreme Court cases have two parallel citations. The first is to the *Pacific Reporter*, and the second is to the *California Reporter*, which started in 1959. Court of Appeals cases have only one parallel citation, to the *California Reporter*.



California Statutes or United States Codes

The terms “statute” and “code” are often used interchangeably. There are two publishers of the annotated California Codes: West (now known as Thomson Reuters) and Deering (published by LexisNexis). The wording of the Codes is identical in either publication; the only difference is in the annotations that follow each section.

The following are examples of citations for California and United States Codes:



List of California Statutory Abbreviations

California codes contain state law (statutes) in 29 separate series, each covering a general topic (e.g. – Education, Insurance, etc.). Some legal citations use the full name of the code, while others use abbreviations.

Cal. Code	Code Abbreviation
Business and Professions	Bus. & Prof. or B&P
Civil	Civ. or C.C.
Civil Procedure	Civ.Proc. or C.C.P.
Commercial	Com.
Corporations	Corp.
Education	Educ. or Ed.
Elections	Elec.
Evidence	Evid.
Family	Fam.
Financial	Fin.
Fish and Game	Fish & Game
Food and Agricultural	Food & Agric.
Government	Gov't.
Harbors and Navigation	Harb. & Nav.
Health and Safety	Health & Safety or H&S
Insurance	Ins.

Labor	Lab.
Military and veterans	Mil. & Vet.
Penal	Penal or P.C.
Probate	Prob.
Public Contact	Pub. Cont.
Public Resources	Pub. Res.
Public Utilities	Pub. Util.
Revenue and Taxation	Rev. & Tax.
Streets and Highways	Sts. & High.
Unemployment Insurance	Unemp. Ins.
Vehicle	Veh.
Water	Water
Welfare and Institutions	Welf. & Inst. or W&I

List of California Regulatory Abbreviations

California codifies its regulations in the California Code of Regulations, published by Barclays (Thomson Reuters). Like the statutes it is organized by topic, but the sections are referred to by title number instead of topic name. (Compare the statutory “Penal Code” or “PC §____” to the regulatory code on “Crime Prevention and Corrections,” cited as Title 15 or 15 CCR ____.)

Until 1987, the CCR was called the “California Administrative Code.” You will still see former title used in some infrequently-updated resources.

The [California Building Standards Code](http://www.bsc.ca.gov/) (<http://www.bsc.ca.gov/>), Title 24 of the CCR, serves as the basis for the design and construction of buildings in California. Due to copyright issues, it is distributed separately from the remainder of the CCR. It is maintained by the California Building Standards Commission.

Regulatory Term	Abbreviations
California Code of Regulations	CCR
California Administrative Code (former title of CCR)	CAC
California Building Standards Code	BSC or CCR Title 24
California Regulatory Notice Registry	Z Register or NR

List of Common Abbreviations in Law

For legal abbreviations not listed, see: *Prince’s Bieber Dictionary of Legal Abbreviations: a Reference Guide for Attorneys, Legal Secretaries, Paralegals, and Law Students* KF 246 .B46.

Abbreviation	Publication
A., A.2d, A.3d	Atlantic Reporter, First, Second and Third Series
A.L.R., A.L.R. 2d , A.L.R. 3d, A.L.R. 4th, A.L.R. 5th, A.L.R. 6th, A.L.R. 7th	American Law Reports: First, Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Series
A.L.R. Fed, A.L.R. Fed 2d A.L.R. Fed 3d	American Law Reports, Federal; First, Second, and Third Series

Am. Jur., Am. Jur.2d	American Jurisprudence, First and Second Series
C. or Cal. ,C.2d or Cal. 2d, C.3d or Cal. 3d, C.4th or Cal. 4th	California Reports, First, Second, Third and Fourth Series
C.C.R., or Cal. Code Regs.	California Code of Regulations
CEB	Continuing Education of the Bar
C.J.	Corpus Juris
C.J.S.	Corpus Juris Secundum
CA or Cal. App; CA2d or Cal. App.2d; CA3d or Cal. App.3d; CA4th or Cal. App.4th; CA5th or Cal. App.5th	California Appellate Reports, First, Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth Series
Cal. Jur, Cal. Jur. 2d, Cal. Jur. 3d	California Jurisprudence, First, Second and Third Series
Cal. Rptr., Cal. Rptr. 2d, Cal. Rptr. 3d	California Reporter (West's), First, Second and Third Series
C.F.R.	Code of Federal Regulations
F., F.2d, F.3d	Federal Reporter, First, Second and Third Series
Fed. Reg.	Federal Register
F.R.D.	Federal Rules Decisions
F. Supp., F. Supp. 2d F. Supp. 3d	Federal Supplement, First, Second and Third Series
L. Ed., L. Ed. 2d	Lawyers' Edition, U.S. Supreme Court Reports, First and Second Series
N.E. & N.E.2d	Northeastern Reporter, First and Second Series

N.W. & N.W.2d	Northwestern Reporter, First and Second Series
P., P.2d, P.3d	Pacific Reporter, First, Second, and Third Series
So., So. 2d, So. 3d	Southern Reporter, First, Second, and Third Series
S.E. & S.E.2d	Southeastern Reporter, First and Second Series
S.W., S.W.2d, S.W.3d	Southwestern Reporter, First, Second and Third Series
S. Ct.	Supreme Court Reports (West's)
U.S.	United States Reports
U.S.C.	United States Code
U.S.C.A.	United States Code Annotated (West's)
U.S.C.S.	United States Code Service (Lexis)