

## Preface

Legal citations serve multiple purposes. Naturally, they record the sources selected by writers to support their statements concerning the law. They provide readers with the information they'll need to access those sources. They give credit to the original authors of text and ideas. But they also underscore the weight, the relevance, and the influence that a particular source possesses. And they even tell us something about the legal writers who drafted them — including how current, how extensive, and how careful their research was — and consequently, the degree to which the writers' work will be perceived as trustworthy, complete, accurate, and ethical.

The *ALWD Guide to Legal Citation* exists to assist legal writers in building citations to serve those purposes. From its inaugural publication in 2000 (under the title *The ALWD Citation Manual*), this book has prioritized the forms of citations used by the overwhelming majority of today's legal writers. In the twenty-one ensuing years, the *ALWD Guide* has found ways to improve its content and structure, while continuing to serve its users and their legal writing needs.

The *ALWD Guide to Legal Citation* has the following goals:

- To help beginners learn the conventions of legal citation, both for constructing their own citations and for understanding citations written by others;
- To explain the functions of the specific components for citations to various types of legal sources;
- To give its users a text that makes sense and that provides a step-by-step guide to constructing accurate citations;
- To offer legal writing and research professors a text that is easy to use, well organized, and self-contained;
- To arrange its contents so that legal professionals can easily find what they need to construct the citations used in practice-based documents; and
- To identify and make easy to find the small changes needed to modify citations for the constraints of scholarly writing in academic journals.

The *ALWD Guide* places its greatest focus on the primary and secondary sources most often cited in practice-based and academic writing. Each primary or secondary source rule begins with a **Fast Formats** page that previews and refreshes understanding of essential components for both full and short citations. Rules for case law, statutes, and restatements feature **Snapshots** of actual pages, illustrating where to find essential components. The *ALWD Guide* features abundant **Charts** with abbreviations and other essentials, *within* the rules they relate to. **Sidebars** help students understand the “why” of legal citations and steer them away from common errors or misconceptions. Templates at the beginning of each source's rule diagram the order and relationship of essential

components. Each primary and secondary source rule features component-by-component explanations and illustrations, including the use of **red triangles ▲** to illustrate required spacing of components within the citation.

As was the case in the sixth edition, the seventh edition takes pains to ensure that writers do not confuse the citation formats of academic writing with those used by lawyers in practice. Each academic formatting rule number ends with the suffix <sup>FN</sup>. The academic rule and its examples are further marked with unmistakable visual cues; they are set off by a vertical red line and accompanied by a warning icon.



The *ALWD Guide* also aims to demystify certain features of legal citation. For example, it addresses curious features, such as star pagination; confounding features, such as whether, when, and why to provide a parallel citation or a public domain citation; confusing features, such as the geographic coverage of a regional reporter; challenging features, such as determining whether to append subsequent history to a case citation, and if so, in what manner; and missing features, such as how to cite to documents in a shared drive, which is not addressed by any other legal citation manual.

In response to suggestions and inquiries by our users, we have made some changes that facilitate the *ALWD Guide*'s use for all law reviews. First, **Parts 1–5** and **Appendix 6** have callouts that cross-reference the information in the text of the *ALWD Guide* to the corresponding rule in the twenty-first edition of *The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation Bluebook*. Consequently, law review students can confidently use the *ALWD Guide* no matter the law review's stated preference. This new development also helps students understand that they are learning legal citation and how to use reference tools, not memorizing a book. Second, **Appendix 5** that lists full abbreviations for periodical titles is available online for free. One of the more difficult tasks of law review staff is to understand and apply the myriad of rules surrounding how to craft lengthy periodical abbreviations. That makes **Appendix 5** a time saver for stressed law students. And allowing all interested individuals access to it for free is our way of giving back. See **Appendix 5** in the back of the *ALWD Guide* for directions to access it online.

Next, we reevaluated the nature of the sources relied upon by today's legal writers. We found that traditional legal citation does not adequately address—or fails to address—many technological sources of information. Accordingly, we extensively revised a number of rules by visualizing the multitude of ways that people access information now, crafting several new examples and illustrations to account for those, and adding detailed explanations of how to construct legal citations for each new source. For example, we revised **Rule 26** (speeches, addresses, and other oral presentations) to answer questions such as what to do if you are citing to a presentation on an online conference platform; **Rule 27** (interviews, letters, and memoranda) to demonstrate how to cite to a virtual video interview or to an unpublished letter posted online; **Rule 28** (video and visual programs) to explain how to cite private videos

people take on their personal devices that they do not post online; and **Rule 33** (email, listservs, shared drives, and other short electronic messages) to show examples of citations to chats in shared workspaces, to texts, and to documents in shared drives. This reimagining also led to expanded coverage of commercial databases and online sources for all primary and secondary source rules.

We then talked to attorneys around the country about the way law is practiced after the global pandemic that forced the legal profession to adapt in significant ways. This indicated the need to overhaul **Rule 25** (citing court documents in your own case) and **Rule 12.15** (citing court documents in published or pending cases) to better reflect how practitioners identify practice documents now. We asked practitioners, judges, and professors from each of the fifty states to weigh in on the local rules of practice for their state that are contained in **Appendix 2**. The response was awe-inspiring and thoughtful. We made significant updates to those local rules as a result. And in gratitude for the outpouring of support for this effort, we decided to make **Appendix 2** available online for free to all as well. As part of our civic duty, we wanted the collective knowledge of local practices to benefit everyone. It also helps us to update this rapidly changing information in a timely fashion.

Finally, we revised many of the examples and illustrations to better reflect the diverse viewpoints and cultures that comprise our world. ALWD adopted a Diversity Strategic Action Plan in 2017 that prioritizes cultural competency among its members and creating an inclusive organization with a welcoming atmosphere for all. In line with this mission, we turned a critical eye on what and who was represented in the *ALWD Guide*. Sometimes the improvements were making sure that every state was represented in an example or illustration in **Rule 15** (legislative materials). At other times, we made sure that the subjects of the sources themselves — movies, speeches, podcasts, etc. — that we used as examples represented gender, sexual orientation, racial, political, and cultural diversity. And we made a concerted effort to include authors or other people represented in citations (such as editors, presenters, or interviewees) with diverse backgrounds. Although we will continually strive for inclusion, we hope that this small effort brings a smile to any user who sees themselves represented in the *ALWD Guide*. Strength lies in differences.

We are confident that the *ALWD Guide to Legal Citation* will meet your needs for a legal citation reference work. Should you find any errors or omissions, or if you have suggestions for our next edition, please send them to the Association of Legal Writing Directors, [alwd@alwd.org](mailto:alwd@alwd.org), or to Carolyn Williams, [cvwilliams@email.arizona.edu](mailto:cvwilliams@email.arizona.edu).