

Using Halsbury's Laws of England

This guide will help you understand how and when to use Halsbury's Laws of England online or in print

What is Halsbury's Laws of England?

Halsbury's Laws of England (often just called *Halsbury's*) is a well-regarded legal encyclopedia. It's a good place to start if you're researching a topic but don't know what cases or legislation are relevant. It doesn't contain the full text of any cases or legislation but gives you enough information to be able to then find them yourself in a legal database such as LexisLibrary or Westlaw.

One of the advantages of using *Halsbury's* for legal research is that it is updated regularly so will always reflect current law.

Information in *Halsbury's* is split up into numbered paragraphs. Each paragraph explains the current legal status of a particular topic. Accompanying footnotes will direct you to relevant case law and legislation.

Using the printed volumes of *Halsbury's Laws* to look up a topic

You can find these on level 2 of the Headington Library shelved at 340 HAL. You cannot borrow them but you can use and photocopy them within the library.

To find the most up-to-date information, this is the recommended procedure to follow when looking up a topic:

1. Consolidated index	Start by looking up your topic in the consolidated index . This is split in two volumes, A-E and F-Z. It will give you a reference to the volume and paragraph your topic is in. For instance, the entry for computer fraud is <u>57 (5th), 502</u> . This means it's in paragraph <u>502</u> of volume <u>57</u> , which is on its <u>5th</u> edition. Currently, every volume is on its 5 th edition.
2. Main volumes	Now you have a volume number you can take that volume off the shelf and turn to this paragraph. You will find descriptive content followed by useful footnotes. To see how recent this information is, look for the date at the front of the volume underneath the names of the contributors.
3. Cumulative supplement	The cumulative supplement is produced every year. You should look up your volume and paragraph number in this to see if anything has been added since the main volume was published. It covers the law up until the end of the previous year.
4. Noter-up	Of course, the law might have changed in recent months since the cumulative supplement was published. You can use the noter-up , which is published monthly, to see if anything has changed. Like the cumulative supplement, this is arranged by volume and paragraph number.

By following these four steps you can be confident that you have found the most up-to-date legal information on a topic that you can.

Other useful volumes of *Halsbury's Laws*

The **consolidated tables** volumes allow you identify where in *Halsbury's* a specific case or piece of legislation is discussed. So, unlike in the procedure outlined above, this allows you to start with a case or Act and explore its significance rather than starting with a topic and finding relevant cases.

Using *Halsbury's Laws* online

The screenshot shows a search interface with the following elements:

- Search terms:** A text input field with a red 'Search' button to its right.
- Instructions:** Below the search box, it says "Put **and** between your search terms to find them anywhere in the document. Search tips".
- Add topics to search:** A blue link.
- Sources:** A dropdown menu currently showing "*Halsbury's Laws of England" with a blue 'i' icon to its right. Below it is a blue link "More sources".
- Advanced search (optional):** A blue link with a plus sign icon.
- Heading:** A text input field.

You can access *Halsbury's* online through [LexisLibrary](#). On the LexisLibrary homepage you will see *Halsbury's Laws of England* in the 'my bookshelf' list on the right'. Click 'search' to be taken to the search form depicted here.

Note how *Halsbury's Laws of England* is now in the sources field.

Type keywords into the search box, using connectors like AND or NOT if you wish, then press 'search'.

If there is only one result you will be directed straight to the results page. If there is more than one result you will get a results list. You will see the paragraph number and title in blue text. To the right of each search result you can see the volume number it's found in.

To successfully find a paragraph in *Halsbury's* you need to know the word or phrase that *Halsbury's* uses to describe your topic. Just like the print version, the online version of *Halsbury's* has an index which helps greatly with finding the right words.

From 'my bookshelf' on the LexisLibrary homepage, click on 'browse' under the *Halsbury's Laws of England* link. At the top of the next screen, select 'index' in the drop-down menu next to the word 'view'

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Put in your search word(s) e.g. 'maternity leave' or 'validity of wills' and click 'search'. Pick the index entry that best matches your topic. There are links from the index pages that will take you straight to the right paragraph.

If there have been any recent updates to the law in a paragraph, these will be prominently displayed in a footnote:

966. Restrictions on import and export of endangered species.

Update

If you see this icon, look in the footnote for updates

Should I use the print or online version of *Halsbury's Laws*?

Both the print and online versions of *Halsbury's* contain the same material, so it's your choice.

The online version has updates incorporated within it and there are direct links to case law and legislation on LexisLibrary.

If you're not sure where to look for a particular topic, the print index can be easier to use than the online version. However, the volume and paragraph numbers are identical so you can easily move between the two versions.

Citing *Halsbury's Laws* in your work

Typically, *Halsbury's Laws* is used as a stepping stone to other legal materials (e.g. cases and legislation) which you would then go on to refer to in your assignments.

If, however, you did want to refer to *Halsbury's* in your work then there is guidance in section 3.2.6 in the OSCOLA handbook.

Getting help and finding out more

More online information can be found on the Law help pages, at www.brookes.ac.uk/library/subject-help/law

If you need any help with finding or using library resources for law please contact **Charlie Brampton** (Academic Liaison Librarian for Law) using the contact details below.

Email: c.brampton@brookes.ac.uk
Tel: 01865 483077

Headington Library, JHB 310 (Level 3, Zone C)
Oxford Brookes University.