I. WHAT ARE THE AMERICAN LAW REPORTS?

The American Law Reports (A.L.R.), published by West, are a multi-volume set of articles called Annotations written by attorneys. Annotations cover a topic through cases that focus on a particular point of law in depth. The Annotations cite, summarize, analyze and critique a legal issue in great detail. Accompanying each Annotation is a case, selected by the publisher as a leading case on the topic discussed in the Annotation. The articles discuss unresolved points of law, changes in the law, and emerging trends in legal thinking. The A.L.R. Annotation gives the researcher citations of many of the reported cases on the issue being researched.

II. WHY IS A.L.R. USEFUL?

First, it describes in general terms and then analyzes in detail the case law on covered topics. An Annotation thus provides a good overview of a topic. Because the case descriptions are organized by rule or outcome, it also permits the user to see the different approaches taken by various courts and the importance of key facts. Second, an A.L.R. Annotation also provides references to primary authority. Cases are cited and described. In addition, an Annotation provides references to other secondary sources. Furthermore, A.L.R. is a timely source. An Annotation on a new legal topic may appear before other secondary sources.

However, A.L.R. has its limits. There may be no Annotation on your subject. The research and writing may be accurate but the writer may not be a recognized scholar or expert in the area because Annotations are written by staff lawyers. Thus the Annotation is not as credible a source as some other secondary sources written by legal scholars.

III. WHERE IS A.L.R. LOCATED IN THE TMSL LIBRARY?

The entire A.L.R. series is located on Aisles 105 & 106 near the Circulation Desk.
IV. HOW DO YOU RESEARCH IN A.L.R.?

1. Consult the A.L.R. Index.
   - This is a multivolume set encompassing the second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, federal and federal second series of A.L.R.
   - Check the pocket part and main volume of the index.
   - Look for the term or descriptive word that most closely identifies your problem.
   - If you already know of a key primary authority, check the tables covering federal statutes, federal regulations, federal court rules and state statutes in the last volume of the A.L.R. index or tables covering federal matter in the A.L.R. Federal Tables volumes.

2. Consult the A.L.R. Digest.
   - This is a multivolume set that covers unsuperseded annotations and decisions in all A.L.R. Series. This set is classified according to the West Key Number System.

3. Once you have located a pertinent Annotation:
   - Skim the opening section for an overview of the topic.
   - Consult the article outline, index and jurisdictional table.
   - Read the text of the Annotation. Look for patterns in the case law from other jurisdictions and look for cases with factual parallels to your client’s situation.
   - Skim the accompanying case.
   - Consult the references section for cross-references to other secondary sources.

4. Update the Annotation.
   - Sometimes, after an Annotation has been published, the law changes. This may result in an earlier Annotation being rendered wholly or partially inaccurate. When this happens either a new Annotation is written to replace or supersede the earlier one or a second Annotation is written to amend or supplement the earlier one. There is no way to tell from the Annotation itself whether it has been supplemented or superseded.
   - To know whether an Annotation has been supplemented or superseded, you must consult the "Annotation History Table," in the end of the A.L.R. General Index (currently in seven (7) volumes). If your Annotation is not listed, then it has not been superseded or supplemented. If it is listed it will have a reference to the supplementing or superseding Annotation.
   - The original series of A.L.R. covers 1919-1948. A.L.R 2d covers 1948-1965. Due to the date of these publications, please note that many of the annotations in these two series have been superseded by later annotations.
   - A.L.R. 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, Federal and Federal, 2d are updated by pocket parts.

5. A.L.R. in Lexis Advance
   - Contains the full text of the annotations included in the Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Federal and Federal Second Series.

6. A.L.R. in WestlawNext
   - WestlawNext provides full text of A.L.R. Annotations.
V. HOW DO YOU CITE A.L.R.?

Cite Annotations by the author’s full name (if available), followed by the word Annotation, the Annotation title in italics, the volume, series, beginning page number and date. This example follows the *The Bluebook, 19th ed.*, Rule 16.7.6.


VI. HOW ARE THE A.L.R. SERIES ORGANIZED?

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