



A Guide to American Law Reports

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American Law Reports (ALR) is a multi-volume publication that features in-depth analyses of important state or federal legal topics. Most ALR articles (called “annotations”) concentrate on unsettled or new developments in state or federal law, and each annotation is written by an attorney. ALR annotations are not comprehensive – only select topics are addressed. Annotations typically have numerous citations to case law, statutes, law review articles, West digest numbers, and more. The extensive analysis and breadth of materials included within each article make ALR annotations valuable time-savers for legal research.

ALR'S ORGANIZATION

ALR SERIES:	COVERAGE:	UPDATED BY:	CALL NUMBER:
ALR (First Series)	1919-1948 State & Federal topics	<i>ALR Blue Book of Supplemental Decisions</i>	KF132.A4 (vols. 1-175) KF132.A4 Suppl. No. 2 (updates)
ALR 2d (Second Series)	1948-1965 State & Federal topics	<i>ALR 2d Later Case Service</i>	KF132.A41 (vols. 1-100) KF132.A41 Suppl. No. 2 (updates)
ALR 3d (Third Series)	1965-1980 State & Federal topics to 1969 State topics only from 1969 >	<i>ALR 3d</i> pocket parts	KF132.A42 (vols. 1-100)
ALR 4th (Fourth Series)	1980-1991 State topics only	<i>ALR 4th</i> pocket parts	KF132.A43 (vols. 1-90)
ALR 5th (Fifth Series)	1992-2005 State topics only	<i>ALR 5th</i> pocket parts	KF132.A44 (vols. 1-125)
ALR 6th (Sixth Series)	2005 to date State topics only	<i>ALR 6th</i> pocket parts	KF132.A45 (vols. 1-)
ALR Fed (Federal)	1969-2005 Federal topics only	<i>ALR Fed</i> pocket parts	KF132.A5 (vols. 1-200)
ALR Fed 2d (Federal)	2005 to date Federal topics only	<i>ALR Fed 2d</i> pocket parts	KF132.A51 (vols. 1-)

FEATURES OF ALR ANNOTATIONS:

- **Schematic Article Outline:** A table of contents that pinpoints where specific legal issues or fact situations are discussed in the article.
- **Research References:** This section contains a wealth of good research information -- make sure that you review it carefully. Usually, it will include references to law review articles, practice guides, treatises, other ALR annotations, West Key numbers, suggested Westlaw search queries, and other relevant secondary materials.
- **Index:** Provides an alphabetical listing of the factual and legal concepts discussed in the annotation, with section references to where each term appears.
- **Jurisdictional Table of Cases, Laws and Rules:** Lists the cases and statutes, organized by jurisdiction, and their locations within the annotation.
- **Scope Statement:** A brief statement delineating the subject matter of the annotation.
- **Summary and Comment:** Gives a broad overview and provides background information on the topic.
- **Practice Pointers:** Offers guidance on practice-related matters, including tips on representation and procedure.
- **Detailed Case Analysis:** The annotation includes brief summaries of each relevant case, sorted by jurisdiction for easy reference.
- **Reported Case:** Full-text of a selected case, which illustrates the legal principles discussed within the annotation.

HOW TO LOCATE ALR ANNOTATIONS:

There are several different ways to find ALR annotations on your research topic. You can use an ALR index or the *Table of Cases*:

- A. Index:** Use the *Index to Annotations* (KF132.6.A47 1999). The *Index to Annotations* covers all of the ALR series except for ALR (First), which has its own index. This index is located at the end of all of the ALR volumes. Look for the keywords or legal terms that best describe your research topic or problem. Citations in bold refer you to ALR annotations about your topic, and will appear like this:

EXAMPLE: MEDICAL CARE AND TREATMENT
 Authority and authorization
 Failure to authorize, liability of third-party health-care payor
 for injury arising from failure to authorize required treatment,
 56 ALR5th 737

The Index for ALR (First) is called the *ALR Word Index to Annotations* (KF132.A4 Suppl. No. 3).

For convenience, there is also a *Quick Index* (KF 132.6.A545) to annotations covering ALR 3d, 4th, 5th and 6th, Volumes 1-8. This single volume only includes select annotations determined by the editors to be the most relevant to any particular concept. Therefore, the coverage of this *Quick Index* is **significantly less detailed** than the multi-volume index.

B. Table of Cases: If you have already identified a key case for your topic, you can use the *ALR Table of Cases* to determine whether your case is discussed in an ALR annotation. If you find an ALR annotation that includes your case, you'll most likely find additional cases, statutes, and secondary sources about your legal research topic. Please note that tables contain only those cases reported in the ALR, not those cited in the annotation.

- Available at: KF132.A451 (Covers ALR 5th and ALR 6th only)
- Available at: KF132.A5 (Covers ALR Fed only)

Note on the *ALR Digest*: Heafey does keep the *ALR Digest* in its collection, but this digest system has some limitations. Its chief drawback is that some of the *ALR Digest* topic references found in older ALR annotations can't be found in the current *ALR Digest* because the publication changed publishers. For example, you might find a reference in an older ALR annotation that looks like this:

“ALR Digest, Juvenile Delinquents and Dependents, § 9”

When you try to locate a topic called “Juvenile Delinquents and Dependents” in the *ALR Digest* volumes, you will be unsuccessful because West, the current publisher, discontinued that topic. There is also no § 9 because the *ALR Digest* now uses the West key number system instead of these section numbers. Because of this shortcoming, the most effective way to locate ALR annotations about your topic is to use the ALR indices or the *Table of Cases*.

SUPERSEDING AND SUPPLEMENTARY ANNOTATIONS:

Before reading any annotation that you find, you'll need to determine if the annotation is current. If the law has changed significantly since your annotation was written, ALR usually publishes later annotations that supersede or supplement earlier ones.

To find superseding or supplementary annotations:

1. Locate the combined *Index to Annotations* (KF132.6.A47 1999).
2. At the back of the last volume, there is a section called “Annotation History Tables,” which lists annotations that have been superseded or supplemented.
3. Find the citation for your ALR annotation in the table:
 - If your annotation has been superseded, read the later one only;
 - If your annotation is supplemented, read both the earlier and later annotations.

HOW TO UPDATE:

In addition to determining if your annotation is still good law, be sure to update your annotation with cases that have been decided since your annotation was published.

If you are using ALR 3d, 4th, 5th, 6th, Fed, or Fed 2d, look for later cases in the pocket parts located in the back of each ALR volume.

ALR (First) and ALR 2d volumes do not have pocket parts. To find later cases for annotations in these volumes, use one of the following texts:

- For ALR (First) annotations, look in the *ALR Blue Book of Supplemental Decisions* (KF132.A4 Suppl. No. 2).
- For ALR 2d annotations, look in the *ALR 2d Later Case Service* (KF132.A41 Suppl. No. 2).

ALR ON WESTLAW AND LEXIS:

Westlaw:

- **Contents and Coverage:** The ALR database contains the entire ALR library (ALR, 2d, 3d, 4th, 5th, 6th, Fed, Fed 2d), as well as the *Index to Annotations*.
- **Update Schedule:** Updated weekly, except for ALR (First), which is updated annually.
- **Exclusions:** The full text of example cases is not included in the database, but these cases are available through hyperlinks in the annotation text.

Lexis:

- **Contents and Coverage:** Includes annotations from ALR 2d, 3d, 4th, 5th, and Fed, but **does not** include ALR 6th or ALR Fed 2d. Because Lexis's coverage is not as comprehensive as Westlaw's coverage, it makes sense to use Westlaw for ALR research.
- **Update Schedule:** Updated regularly.
- **Exclusions:** You can access the full text of example cases through hyperlinks in the annotations.