

TIP 63

# Case Search

If you need information about court records, there is a valuable online tool that can help. It's called Maryland Judiciary Case Search or just "Case Search." To get started visit [mdcourts.gov/casesearch](https://mdcourts.gov/casesearch). Below are the most commonly asked questions about Case Search.

Watch the Video



## What Information is Available on Case Search?

- Case Search displays records of cases heard in Maryland state courts. This includes the District Court of Maryland, the circuit courts, the Appellate Court of Maryland, and the Supreme Court of Maryland. The United States District Court is a federal court. Case Search does not include federal cases.
- In general, court records are open to the public. Case Search allows you to see a summary of a court case, but not a complete record.
- You may see case numbers, the names and addresses of some of the people involved, dates and times of hearings, the names of documents in the court file, and a brief statement about a decision made by the court.
- If you want to read a document, write down the case number. Then go to the courthouse where the case was filed. At the clerk's office, you may view the file and request copies of most documents.
- Copies may also be available through the Maryland Electronic Courts, also called MDEC. Remote access to MDEC is limited to registered users who are a party to the case. For more information visit: [mdcourts.gov/mdec](https://mdcourts.gov/mdec).

## What Information is not Available on Case Search?

- **Land records** - View land records online at [mdlandrec.net](https://mdlandrec.net).
- **Estate cases** – These are cases involving the Register of Wills and Orphan's Court. They are available through Estate Search at [registers.maryland.gov](https://registers.maryland.gov).
- **Traffic cases** – Some are available on Case Search. This information does not reflect a person's complete driving record.



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- **Criminal Records** - Most criminal cases are available on Case Search, but with some restrictions. The website may not show records where the outcome of all charges was nolle prosequi, dismissal, acquittal, or not guilty. Some cases involving possession of cannabis (marijuana) are also not available on Case Search.
- **Restricted Information** - Although court records are usually open to the public, Maryland Law requires some be kept private. This means they will not appear on Case Search and the clerk’s office will only allow authorized people to view the file.

Here are some examples of information not available to the public:

Types of cases where the entire file is restricted (the public may not view the file)	Documents in a court file that are restricted (the public may view the case file except these documents)	Information in a document that is restricted (the public may view the document, but this information will be redacted)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adoption</li> <li>• Guardianship terminating parental rights</li> <li>• Juvenile delinquency</li> <li>• Child in need of assistance cases (CINA)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Income tax returns</li> <li>• Financial statements filed in family law cases like custody, divorce, and child support.</li> <li>• Requests to waive court fees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Security numbers</li> <li>• Medical or financial account numbers</li> <li>• The name of a person who reported abuse of a vulnerable adult</li> </ul>

**How Can Information Be Removed?**

- **Expungement** - Criminal cases may be eligible for expungement. If granted, an expungement requires the court and law enforcement to remove information about a criminal case from their records.
- **Civil Cases** – You may request the record be removed by submitting a petition for “Shielding.” Shielding can only be granted in some circumstances.
- **Peace and Protective Orders** – Shielding may be requested depending on the outcome.

Read about shielding and expungement at [peoples-law.org](http://peoples-law.org). Questions about shielding and expungement may be directed to a lawyer at a Maryland Court Help Center by calling 410-260-2508 or chat at [mdcourts.gov/helpcenter](http://mdcourts.gov/helpcenter)

**Can I use Case Search for a Background Check?**

- No. Information about criminal cases that appear on Case Search should be **reviewed with caution**. Remember that cases may appear even when the defendant received a favorable outcome.

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- To request a background check, contact the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services at 1-888-795-0011 or online at [dpscs.maryland.gov](https://dpscs.maryland.gov).



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