



What is the Law?

The law allows people to resolve disagreements in an orderly way. This tip sheet offers tips on sources of law and where to find those laws.

Types of Laws

- There are local laws, state laws, federal law, and international law. These laws sometimes overlap.
- State law covers topics such as divorce, custody, landlord-tenant, wills and estates, and some contract matters.
- Federal law covers topics such as interstate commerce, patent and copyright, stocks, and bankruptcy.
- Federal and state laws both cover topics such as employment issues, consumer matters, and criminal behavior.



Maryland Statutes

- The legislature creates statutes. Statutes are a type of law. The legislature in Maryland is the General Assembly.
- Maryland statutes are organized by subject. Each subject is in an article and has smaller topics called titles. For example, the Family Law Article of the Maryland Code has a title on marriage.
- View the Maryland Code on the Maryland State Law Library website at mdcourts.gov/lawlib. Click on Gateway to Maryland Law.

Maryland Regulations

- Regulations are rules. State agencies create regulations. An example of a state agency is the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration.
- Regulations are more specific than statutes. For example, a statute may state that all electricians must have a license, but the regulation may state how the licensing process works.
- You can view Maryland regulations in the Code of Maryland Regulations, or COMAR. Visit www.dsd.state.md.us.

Maryland Court Rules

- The Maryland Rules of Court govern how Maryland's state courts operate.
- If you have a case in a Maryland court, you should familiarize yourself with the Maryland Rules.
- View the Rules on the State Law Library website at mdcourts.gov/lawlib. Click on Gateway to Maryland Law.

Maryland Case Law

- Case law refers to the court's interpretation of statutes and regulations.
- Appellate judges make case law. They apply the law to the factual situation of a case and report their decisions.
- The judge's reported decision is called an opinion.
- The opinions of appellate courts are binding on lower courts.
- View opinions at a law library; on the Maryland Judiciary's website, mdcourts.gov; and on Google Scholar.

Resources

- Find Maryland law library locations at mdcourts.gov/ccll.



Maryland Court Help

Free. Online. In Person. By Phone.

- You can get free legal help at the [Maryland Court Help Center](#) at 410-260-1392 or at mdcourts.gov/helpcenter.
- View the full Court Help Video Library on the Maryland Judiciary's website at mdcourts.gov/reference/videolibrary.