

A Key to Legal Citation

1. Case names and FCC decisions and reports. The names of litigated cases (lawsuits) decided by appellate courts are cited as follows:

National Broadcasting Co. v. United States, 319 U.S. 190 (1943).

(as in footnote 48). This means that the court's opinion is published in volume 319 of the United States Reports, starting on page 190, and that the case was decided by the United States Supreme Court (the only court whose opinions are published in the U.S. Reports) in 1943.

Sometimes it is necessary to provide a "pinpoint" citation, the precise location of a quotation or other material taken from a case. A citation including a pinpoint citation might look like this:

319 U.S. 190, 228 (1943) (Murphy, J., dissenting).

(combined footnotes 53 and 54). As does the first example, this citation tells you that the opinion is published in volume 319 of the U.S. Reports, starting on page 190, and that the case was decided by the United States Supreme Court in 1943. It also tells you that the cited material is found on page 228, and that it was written by Justice Murphy in his dissenting opinion.

Opinions of cases decided by courts other than the United States Supreme Court are also published in reports. For example:

United States v. Zenith Radio Corp., 12 F.2d 614 (N.D. Ill. 1926).

(as in footnote 30). This citation tells you that the opinion is published in volume 12 of the Federal Reports, second series, starting at page 614, and that it was decided by the United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois in 1926.

F.C.C. reports and decisions are cited in a similar manner. For example:

First Report and Order, 22 F.C.C.2d 306 (1970).

(as in footnote 96). This indicates that the First Report and Order is published in Volume 22 of the F.C.C. Reports, second series, starting on page 306, and that it was released in 1970. Other F.C.C. decisions and reports are cited as follows:

Duopoly Decision, 4 F.C.C. Rec. 1723 (1989).
52 Rad. Reg. 2d (P & F) 1081 (1981).

(as in footnotes 219 and 6, respectively). The first citation is to page 1723 of volume 4 of the F.C.C. Record. (The F.C.C. Reports (F.C.C., F.C.C.2d) were abandoned in the 1980s and replaced with the F.C.C. Record (F.C.C. Rec.)) The second citation is to page 1081 of Volume 52 of Radio Regulation, second series, published by a private publishing company called Pike and Fischer.

2. Statutes and Regulations. Statutes are laws enacted by a vote of Congress and approval of the president, or by a 2/3 vote of Congress to override a presidential veto. Regulations are rules promulgated by administrative agencies (like the F.C.C.). An example of the citation of a statute:

Communications Act of 1934, 47 U.S.C. § 307(a) (1982 and Supp. V 1987).

(as in footnote 1). The popular name of this statute is the Communications Act of 1934; it was published in Volume 47 of the official United States Code in 1982; there was a fifth supplement updating the statute in 1987; and the specific section being referred to is Section 307(a).

An example of a citation of a regulation:

47 C.F.R. § 73.1125 (1986).

(as in footnote 5). This indicates that the regulation was published in Volume 47 of the Code of Federal Regulations in 1986, and that the specific regulation being referred to is Section 73.1125.

3. *Supra*, *infra*, and *id*. *Supra* means above; *infra* means below. Thus, *see supra* note 3 refers you to footnote 3 above (*i.e.*, an earlier footnote). Likewise, *see infra* note 46 means to look at note 46 below. *Id*. Is legal citation shorthand referring to the last cited source. For example:

53. 319 U.S. 190 (1943).

54. *Id*. At 228 (Murphy, J., dissenting).

In this example, note 53 gives the full citation of the case; it would be cumbersome to have to repeat the full citation in the following note, so the short form, *id.*, is used. Note that *id.* is not used to refer to any source more than four footnotes back, so if you see an *id.*, you should not have to look back more than four footnotes to find another reference to the citation, or the full citation itself.

4. Miscellaneous. The Congressional Record (cited as CONG. REC.) gives legislative history of acts of Congress, which may be illuminating as to the purposes of laws passed. *See, e.g.*, note 64.

Citations to BROADCASTING are to Broadcasting Magazine.

Footnotes in court or commission decisions are cited as “n.”; *see, e.g.*, note 230:

100 F.C.C.2d 17, 25 nn.22 & 24.

This citation refers to footnotes 22 and 24 on page 25 of an F.C.C. decision that begins on page 17 of Volume 100 of the F.C.C. Reports, second series.