

Quick Guide to Montana Legal Information

State Law Library of Montana

Montana became a state in 1889.

Legal materials from 1864 to 1889 relate to the Territory of Montana.

- **State Constitution:** Print version of the current Montana Constitution is contained in *Montana Code Annotated* (MCA), vol. 1. Annotations to the current Constitution are available in the Annotations to the MCA, a separate title. The online version does not include annotations and can be found at: http://leg.mt.gov/bills/mca/title_0000/chapters_index.html. The Organic Act (created the Montana Territory), the original 1889 Constitution and the original 1972 Constitution are available online, as well as the Proceeding of the 1972 Constitutional Convention, <http://courts.mt.gov/library/statehood>.
- **State Code:** Print version is contained in *Montana Code Annotated*, published in the fall of every odd numbered year. The online version can be found at: http://leg.mt.gov/bills/mca/title_0000/chapters_index.html. Older editions of the state and territorial codes are available at the State Law Library of Montana in Helena, <http://courts.mt.gov/library>. Annotations to the MCA are not available online but may be purchased from Legislative Services, <http://leg.mt.gov/css/Publications/purchase.asp>
- **State Session Laws:** A print version of *Laws of Montana* has been produced by the Montana Legislature after each session since 1864 and can be found at the State Law Library of Montana. Generally, the Legislature meets every odd-numbered year. There is no online version of the Session Laws.
- **State Bills:** The State Law Library of Montana has collected and bound the Bills introduced in the House and Senate, beginning with the 1977 session. Bills can be found online beginning with the 1999 session, <http://leg.mt.gov/css/bills/Default.asp>. The Montana Historical Society Archives is the official depository for all legislative materials, <http://mhs.mt.gov/research/library>.
- **Legislative Material:** House and Senate Journals exist from 1864 through present. For the years, 1864 through 1993, they are in print format available at the State Law Library. Subsequently, they are digital only. Committee minutes are available from the Historical Society, the State Law Library or the Legislative branch website, <http://leg.mt.gov/css/default.asp> depending upon the year of the session.
- **State Administrative Code:** Montana's administrative rules are found in print, *Administrative Rules of Montana* (ARMs). The current version of the Administrative Rules can be found online on the Montana Secretary of State's website, <http://www.mtrules.org/>. Notices about proposed rules and recently adopted Rules are published in the *Montana Administrative Register* (MARs). The Register, back to 2000, is also online, <http://www.mtrules.org/>. The Law Library has print copies of the superseded ARMs pages as well as older MARs issues.
- **Attorney General Opinions:** The Report and Official Opinion of Attorney General are available starting from 1905. Up until 1992, they were published in hardbound volumes available at the State Law Library. From 1993, the Opinions are available only online, <https://dojmt.gov/agooffice/attorney-generals-opinions/>.

- **County/Municipal/City Codes:** Some of the larger local governments have their codes online but that is the exception in Montana.
- **State Jury Instructions:** The Montana Civil and Criminal Pattern Jury Instructions are printed by the State Bar of Montana. Instructions are contained in print format or on CD-ROM. The State Law Library has both sets of Instructions. They can be purchased from the State Bar Association at <https://montanabar.site-ym.com/store/default.aspx>. Only the Criminal Pattern Jury Instructions are available online, <https://dojmt.gov/agooffice/criminal-jury-instructions>.
- **Montana Court Decisions:** The official printed reports of Montana Supreme Court opinions from 1873 to present are in Montana Reports. Montana Supreme Court decisions also appear in West's Pacific Reporter. Montana Supreme Court opinions from the early 1970's forward are available free online from the State Law Library of Montana, <http://searchcourts.mt.gov/>. The briefs filed with the Court in cases after 1970 are found on the same website. Recent Montana Supreme Court opinions are posted on the State Law Library website within several hours of being issued, <http://searchcourts.mt.gov/>. The Court's Docket for cases filed after 2007 are available online, <http://supremecourtdocket.mt.gov/>, with current orders from the last month at <http://courts.mt.gov/orders/orders>. Montana has no intermediate-level appellate court. State district court opinions are not published or available online. Dockets with case information from the state district courts or justice courts are not available online in Montana.
- **US Court System:** All of Montana is included the United States District Court for the District of Montana, <http://www.mtd.uscourts.gov/>. The district is part of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, <http://www.ca9.uscourts.gov/>. Dockets and case information are in PACER, <https://www.pacer.gov/>.
- **State Court Rules:** The official publication of the court rules is in the MCA, Title 25 (Civil) and Title 46 (Criminal). Current and retrospective volumes are kept by the State Law Library of Montana. Current rules without annotations can be found online at the State Law Library's website, <http://courts.mt.gov/dcourt> and on the legislature's website at <http://leg.mt.gov/bills/mca/index.html>. West publishes an unofficial set, *Montana Rules of Court*, in 3 volumes.
- **State Jury Instructions:** The Montana Civil Pattern Jury Instructions (MPI), are published and sold by the State Bar of Montana, <https://montanabar.site-ym.com/store/default.aspx>. The civil instructions are not available on line. The Montana Criminal Jury Instructions (MCJI) are available online, <https://doj.mt.gov/agooffice/criminal-jury-instructions/> or for purchase from the State Bar. The State Law Library has both sets of Instructions.
- **Link to the State Bar of Montana:** Montana is a unified bar state, <http://www.montanabar.org/>. *The Lawyers' Deskbook and Directory* is published annually, <https://montanabar.site-ym.com/store/default.aspx>.
- **Link to Research Guides:** The State Law Library provides research guides, including a guide to compiling state legislative history, at <http://courts.mt.gov/library/collections/guides>. There are also guides from the Jameson Law Library of the University of Montana, <http://www.umt.edu/law/library/montanalegalresearch.php>.

- **Practice Materials and Legal Forms:** Montana does not have a legal encyclopedia, deskbook series or any significant up-to-date practice materials. There are a limited number of Montana specific forms available through the State Law Library website, <http://courts.mt.gov/forms>. Montana Law Help (MTLSA) also has some forms, <http://www.montanalawhelp.org>.
- **Subscription Legal Databases:** Westlaw and Lexis provide the broadest coverage of Montana legal materials. Fastcase, <http://www.fastcase.com/> and Loislaw, <http://www.fastcase.com/loislaw/> are lower priced alternatives with more limited retrospective and secondary materials. HeinOnline has digital libraries which include Montana Attorney General Opinions, the two law reviews, session laws and older codes, <https://heinonline.org/HOL/Welcome>.
- **Law Related Organizations and Community Contacts:**
 - Self Help Centers, <http://courts.mt.gov/selfhelp/community>;
 - Montana Department of Justice, Office of Consumer Protection, <http://www.dojmt.gov/consumer>;
 - State Bar of Montana, <https://montanabar.site-ym.com/?page=ResourcesandFAQs> ;
 - State Law Library <http://courts.mt.gov/library>;
 - Montana Law Help/Montana Legal Services Association, <http://www.montanalawhelp.org> .
- **Montana Court Help Program and Self Help Centers:** The Judicial Branch funds a program to help self-represented litigants throughout the state navigate the court system, <http://courts.mt.gov/selfhelp> and http://courts.mt.gov/Portals/189/selfhelp/docs/brochure_feb.pdf
- **Federal Depository Libraries:** The State Law Library is a limited depository library while the University of Montana Mansfield Library is the Regional Federal Depository Library. For more information visit <http://www.lib.umt.edu/about/depository>.
- **Law Libraries:** There are only two law libraries open to the public in the state of Montana. They are:

State Law Library of Montana
 Mazurek Justice Building
 215 North Sanders St.
 Helena, MT 59601
 PH: (406) 444-3660
mtlawlibrary@mt.gov
 Website: <http://courts.mt.gov/library>

William J. Jamieson Law Library
 University of Montana
 32 Campus Drive #9999
 Missoula, MT 59812
 PH: (406)243-2699
 Website: <http://www.umt.edu/law/library/>

Most of the Montana materials held by the State Law Library are also available at Jameson Law Library.

For more information,
 please contact one of the above libraries.