

How to Access Legal Resources on the Web

First off, why online?

There are several reasons why utilizing online instead of print resources will make your life easier, including:

- Search function – This document will show you how to search for words and phrases within the law and deskbooks.
- Updated information – While none of the resources are updated immediately after bills pass, online resources are updated quicker than hard copy ones.

Texas Constitution and Statutes


How to find it online:

1. Open up a web browser and go to the Google search engine or another search engine that you prefer. *(If you are a beginner to using online resources and want to learn about browsers and search engines, see the handout “Web Search for Beginners” in your binder appendix.)* Type in Texas Statutes and Constitution.



2. Find the correct search result. Make sure you are going to the website affiliated with the state of Texas at the web address below. Click the link.

About 688,000 results (1.08 seconds)



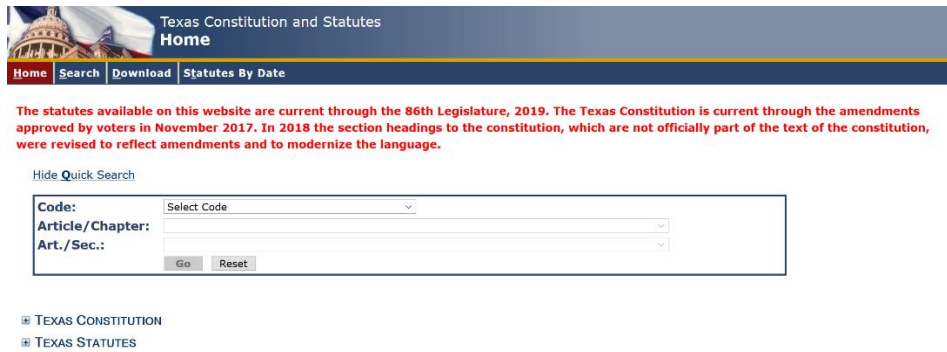
Texas Statutes
<https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov> ▼

The **Texas Constitution** is current through the amendments approved by voters in November 2017. In 2018 the section headings to the **constitution**, which are not officially part of the text of the **constitution**, were revised to reflect amendments and to modernize the language.

Search
The Search feature looks for several variations of the word or ...

Statutes By Date
Select a date using the Calendar selector on the left. 2.

3. This link will take you to the official Texas Constitution and Statutes webpage. The Constitution and Statutes are huge so this site helps you search for particular sections of code.



Home | Search | Download | Statutes By Date

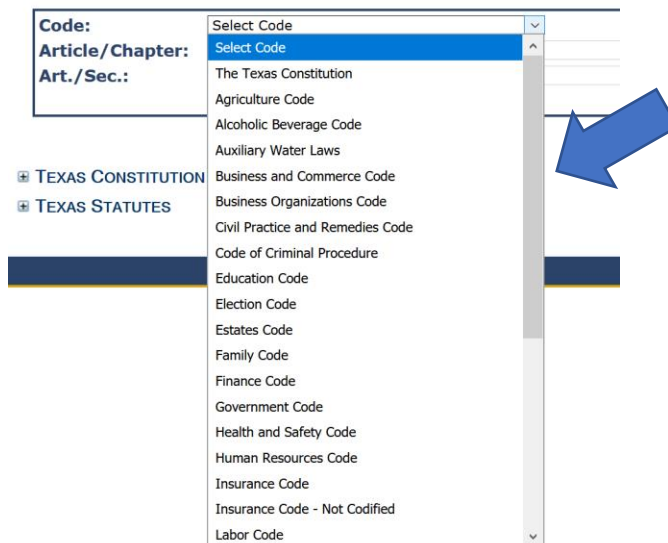
The statutes available on this website are current through the 86th Legislature, 2019. The Texas Constitution is current through the amendments approved by voters in November 2017. In 2018 the section headings to the constitution, which are not officially part of the text of the constitution, were revised to reflect amendments and to modernize the language.

Hide Quick Search

Code: Select Code
Article/Chapter:
Art./Sec.:
Go Reset

☐ TEXAS CONSTITUTION
☐ TEXAS STATUTES

4. To find a particular code, click the "Code" dropdown menu. Use the scroll bar to see more code options.



Code: Select Code
Article/Chapter: Select Code
Art./Sec.:
Go Reset

- ☐ TEXAS CONSTITUTION
- ☐ TEXAS STATUTES

- Select Code
- The Texas Constitution
- Agriculture Code
- Alcoholic Beverage Code
- Auxiliary Water Laws
- Business and Commerce Code
- Business Organizations Code
- Civil Practice and Remedies Code
- Code of Criminal Procedure
- Education Code
- Election Code
- Estates Code
- Family Code
- Finance Code
- Government Code
- Health and Safety Code
- Human Resources Code
- Insurance Code
- Insurance Code - Not Codified
- Labor Code

5. Once you have found the code you are looking for, the “Article/Chapter” search bar will populate a dropdown menu. Use that to find the Chapter of the code you are looking for.

The screenshot shows a search interface with the following elements:

- Code:** Property Code
- Article/Chapter:** Select Chapter
- Art./Sec.:** Select Chapter
- Navigation links: TEXAS CONSTITUTION, TEXAS STATUTES
- Dropdown menu items:
 - CHAPTER 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS
 - CHAPTER 2. NATURE OF PROPERTY
 - CHAPTER 5. CONVEYANCES
 - CHAPTER 11. PROVISIONS GENERALLY APPLICABLE TO PUBLIC RECORDS
 - CHAPTER 12. RECORDING OF INSTRUMENTS
 - CHAPTER 13. EFFECTS OF RECORDING
 - CHAPTER 14. UNIFORM FEDERAL LIEN REGISTRATION ACT
 - CHAPTER 15. UNIFORM REAL PROPERTY ELECTRONIC RECORDING ACT
 - CHAPTER 21. EMINENT DOMAIN
 - CHAPTER 22. TRESPASS TO TRY TITLE
 - CHAPTER 23. PARTITION
 - CHAPTER 23A. UNIFORM PARTITION OF HEIRS' PROPERTY ACT
 - CHAPTER 24. FORCIBLE ENTRY AND DETAINER
 - CHAPTER 24A. ACCESS TO RESIDENCE OR FORMER RESIDENCE TO RETRIEVE PERSONAL P...
 - CHAPTER 25. TRIAL OF RIGHT OF PROPERTY
 - CHAPTER 26. USE OF A DECEASED INDIVIDUAL'S NAME, VOICE, SIGNATURE, PHOTOGRAPH, OR LIKENESS
 - CHAPTER 27. RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION LIABILITY
 - CHAPTER 28. PROMPT PAYMENT TO CONTRACTORS AND SUBCONTRACTORS
 - CHAPTER 29. FORCED SALE OF OWNER'S INTEREST IN CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY AS REIMBURSEMENT FOR PROPE...

6. After choosing the “Article/Chapter” you want, the Art./Sec. will now populate a dropdown menu. Use that to find the Section you want.

The screenshot shows the search interface with the following elements:

- Code:** Property Code
- Article/Chapter:** CHAPTER 92. RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES
- Art./Sec.:** Select Art./Sec.
- Navigation links: TEXAS CONSTITUTION, TEXAS STATUTES
- Dropdown menu items:
 - Sec. 92.001. DEFINITIONS
 - Sec. 92.002. APPLICATION
 - Sec. 92.003. LANDLORD'S AGENT FOR SERVICE OF PROCESS
 - Sec. 92.004. HARASSMENT
 - Sec. 92.005. ATTORNEY'S FEES
 - Sec. 92.006. WAIVER OR EXPANSION OF DUTIES AND REMEDIES
 - Sec. 92.007. VENUE
 - Sec. 92.008. INTERRUPTION OF UTILITIES
 - Sec. 92.0081. REMOVAL OF PROPERTY AND EXCLUSION OF RESIDENTIAL TENANT
 - Sec. 92.009. RESIDENTIAL TENANT'S RIGHT OF REENTRY AFTER UNLAWFUL LOCKOUT
 - Sec. 92.0091. RESIDENTIAL TENANT'S RIGHT OF RESTORATION AFTER UNLAWFUL UTILITY DI...
 - Sec. 92.010. OCCUPANCY LIMITS
 - Sec. 92.011. CASH RENTAL PAYMENTS
 - Sec. 92.012. NOTICE TO TENANT AT PRIMARY RESIDENCE
 - Sec. 92.013. NOTICE OF RULE OR POLICY CHANGE AFFECTING TENANT'S PERSONAL ...
 - Sec. 92.0131. NOTICE REGARDING VEHICLE TOWING OR PARKING RULES OR POLICIES
 - Sec. 92.0132. TERM OF PARKING PERMIT
 - Sec. 92.014. PERSONAL PROPERTY AND SECURITY DEPOSIT OF DECEASED TENANT
 - Sec. 92.015. TENANT'S RIGHT TO SUMMON POLICE OR EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

7. Now hit the “Go” button.

The screenshot shows the search interface with the following elements:

- Code:** Property Code
- Article/Chapter:** CHAPTER 92. RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES
- Art./Sec.:** Sec. 92.019. LATE PAYMENT OF RENT; FEES
- Buttons: Go, Reset

A blue arrow points to the "Go" button.

8. This will open up a web page with the code section you have searched for.

Sec. 92.019. LATE PAYMENT OF RENT; FEES. (a) A landlord may not collect from a tenant a late fee for failing to pay any portion of the tenant's rent unless:

- (1) notice of the fee is included in a written lease;
- (2) the fee is reasonable; and
- (3) any portion of the tenant's rent has remained unpaid two full days after the date the rent was originally due.

(a-1) For purposes of this section, a late fee is considered reasonable if:

- (1) the late fee is not more than:

What if I don't know the code I need? Use the Texas Constitution and Statutes Search Function.

1. At the top of the page, click the word "Search."



The statutes available on this website are current through the 86th Legislature approved by voters in November 2017. In 2018 the section headings to the code were revised to reflect amendments and to modernize the language.

2. Search in a particular code or search in all codes if you don't know what code you need. Type in the text to search for and hit submit.

The image shows the "Text Search" interface on the website. It includes a navigation bar with "Home", "Search", "Download", and "Statutes By Date" links. Below the navigation bar, there is a "Code(s) to Search:" dropdown menu set to "All Codes". A "Text to Search for:" input field contains the text "truancy". At the bottom, there are "Submit" and "Reset" buttons. A blue arrow points to the "Submit" button.

3. This will show you each Section that uses the term you just searched. With these headings, you may be able to determine what section of code you need to answer your question.



Results 1 through 17 out of 17 matches.

Search phrase: truancy

1. [CODE OF CRIMINAL PROCEDURE CHAPTER 45. JUSTICE AND MUNICIPAL COURTS](#)
2. [CODE OF CRIMINAL PROCEDURE CHAPTER 102. COSTS PAID BY DEFENDANTS](#)
3. [EDUCATION CODE CHAPTER 25. ADMISSION, TRANSFER, AND ATTENDANCE](#)
4. [EDUCATION CODE CHAPTER 37. DISCIPLINE; LAW AND ORDER](#)
5. [EDUCATION CODE CHAPTER 42. FOUNDATION SCHOOL PROGRAM](#)
6. [FAMILY CODE CHAPTER 51. GENERAL PROVISIONS](#)
7. [FAMILY CODE CHAPTER 65. TRUANCY COURT PROCEEDINGS](#)
8. [FAMILY CODE CHAPTER 265. PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES](#)
9. [GOVERNMENT CODE CHAPTER 38. JUDICIAL DONATION TRUST FUNDS](#)
10. [GOVERNMENT CODE CHAPTER 54. MASTERS; MAGISTRATES; REFEREES; ASSOCIATE JUDGES](#)
11. [GOVERNMENT CODE CHAPTER 71. TEXAS JUDICIAL COUNCIL](#)

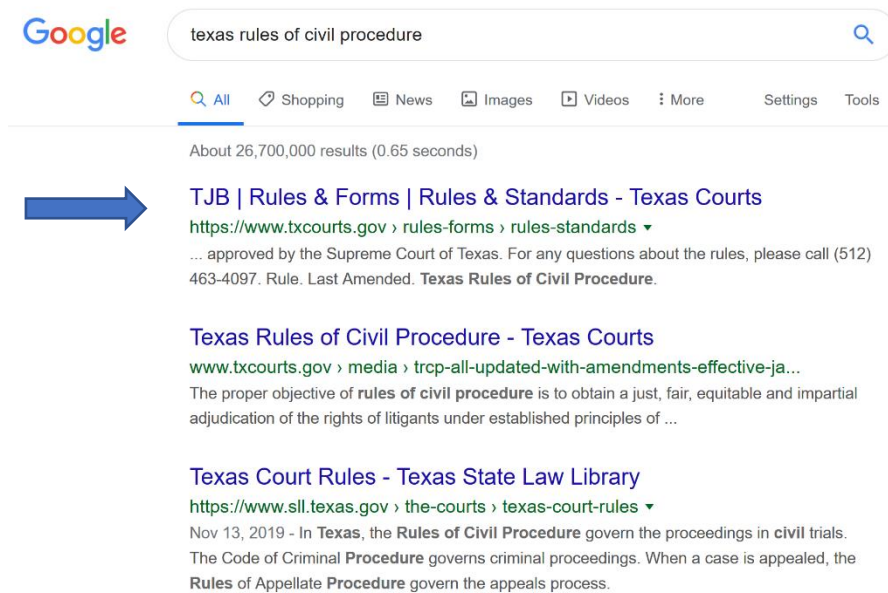


Texas Rules of Civil Procedure

How to find it online:

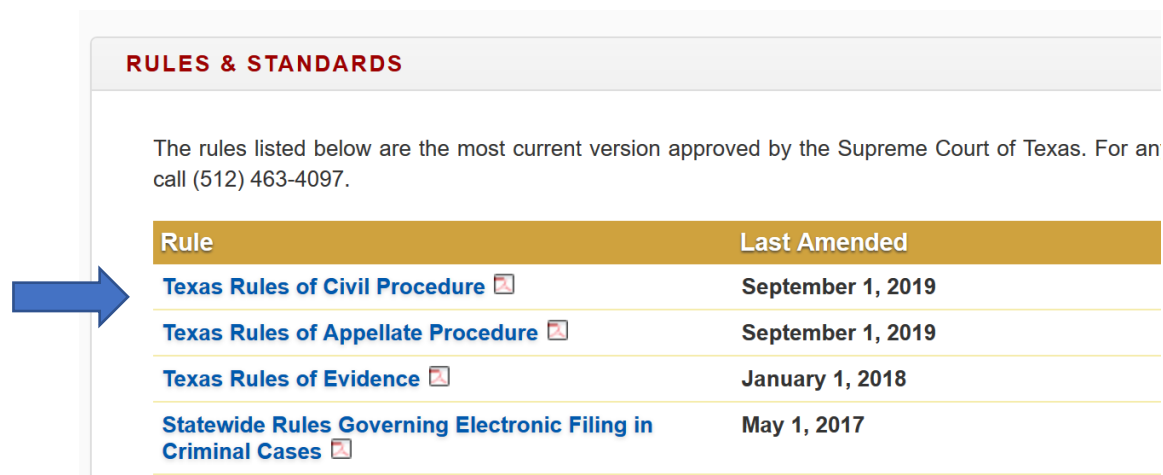
1. Open up a web browser and go to the Google search engine or another search engine that you prefer. (If you are a beginner to using online resources and want to learn about browsers and search engines, see the handout “Web Search for Beginners” in your binder appendix.) Type in “Texas Rules of Civil Procedure.”

2. Find the correct search result. Make sure you are going to the website affiliated with the state of Texas at the web address below. Click the link.



The screenshot shows a Google search page with the query "texas rules of civil procedure". The search results are displayed below the search bar. A blue arrow points to the first search result, which is titled "TJB | Rules & Forms | Rules & Standards - Texas Courts" and has the URL "https://www.txcourts.gov". Below the title, there is a snippet of text: "... approved by the Supreme Court of Texas. For any questions about the rules, please call (512) 463-4097. Rule. Last Amended. Texas Rules of Civil Procedure."

3. Click the www.txcourts.gov website. There will be a list of Rules. Click the “Texas Rules of Civil Procedure.”



The screenshot shows the "RULES & STANDARDS" page on the Texas Courts website. The page has a header with the text "RULES & STANDARDS" in red. Below the header, there is a paragraph of text: "The rules listed below are the most current version approved by the Supreme Court of Texas. For an call (512) 463-4097." Below the text is a table with two columns: "Rule" and "Last Amended". A blue arrow points to the first row of the table, which is "Texas Rules of Civil Procedure".

Rule	Last Amended
Texas Rules of Civil Procedure	September 1, 2019
Texas Rules of Appellate Procedure	September 1, 2019
Texas Rules of Evidence	January 1, 2018
Statewide Rules Governing Electronic Filing in Criminal Cases	May 1, 2017

4. This will open up a web browser with the Rules of Civil Procedure. To see how to save the Rules on your computer, look at the handout “Web Search for Beginners.”

Texas Rules of Civil Procedure

Table of Contents

PART I - GENERAL RULES

- RULE 1. OBJECTIVE OF RULES
- RULE 2. SCOPE OF RULES
- RULE 3. CONSTRUCTION OF RULES
- RULE 3a. LOCAL RULES

5. To find the rules affiliated with Justice Court, use your web browser’s search function. Hold down the “Control” button (On your keyboard as CTRL) along with the letter F. This will open a search bar where you can type in the phrase you are looking for.

The screenshot shows a document titled "COURTS" with a section "PART V - RULES OF PRACTICE IN JUSTICE COURTS" highlighted in green. Below this, a list of rules is shown: RULE 500. GENERAL RULES, RULE 501. CITATION AND SERVICE, RULE 502. INSTITUTION OF SUIT, RULE 503. DEFAULT JUDGMENT; PRE-TRIAL MATTERS; TRIAL, RULE 504. JURY, RULE 505. JUDGMENT; NEW TRIAL, and RULE 506. APPEAL. At the bottom, a search bar contains the text "justice court" and has a dropdown arrow. To the left of the search bar, a large black vertical bar is present. A blue arrow points from the search bar to the highlighted section title. Two blue arrows point to the search bar and its dropdown arrow.

Use the search bar here to type in the word you want to find. Then click the down arrow to see each instance of that word or phrase in the document. The search function will then take you to that word in the text and highlight it.

6. To find the Justice Court Rules, search for 500 and click down until you are at the 500 Rules.

RULE 500. GENERAL RULES

RULE 500.1. CONSTRUCTION OF RULES

Unless otherwise expressly provided, in Part V of these Rules of Civil Procedure:

- (a) the past, present, and future tense each includes the other;
- (b) the term “it” includes a person of either gender or an entity; and
- (c) the singular and plural each includes the other.

TJCTC Deskbooks

How to find the deskbooks online:

1. Open up a web browser and type www.tjctc.org into the address bar. Click enter.



2. Click on the Resources tab at the top of the page. Several options will then drop down. Click on "Deskbooks."



3. Choose the deskbook you want to access.


Deskbooks

- [Administrative Proceedings Deskbook](#)
- [Civil Deskbook](#)
- [Criminal Deskbook](#)
- [Evictions Deskbook](#)
- [Inquests Deskbook](#)
- [Officeholding Deskbook](#)
- [Magistration Deskbook](#)
- [Juvenile Deskbook](#)
- [Civil Process Field Guide](#)

4. Once you choose the deskbook you want, the deskbook will open up in your web browser. (For information on how to save the deskbook in your browser, see the handout “Web Search for Beginners.”)

5. Scroll down to the Table of Contents. You can click on a title in the Table of Contents and it will take you to that part of the text.

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CHAPTER 2: INITIATING A CRIMINAL CASE IN JUSTICE COURT

A. Jurisdiction

A court may not act unless it has **jurisdiction** over a case, meaning the power to hear and decide a case. Often, people think jurisdiction has to do with geographic location, but geographic location is primarily a **venue** issue, which we will discuss below. Of course, sometimes geography does play into jurisdiction; for example, a court only has jurisdiction over eviction cases if they are filed in the proper geographic location. There are two types of jurisdiction, **subject matter jurisdiction** and **personal jurisdiction**. A court must have both types of jurisdiction to be able to hear a case.

1. Subject Matter Jurisdiction

Subject matter jurisdiction defines what kind of cases a court can hear. For criminal cases, justices of the peace have subject matter jurisdiction over misdemeanor cases punishable by fine only, or punishable by a fine and, as authorized by statute, a sanction not consisting of confinement or imprisonment. *Texas Constitution, Art. 5, § 19; Code of Criminal Procedure Art. 4.11*. This means justice courts may not try offenses punishable by jail time.

A justice court may not try an offense that has a possible punishment of jail time, even if the justice court decides not to impose that punishment. Also, a person may end up committed to jail to satisfy the fine and costs assessed against them, but that doesn't mean the **offense** was punishable by jail. It was **punished** by fine and costs, which were **satisfied** by jail credit. For more information, see **Chapter 8**.

6. You can also search within the Deskbook. Hold down the “Control” button (On your keyboard as CTRL) along with the letter F. This will open a search bar where you can type in the phrase you are looking for.

CHAPTER 5: DEFERRED DISPOSITION, DSC & OTHER DISMISSALS

COMMON PITFALL

A court may not dismiss a criminal case that has been filed unless there is a statute giving the court authority to do so, or unless the state, through a prosecutor, has filed a motion to dismiss the case. *State v. Morales*. Many judges have been sanctioned by the Commission on Judicial Conduct for dismissing criminal cases unlawfully. Remember that a court does not “dismiss” criminal cases when, for example, the prosecutor doesn’t appear, or if the prosecutor fails to meet its burden at trial. The two main statutes authorizing dismissal of criminal cases without a motion from the prosecutor are Arts. 45.051 and 45.0511 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, which govern deferred disposition and driving safety course (DSC) dismissals. Additionally, several statutes allow judges to dismiss criminal cases when certain conditions have been met.

A. Deferred Disposition

Deferred disposition is a process, similar to probation, where the court imposes certain conditions on the defendant. If the defendant complies with the conditions, the criminal charge is dismissed, and no conviction is ever entered. However, if the defendant fails to comply, they will be convicted of the offense. *Code of Criminal Procedure Art. 45.051*. See the flowchart on page 34 for more information.

KEY POINT

Forms
Forms related to deferred disposition may be found under the Criminal Procedure tab at <http://www.tjctc.org/tjctc-resources/forms.html>.

1. Eligibility for Deferred Disposition

Courts generally have very broad discretion on whether or not to allow a defendant the option of deferred disposition. Unlike DSC dismissal, a defendant is generally not **entitled** to deferred

deferred Highlight All Match Case Whole Words 13 of 68 matches

Use the search bar here to type in the word you want to find. Then click the down arrow to see each instance of that word or phrase in the document. The search function will then take you to that word in the text and highlight it.

Web Search for Beginners

What is a browser?

A browser is a program on your computer used to navigate the internet. The four most commonly used browsers are:

- Internet Explorer
- Firefox
- Chrome
- Safari



Generally, you can access your browser by clicking the corresponding icon at the bottom of your computer screen or on your desktop.

What is bookmarking?

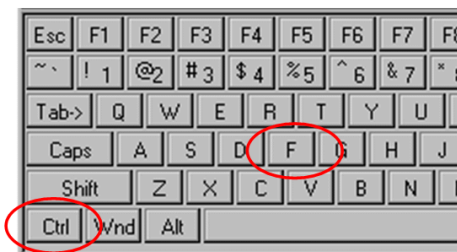
Bookmarking is a way to save a website you will visit frequently on your browser so that you do not have to continually retype the web address each time you visit. The following pages will provide step by step instructions to bookmark a webpage on each of the different browsers.

What is control find? (CTRL-F)

Control find is a way to open a search bar on your computer. When you type in the word or phrase you want to find, it will highlight and take you to all of the instances of that word or phrase in your document or on the internet page.

To use control find on your computer (CTRL-F), click onto the webpage you want to search. Hold down the buttons CTRL and F on your keyboard if you are using a windows computer or Command F if you are using a Mac.

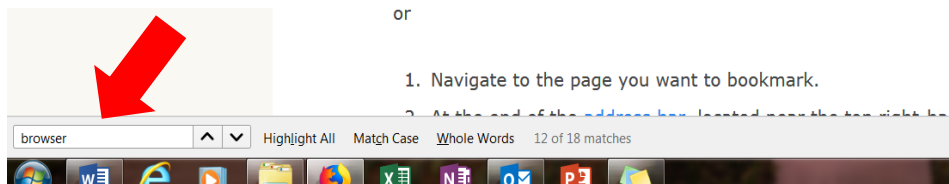
Windows Computer



Mac computer – You have 2 options: Command F or Ctrl F



CTRL-F will open a bar at the bottom of your browser that looks like this:



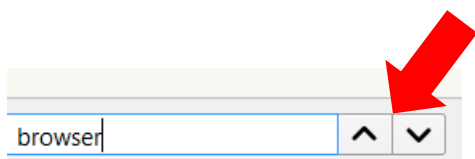
Type the word or phrase you want to find in the search bar and hit enter. Then, CTRL-F will highlight that word on the webpage.

to bookmark.

right-hand corner of the **browser**

t the folder in which you want it saved.

If the word is listed more than once on the page, click the up and down arrows on the search bar to find other instances of the word or phrase being used.



How to bookmark websites on different browsers

Internet Explorer

The following methods may be used to create a favorite (bookmark) in Microsoft Internet Explorer:



1. Navigate to the page you'd like to [bookmark](#).
2. **Right-click** on a blank portion of the page and click **Add to Favorites** or press **Ctrl+D**.
3. Name the bookmark and select the folder in which you want it saved.
4. Click **Add**.

or

1. Navigate to the page you want to add to your Favorites.
2. At the top, right-hand corner of the [browser](#) window, click the **Star Icon**.
3. Name the bookmark and select the folder in which you want it saved.
4. Click **Add**.


Google Chrome



The following methods may be used to create a bookmark in the Google Chrome browser:

1. Navigate to the page you'd like to bookmark.
2. Press **Ctrl+D**.
3. Name the bookmark and select the folder in which you want it saved.
4. Click **Done**.

or

1. Navigate to the page you'd like to bookmark.
2. In the [address bar](#), click **Bookmark this page**  on the right-hand side.
3. Name the bookmark and select the folder in which you want it saved.
4. Click **Done**.


Mozilla Firefox




The following methods may be used to create a bookmark in Mozilla Firefox Internet browser:

1. Navigate to the page you'd like to bookmark.
2. Press **Ctrl+D**.
3. Name the bookmark and select the folder in which you want it saved.
4. Click **Done**.

or

1. Navigate to the page you'd like to bookmark.
2. At the top, right-hand corner, after the search field, click **Bookmark this page** .
3. Name the bookmark and select the folder in which you want it saved.
4. Click **Done**.

 **Tip:** If you would like to create a new [folder](#) to place this bookmark in, click the **down arrow** next to the **Folder** section and click the **New Folder** button.

Safari



The following method may be used to create a bookmark in the Safari Internet browser:

1. Navigate to the page you'd like to bookmark.
2. Press **Command + D** or click **Bookmarks** at the top of the browser window and select **Add Bookmark...** from the [drop-down menu](#).
3. Name the bookmark and select the folder in which you want it saved.
4. Click **Add**.

Tip: You may also add a bookmark by [dragging and dropping](#) the page you want into the **Bookmarks Bar**.

To add a bookmark to the Safari browser on your iPad or iPhone, follow these steps:

1. Navigate to the page you'd like to bookmark.
2. **Tap the share button.** (It is located just to the left of the [address bar](#) and looks like a square with an up arrow going through the center.)
3. **Tap the Bookmark Icon.**
4. Name the bookmark and select the folder in which you want it saved.
5. Tap **Add**.

Legal Question Board: Searching & Posting Questions

What is the Legal Question Board?

- An online database where you can:
 - Find the answers to legal questions that have already been asked; and
 - Post your own legal question if it has not already been answered.
- You must have a TJCTC log-in to use the legal board.
- Where you find it: <https://www.tjctc.org/tjctc-resources/legal-question-board.html>

Tips for Searching on the Legal Question Board

(We ask that you always try searching first before posting a new question!)

- Think about your search terms. You want to use a search term that will narrow down your search results, but one that is not too specific.
 - *Example:* If you are looking for info related to an order to vacate—"Eviction" will return hundreds of answers. "Order to vacate" is too specific. "Vacate" would be a great search term to get you the answer you need.
- Think about different ways a topic might be written when searching, like if it can be abbreviated or if there is more than one way you can refer to something
 - *Example:* "Occupational Driver Licenses" or "ODL".
- Use the time frame search option if a topic has undergone recent legislative changes.
 - *Example:* For "Truancy," search from September 1, 2015.
- Click to view your search results in descending order so that you get the most recent answers first.
- When searching the legal questions, you must click "View" to see the full answer.
- If your search query brings up more than one page of questions, click the numbers at the top or bottom to see more questions.

Tips for Posting a Question on the Legal Question Board

(Only do this if you have already searched and did not find what you were looking for)

- If you have multiple questions, enter each one separately.
- Write out your questions with full words as well as abbreviations (if applicable). That way, future users can easily search for your question and find our answer.
 - *Example:* Write both "Occupational Driver Licenses" and "ODL"
- Give us as much *relevant* detail as possible, including what kind of case it is, what has happened so far, and the related statute/rule number (if applicable).
 - *Example:* If asking what the maximum fine is for an offense that has been filed in your court, tell us the statute for the offense that is listed on the ticket/complaint (i.e. "Transportation Code 545.066").
- ***Example Question:*** You have a criminal case in your court where you have already entered a judgment of conviction, the defendant has not paid their fine/costs, and you want to know how long you have to wait before you can report them to OMNI.
 - **Good Question:** Criminal case, judgment of conviction entered 45 days ago. Judge determined that defendant can pay, so no payment alternatives were ordered. Defendant has not paid any of the fine/costs. How long before we can report them to OMNI?
 - **Bad Question:** When can we report a defendant to OMNI?