

## ***Using American Law Reports (ALR's)***

University of Idaho  
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*American Law Reports* consist of selected cases, followed by detailed analytical articles called "annotations" summarizing legal issues and noting cases from around the country. ALRs are more narrowly focused on specific legal topics rather than a broader subject matter approach that can be found in legal encyclopedias.

ALR consists of eight separate series: ALR, ALR2d, ALR3d, ALR4th, ALR5th, ALR 6th, ALR FED, and ALR FED 2d.

Example of citation to an ALR annotation:

25 ALR3d 446

"25" is the volume number; "ALR3d" is the ALR series set; and "446" is the page number of the annotation.

### **FINDING ALR IN PRINT AND ONLINE**

#### **ALR on Westlaw:**

West is the publisher of the print version of ALR. As such, Westlaw offers the most comprehensive electronic coverage of ALR. Westlaw contains full text of the First, Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Federal, and Federal Second series of American Law Reports (ALR) and the Index to Annotations.

#### **ALR on Lexis:**

Lexis provides the full text of the annotations included in the Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Federal and Federal Second Series.

#### **ALR in Print:**

The print versions of the ALRs are located in the reference section of the main floor of the law library starting at call number KF 105 through KF 132.

### **ANNOTATION FORMAT AND FEATURES**

1. Lead Case. In ALR 1st - ALR 4th, each annotation is preceded by a lead case that exemplifies the point of law under discussion. In ALR 5th and ALR Federal, the lead

cases are published at the end of the volume.

2. Title. A detailed annotation title identifies the subject of the annotation.
3. Annotation Outline.
4. Annotation Index.
5. Total Client Service Library References. Cross-references to pertinent sections in other Lawyers Cooperative publications are cited under this heading. ALR 5th also includes references to West Key Numbers.
6. Table of Courts Represented provides a jurisdictional checklist of cases cited in the annotation.
7. Introduction. The introductory paragraph specifies the scope of the annotation. The scope statement is followed by cross-references to ALR annotations and law review articles on related topics.
8. Summary. The summary expands upon the scope note, providing an overview of the content of the annotation.
9. The Text of the Annotation.
10. Supplementation. Supplementation includes references to later cases on the topic of an annotation, and references to later annotations that augment or supersede an annotation.

## FINDING AN ALR ANNOTATION

1. The fact pattern of your research suggests key words and phrases to use as search terms in the ALR indexes. The Index to Annotations, in addition to the ALR Digests, are the most useful finding aids.
2. Be sure to search the correct index or digest. There is no single comprehensive finding aid for the whole ALR set.
  - a. *ALR Index to Annotations* indexes ALR 2<sup>nd</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> and ALR FED and ALR FED 2d. (ALR 1st has an older "Word Index" and a separate "Quick Index.")
  - b. There are separate digests for ALR 1st and ALR 2nd. There is a single digest for the annotations in ALR 3<sup>rd</sup> - ALR 6<sup>th</sup>, and ALR FED and FED 2d.

- c. Other publications frequently cite ALR annotations and can therefore be used as finding aids.
- d. Use the ALR *Table of Laws, Rules, and Regulations* (shelved next to the ALR indexes) to find annotations citing sections of the U.S. Code and CFR, Federal Court Rules, and State statutes and constitutions.
- e. Shepard's citators contain citations to ALR annotations in which the case being shepardized is cited.

## UPDATING AN ANNOTATION

- a) Read and "Shepardize" all relevant cases. Also check the "Total Client Service Library References" box at the beginning of the annotation for cross-referencing to other sources.
- b) Update the annotation. Updating serves the dual purposes of seeing whether an article has been supplemented or superseded and identifying cases decided since the publication of the annotation. Updating techniques vary among the series within the ALR set.

To find cases decided since the annotation was published:

ALR 1st - use the **Blue Book of Supplemental Decisions** to locate subsequent decisions and to identify supplementing or superseding decisions. Examine each volume and paper supplement because the volumes do not cumulate. The volumes arrange supplementing materials by volume and page of the cited annotation. Supplementation is by case citation and contains no further information about the subsequent case or annotation.

ALR 2nd - use the **Later Case Service** to locate subsequent decisions. This is a separate set which is arranged by volume and page of the cited annotation. The Later Case Service is updated with annual pocket parts. This supplementation contains short digests of cases.

ALR 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6<sup>th</sup>, and Federal - use the supplement (pocket part) in each volume to locate subsequent decisions. This supplementation contains short digests of cases.

To find whether an annotation has been supplemented or superseded by a later annotation in ALR 1<sup>st</sup> - ALR 6<sup>th</sup> and ALR Federal use the "Annotation History Table" found in the back of the Index to Annotations volumes. If an annotation has been supplemented consult both the original and supplementing annotations. If an annotation has been superseded consult only the new annotation.

*Updated January 30, 2013*