



# LIBRARY UPDATE

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## How to Research a Legal Problem: A Guide for Nonlawyers

The American Association of Law Libraries has a guide available through their Legal Information Services to the Public Special Interest Section that can help a person with a legal question find the legal rules that can prevent or resolve a conflict. For a Web version of this guide go to: [www.aallnet.org/sis/lisp](http://www.aallnet.org/sis/lisp). The Ellis County Law Library can also provide you with a printed version of this pamphlet as a reference guide.

Some tips given to get started in your research include:

**State the question** clearly that you need an answer to.

**Determine the jurisdiction**, meaning the particular subject and locality. You must first determine which court or government agency can resolve the conflict before you can begin legal research.

**Understand citations and abbreviations.** Most law books are cited in the order of volume number, book and page. For example, 410 U.S. 113 would signify volume 410 of United States Reports, page 113. Statutes are cited by statute title and section number, such as 42 U.S.C. §1983 for title 42 United States Code, section 1983. The pamphlet explains what most of the abbreviations stand for.

Places to go to do legal research are:

**County, court or law school libraries** are open to the public and contain all these resources. Internet access for the public is also generally available.

**Public libraries** may also have some of the materials mentioned.

**The Internet** is not a complete source for any legal material. Some websites given as starting points for research are: The Legal Information Institute, [www.law.cornell.edu](http://www.law.cornell.edu); FindLaw, [www.findlaw.com](http://www.findlaw.com); The American Bar Association, [www.abalawinfo.com](http://www.abalawinfo.com) and HierosGamos, [www.hg.org](http://www.hg.org).

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The library is located  
in Suite B105 in the  
basement of the  
Ellis Co. Courthouse.

**CASA of Johnson County DVD**

This DVD is designed as a training and educational video to be used for professionals, volunteers, and the general public. It was funded by the Texas Bar Foundation through a grant administered by Johnson County Court Appointed Special Advocates' (CASA) organization. Some of the basic work of both CASA and Children's Advocacy Centers (CAC) is shown and the story follows the provisions of the Texas Family Code in regard to children who are removed from the custody of their parents by the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). It is sixty minutes long and can be viewed in the Law Library.

This video took more than two years to plan and produce. All participants volunteered their time and many of the actors are professionals who work daily within the court system doing this type of work. The video was created to help understand exactly what occurs after children are removed from their home environments. The hope is that this understanding will result in improvement in the child welfare system here in Texas. Katherine Raines was the Chair/Producer of the Johnson County Video Project. Comments and suggestions are actively solicited after viewing the video and can be sent to her at: [rainskath@aol.com](mailto:rainskath@aol.com).



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**TX Criminal Defense Lawyers Association DVD: Representing Mentally Impaired Clients**

A DVD entitled "Representing Mentally Impaired Clients" has been produced by the Texas Criminal Defense Lawyers Association from a seminar held on October 27, 2008 and co-sponsored by the Texas Criminal Defense Lawyers Project, the Harris County Criminal Courts at Law, the Texas Taskforce on Indigent Defense and the Court of Criminal Appeals. The purpose for making it and also presenting the seminar was to help educate the bar and the bench in the unique problems involved in representation of mentally ill clients. The Association is hoping that judges and attorneys view it and find it useful.

**Dorsaneo, Texas Litigation Guide**

A new chapter has been added to the Texas Litigation Guide in Volume 22, chapter 360A on Temporary Orders. It discusses the importance of temporary orders in family law cases and covers temporary orders in marriage dissolution proceedings and suits affecting the parent-child relationship. Pertinent forms and discussions on how and when to appropriately use them are provided. Also included is a discussion on associate judges and masters in chancery and their powers in relation to temporary orders.

**Texas Practice Series—Courtroom Handbook on Texas Evidence, 2009 Revision**

The new edition with the latest legislation, rules and case law concerning the admissibility of evidence includes the Texas Rules of Evidence, select constitutional and statutory provisions and excerpts of other court rules such as the rules of civil and appellate procedure. It also has courtroom commentary on each Rule of Evidence complete with up-to-date case law and a detailed index, table of cases, statutes and rules.