

AALL LISP PUBLIC LIBRARIES TOOLKIT STATE INFORMATION (VIRGINIA)

by Fred Dingley

January, 2014

1. Constitution of Virginia

Online

The Commonwealth of Virginia makes its constitution available through its website at <http://constitution.legis.virginia.gov/>

Print

Can be found in the Constitutions volume of the print *Code of Virginia 1950* (below) and in Volume 1 (Constitutions) of *West's Annotated Code of Virginia* (below).

2. State Code (statutes)

Online

The Commonwealth of Virginia makes an unannotated version of its statutory code available through its *Legislative Information System (LIS)* at <http://lis.virginia.gov/000/src.htm>. They usually do a good job of keeping the code on the website up to date.

The State Decoded project, an independent effort to make freely-available state codes that are more user-friendly, has released a version of the Virginia code called *Virginia Decoded*, available at <http://vacode.org/>. This version of the code includes pop-up definitions, cross-references to other code sections, and references to court decisions interpreting code sections. *Virginia Decoded* is currently in beta, and this is not an official version of the code, but has handy research tools that would normally require using a pay service.

Print

You have two choices of annotated codes in Virginia:

- LexisNexis's *Code of Virginia 1950* (Va. Code Ann.). This is also known as "Michie's Code", since it used to be published by Michie (pronounced like "Mickey"), which LexisNexis bought.
- *West's Annotated Code of Virginia* (Va. Code Ann. (West)).

3. State bills and session laws

Online

Bills and session laws are available online via the Commonwealth of Virginia's

Legislative Information System (LIS) at <http://lis.virginia.gov/lis.htm>.

Print

Session laws are available through three sources:

- The Commonwealth of Virginia's *Acts of Assembly*
- *West's Virginia Legislative Service*
- LexisNexis's *Virginia Advance Legislative Service*.

4. **State administrative code**

Online

The Commonwealth of Virginia makes the *Virginia Administrative Code (VAC)* available through its website at <http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?000+men+SRR>. The site says its version of the VAC is updated daily.

Print

Virginia Administrative Code (Thomson Reuters Westlaw). Looseleaf, updated semi-annually.

5. **County/municipal codes**

Online

Many local government websites contain a link to that government's code. The Commonwealth of Virginia has a page with links to city and county government websites at <http://www.virginia.gov/government/federal-and-local> (select Local tab).

American Law Sources On-line is a portal that lists links to county and municipal codes for each state. Its Virginia page is at <http://www.lawsources.com/also/usa.cgi?va>.

You may also wish to try the major publishers of local codes. Their websites contain free versions of the county and municipal codes that they publish:

- American Legal Publishing Corp. (Virginia page at <http://www.amlegal.com/library/va/index.shtml>)
- General Code Publishers Corp. (Virginia page at <http://generalcode.com/ecode360/VA>)
- Municipal Code Corp. (Virginia page at <http://www.municode.com/Library/VA>)

6. **State jury instructions**

Print

Virginia Model Jury Instructions – Civil (2 vols., Charlottesville, VA: LexisNexis, 1998) and *Virginia Model Jury Instructions – Criminal* (2 vols., Charlottesville: LexisNexis, 2004) contain model jury instructions created by the Supreme Court of Virginia’s Model Jury Instruction Committee. Both sets have annotations with relevant statutes and caselaw, as well as practice pointers. Updated in looseleaf format.

Ronald J. and Margaret Ivey Bacigal’s *Virginia Practice: Jury Instructions* (Eagan, MN: Thomson Reuters Westlaw, 2013) has model jury instructions synthesized from Virginia caselaw, and includes commentary referring to relevant caselaw, statutes, and secondary sources. Published annually.

Instructions for Virginia and West Virginia (4 vols., Charlottesville, VA: LexisNexis, 5th ed. 2001) contains jury instructions taken from Virginia cases, and has references to other relevant Virginia cases. Updated with pocket parts.

7. **State form books**

Print

Virginia Forms (11 vols. Charlottesville, VA: LexisNexis, 2005-2013) has the widest range of Virginia forms, both procedural (e.g., complaints, pleadings) and substantive (e.g., contracts). Updated with pocket parts.

Some treatises and continuing legal education (CLE) materials may also contain forms. Refer to *A Guide to Legal Research in Virginia* (below) for a list of treatises.

Online

Some procedural forms are available for free online via the Virginia Courts’ website at <http://www.courts.state.va.us/forms/home.html>.

The Virginia Partnership for Equal Justice’s website at <http://www.valegalaid.org/> offers some procedural and substantive forms.

8. **State legal encyclopedia**

Print

Michie’s Jurisprudence of Virginia and West Virginia (Charlottesville, VA: LexisNexis). Updated with pocket parts.

9. **State cases**

Print

The *South Eastern Reporter* (S.E., S.E.2d) (Eagan, MN: Thomson Reuters) contains cases from the Supreme Court of Virginia and the Court of Appeals of Virginia.

Virginia Reports (Va.) (Atlanta, GA: Darby Printing) contains decisions by the Supreme Court of Virginia.

Virginia Court of Appeals Reports (Va. App.) (St. Paul, MN: West Group) contains decisions by the Court of Appeals of Virginia.

Virginia Circuit Court Opinions (Va. Cir.) (Charlottesville, VA: LexisNexis) contains selected decisions by the Virginia Circuit Courts.

Online

Slip opinions for the Supreme Court of Virginia (June 9, 1995 – present) and Court of Appeals of Virginia (published May 2, 1995 – present; unpublished March 5, 2002 – present) are available for free via the Virginia Courts' website at <http://www.courts.state.va.us/search/textopinions.html>

Google Scholar <http://scholar.google.com> has cases for free from the Supreme Court of Virginia and Court of Appeals of Virginia dating back to 1950.

The Public Library of Law <http://www.plol.org> has cases for free from the Supreme Court of Virginia and the Court of Appeals of Virginia dating back to 1997.

Fastcase <http://www.fastcase.com> has decisions from the Supreme Court of Virginia dating back to 1900, and from the Court of Appeals of Virginia dating back to 1985. It is a paid database, but members of the Virginia bar get free subscriptions as a benefit.

CD-ROM

Virginia CaseFinder (St. Cloud, MN: Geronimo Development Corp.). Full-text Virginia caselaw on CD-ROM.

Virginia Reporter and West's Annotated Code of Virginia, PREMISE CD-ROM ed. (Eagan, MN: Thomson West).

LexisNexis CD: Virginia Primary Law (formerly *Virginia Law on Disc*) (Charlottesville, VA: LexisNexis). Full-text Virginia caselaw on CD-ROM.

10. **State digest**

Print

West's Virginia and West Virginia Digest: Covering Cases from State and Federal Courts.

West's South Eastern Digest, 2d covers cases from Virginia state courts along with state courts in Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and West Virginia.

See also the *Case Finder* books:

- Clarke, Joseph M. *Virginia Criminal Law Case Finder* (2 vols., New Providence, NJ: LexisNexis, 7th ed. 2011). Updated with annual supplement.
- Rashkind, Alan Brody. *Virginia Insurance Case Finder* (New Providence, NJ: LexisNexis, 3d ed. 2010). Updated with pocket part.
- Roche, Brien A. *Virginia Domestic Relations Case Finder* (New Providence, NJ: LexisNexis, 4th ed. 2009). Updated with pocket part.
- Roche, Brien A. *Virginia Torts Case Finder* (San Francisco, CA: LexisNexis, 5th ed. 2009). Updated with pocket part.
- Sweeny, Peter M. *Virginia Workers' Compensation Case Finder* (Huntington, NY: Juris Publishing, 4th ed. 2012). Updated with pocket part.

11. **How to join the local AALL chapter**

To become a member of the Virginia Association of Law Libraries (VALL), go to VALL's website at <http://vall.pbworks.com> ; listserv open to members only.

12. **Referral policies**

Note that even though many academic law libraries are open to the public, subscription databases such as Westlaw and Lexis are often restricted to use by law students and faculty only.

Appalachian School of Law Library: open to public. Policies available at <http://www.asl.edu/Library/Library-Information.html>

Arthur J. Morris Law Library (University of Virginia School of Law): open to public. Policies available at <http://libguides.law.virginia.edu/content.php?pid=194349&sid=1628971>

George Mason Law Library: open to public (sign-in required, ID may be requested). Policies available at <http://www.law.gmu.edu/library/guides/public>

Liberty University School of Law Library: open to members of the bar, the judiciary, and to scholars seeking access to the library's collections (photo ID and sign-in required). Policy available at <http://www.liberty.edu/law/index.cfm?PID=6643>

Muse Law Library (School of Law, University of Richmond): open to public. Policies available at <http://law.richmond.edu/library/about.html>

Regent University Law Library: open to public. Information about public services available at <http://www.regent.edu/acad/schlaw/library/guests/services.cfm>

Wilbur C. Hall Law Library (Washington and Lee University): open to public. Policies available at <http://www.law.wlu.edu/library/page.asp?pageid=447>

Wolf Law Library (Marshall-Wythe Law School, College of William & Mary): open to public. Policies available at <http://law.wm.edu/library/services/visitors/index.php>

13. **Federal Depository Libraries in Virginia**

List available online via GPOAccess (the Government Printing Office's web site). Virginia page at http://catalog.gpo.gov/fdlpdir/FDLPdir.jsp?flag=searchp&st_12=VA

14. **Bar associations**

Virginia State Bar (mandatory bar) online at <http://www.vsb.org/>

Virginia Bar Association (voluntary bar) online at <http://vba.org/>

15. **Virginia research guides**

Print

A Guide to Legal Research in Virginia (Charlottesville, VA: Va. CLE Publications, 2012 ed.) is an excellent guide to current resources for Virginia legal research.

Chanin, Leah F., Pamela J. Gregory, and Sarah K. Wiant's *Legal Research in The District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia* (Buffalo, NY: Wm. S. Hein & Co., 2d ed. 2000) is a very good resource to go to when doing historical legal research in Virginia.

Online

The Appalachian School of Law Library research guides online under Library Publications at <http://www.asl.edu/Library/Library-Publications.html>

Arthur J. Morris Law Library (University of Virginia School of Law): research guide at <http://libguides.law.virginia.edu/virginia-legal-resources>

Edward Bennett Williams Library (Georgetown University Law Center): guide at <https://www.law.georgetown.edu/library/research/guides/virginia-in-depth.cfm>

Marshall-Wythe Law Library (Marshall-Wythe School of Law, College of William & Mary): research guide at <http://law.wm.edu/library/research/researchguides/virginia/index.php>

Muse Law Library (University of Richmond School of Law) research guides at <http://law.richmond.libguides.com/content.php?pid=242019>

VALegalAid.org: Contains a series of articles designed for the lay patron which discuss common legal topics. Also has a directory of legal aid programs. Available at <http://www.valegalaid.org/>

Virginia State Bar's publications page has several pamphlets and handbooks covering law-related issues at <http://www.vsb.org/site/publications>

Wahab Public Law Library (Virginia Beach) resource guides at <http://www.vbgov.com/government/departments/libraries/research/lawlibrary/Pages/Resource-Guides-.aspx>