

## **Information Resources Policy**

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ALBERTA LAW SOCIETY  

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LIBRARIES

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## MISSION STATEMENT

"The Alberta Law Society Libraries are dedicated to facilitating access to legal information for all Albertans"

## INFORMATION RESOURCES STRATEGY

"To select, acquire, preserve and provide access to a wide range of print, non-print and electronic legal information resources relevant to the needs of our clients"

### 1. General

#### 1.1 Primary clients

The primary clients of Alberta Law Society Libraries (ALSL) are the participants in the justice system including the judiciary, legal profession, court staff and public.

#### 1.2 Designation of libraries

ALSL shall have a library in each Queen's Bench Judicial District.

The libraries in Edmonton and Calgary shall be designated Resource Libraries ; as Resource Libraries, their collections will provide support and enrichment to Regional and Local libraries.

The libraries in Lethbridge and Red Deer shall be designated Regional Libraries as they serve populations in excess of 50,000 and a practising bar of more than 100 members.

Other libraries shall be designated Local Libraries. Their collections and services will vary depending on the size of the local population and the numbers and areas of practice of the local bar.

#### 1.3 Cooperation with other libraries

ALSL participates in the National Resources Sharing Agreement with other courthouse library systems in Canada and will seek partnerships with other libraries and organisations when to do so would extend the information and services available to primary clients, or would make the library system more cost-effective.

#### 1.4 The INTERNET

Library staff shall consider the information available free on the INTERNET in making collection management decisions but may recommend fee-based services if they are reliable and improve access to, or provide, unique information which is needed by clients.

#### 1.5 Context

This policy recognises that large and increasing numbers of primary clients rely on access to electronic sources of legal information in their offices.

#### 1.6 Budget expectations

This policy recognises that funding for information resources may not increase sufficiently to offset inflation in the foreseeable future. Librarians shall continuously reassess subscriptions by analysing usage patterns and applying the criteria set out in section 2 to ensure that they continue to be needed.

## 1.7 Utilisation of resources

Library staff shall be aware of resources available in other libraries and shall promote and facilitate the use of the resources and services of the entire ALSL system by all clients wherever they are located in the province.

## 1.8 Essential Law Library (ELL)

Publications which are regarded, in the judgement of the professional staff, as being essential to the practice of law in Alberta and to ALSL's responsibility to maintain an archival collection of Canadian law in print, have been listed in *The Essential Law Library (ELL)* which is appended to this document. The *ELL* shall be regularly updated to take into account new and revised publications.

## 1.9 Choice of media

ALSL will normally purchase only print publications and subscribe to commercial databases of legal information rather than collect CD ROMS, DVDs and tapes.

## 2. Selection criteria for all resources

The libraries shall select for purchase, maintenance, licensing or use based on the criteria described below.

### 2.1 Relevance / jurisdiction

The subject matter must be relevant to the practice of law in Alberta. Primacy will be given to publications from jurisdictions which have a direct impact on law in Alberta or which are likely to be referred to regularly by primary clients. All Alberta legal publications shall be collected.

### 2.2 Currency

The time of updating must be clear and dependable.

### 2.3 Scope and uniqueness

The breadth and depth of coverage of the field must be appropriate. Publications which contain unique coverage of relevant subject matter are especially valued.

### 2.4 Cost / cost recovery

The cost-value ratio of purchased publications must be reasonable for the size and quality of the product. The possibility of recovery of transactional costs for fee-based electronic services shall be considered in conjunction with an assessment of any savings which may be made in the cost of print subscriptions by providing them.

### 2.5 Authority

The reputation of the author, publisher or supplier must be positive. In the case of primary sources, whether the material is regarded as citable to the courts is a factor.

### 2.6 Ease of use

The reliability, indexing, ease of access, user-friendliness and searchability must be acceptable.

### 2.7 Display / legibility

The presentation of information must be easy to read.

### 2.8 Archival value

For publications which shall be retained permanently, the probability that the quality and format of

publication will render it suitable for archiving will be a major factor.

## 2.9 Language

ALSL collects systematically only in English.

## 3. Types of publications

### 3.1 Statutes

#### 3.1.1 Federal and Alberta

All libraries shall collect the official texts of Federal and Alberta legislation. Searchable electronic versions of the statutes shall be made accessible through the ALSL website. QPSource shall be available in all libraries for client and staff use. The loose-leaf consolidation of the Statutes of Alberta will be maintained wherever usage warrants.

Alberta Bills and selected Federal Bills will be accessible through the ALSL website.

#### 3.1.2 Other provinces and territories

Resource Libraries shall collect the official texts of all other Canadian jurisdictions' statutes. They will maintain loose-leaf consolidations where usage warrants. Regional and Local Libraries will normally rely on Resource Libraries or the ALSL website.

Bills from other jurisdictions will be accessible through the ALSL website.

#### 3.1.3 Other countries

Resource Libraries may subscribe to English statutes so long as usage warrants. Electronic versions of key foreign legislation will be made accessible through the ALSL website and commercial electronic databases.

### 3.2 Gazettes

#### 3.2.1 Federal and Alberta

Resource Libraries shall collect all the Federal and Alberta Gazettes. Regional and Local Libraries may collect only Gazette Part II (regulations) for these jurisdictions.

#### 3.2.2 Other provinces and territories

ALSL shall collect the regulations of all Canadian common law jurisdictions in one or more Resource Libraries, and may maintain loose-leaf consolidations as long as usage warrants. Electronic versions of Canadian regulations shall be made accessible through the ALSL website.

#### 3.2.3 Other countries

Out of scope of the collections.

### 3.3 Judicial decisions

#### 3.3.1 Canadian law reports

Resource Libraries shall collect all Canadian jurisdictional and topical law reports in print but may bind parts from one library's subscription for the other. Wherever possible, reports still required at Regional and Local Libraries shall be provided by binding loose parts but normally reliance shall be placed on providing current reports from an electronic source.

Where it is economically viable, ALSL will negotiate site licenses to commercial legal databases to make them available free on computer workstations in libraries to clients. Otherwise, the

ALSL website shall facilitate self-service access to these databases for clients using their own passwords. Library staff shall also have access to important commercial electronic sources in order to assist clients with searches and supplement or replace print publications.

### 3.3.2 Unreported Canadian judgments

The various courts' websites, CanLII and WestlaweCARSWELL's LawSource shall be the major sources of unreported judgments. Resource and Regional Libraries shall continue to receive and bind Alberta Unreported Decisions to ensure all Alberta judgments are permanently available.

### 3.3.3 Other countries

Resource Libraries shall collect the most frequently-cited English reporters and provide access to the important court judgments of the United States, Australia and New Zealand through commercial electronic databases and websites. Regional and Local Libraries will not collect current foreign judgments but may access them electronically.

## 3.4 Decisions of administrative boards and tribunals

Resource Libraries shall only collect regularly used publications, Federal and Alberta, not available on the boards' websites.

The ALSL website will make the decisions from boards of regular interest to primary clients accessible.

## 3.5 Finding Tools

### 3.5.1 Legislation

All Libraries shall depend primarily on the links on the ALSL website for information on bill tracking. Resource and Regional Libraries may supplement web sources with one or more of *Canada Statute Citator*, *Canada Legislative Index* or *Canadian Current Law : Legislation*. Resource Libraries will collect *Hansard* for Canada and Alberta.

### 3.5.2 Case law

ALSL shall maintain the *Canadian Abridgment* and *Canadian Encyclopedic Digest* in all libraries in electronic format. Both publications shall be maintained in print format at Resource Libraries so long as usage warrants, and print versions will be updated selectively at Regional and Local Libraries depending on continued usage and the quality and quantity of updating provided by the publisher. Libraries may collect highly selectively other Canadian topical, national and jurisdictional digests, but will generally rely on electronic sources for access to digests. A single copy of *All Canada Weekly Summaries* and *Weekly Criminal Bulletin* shall be maintained by the library system.

Resource Libraries will maintain *The Digest*, *Halsbury's Laws of England*, and either *American Jurisprudence 2d* or *Corpus Juris Secundum* as long as usage warrants. Other encyclopedic sets may be considered if justified by specific client demand.

*Canadian Case Citations* may be collected by all Libraries. Resource Libraries may also collect *Current Law Case Citator*.

All Libraries shall have access to a selection of legal databases to ensure the currency of noting-up cases and legislation.

All Libraries shall collect annotated versions of important Alberta and Canada statutes. Resource Libraries shall collect *Canadian Statute Citations* for all jurisdictions; Regional and Local Libraries may collect only for selected jurisdictions. Other Alberta and Federal citators may be collected but not those of other jurisdictions.

### 3.5.3 Indices and bibliographies of secondary sources

Resource Libraries shall collect *Index to Canadian Legal Literature* and *Current Law Index* in print or electronically; Regional Libraries may only subscribe to the former.

Bibliographies are out of scope of the collection.

### 3.6 Textbooks

Resource Libraries shall collect all major Canadian legal and law-related texts relevant to the Alberta practitioner. "Cases, Notes and Materials" intended for students, legal education materials from other provinces, consolidations of legislation, and materials on legal theory and legal history will be collected highly selectively. Texts from other common law jurisdictions may be selected if they cover an area of law not well covered by a Canadian text, or if they are well-established and regularly consulted in Canada.

Regional and Local Libraries will only collect Canadian texts on subject areas practised locally.

### 3.7 Loose-leaf publications

Resource Libraries shall collect and maintain Canadian loose-leaf publications in any area of law so long as they continue to be regularly consulted. Loose-leaf services which largely consolidate legislation shall only be maintained as long as usage warrants.

Regional and Local Libraries shall normally maintain only one Canadian loose-leaf publication on areas of law which are practised locally.

Loose-leaf publications may only be updated annually when the cost of a full subscription substantially exceeds the new purchase price or when changes in the law are minimal.

### 3.8 Journals

ALSL shall collect all journals indexed by *Index to Canadian Legal Literature* and may collect highly selectively, practice-oriented journals from other common law jurisdictions in one or both Resource Libraries. For other journals, the libraries will depend on electronic versions or interlibrary loan. Regional and Local Libraries will not normally collect journals.

Librarians shall develop a small professional development collection to be housed at the Edmonton Library and circulated to staff.

### 3.9 Forms and precedents

Resource Libraries shall collect the major precedent sets from Canada, the United States and England which have significant value for the Alberta legal community. Regional and Local Libraries shall only collect the most important Canadian services.

### 3.10 Reference sources

Wherever possible the Libraries shall rely on the Internet for non-legal reference information. Resource and Regional Libraries may collect dictionaries, directories and other sources which are too regularly consulted to rely on an equivalent electronic source or not available electronically. Local Libraries shall collect only the most basic Canadian tools.

The ALSL website shall make key sources accessible electronically.

### 3.11 Public legal information

All libraries shall collect any types of publications suitable for the public based on the kinds of questions received or anticipated. Librarians shall carefully monitor the availability of suitable publications which could be linked to by the ALSL website and free print publications.

#### **4. Selection and Retention**

##### **4.1 Submission of requests for purchase / licensing**

Members of the Alberta legal community are encouraged to request that publications be added to the collections within the limits set by this Policy. Requests can be made either electronically through the ALSL website or by contacting library staff. All Public Services' staff have a responsibility for requesting titles which are needed by their clients. The librarians-in-charge at the Resource Libraries have particular responsibility for monitoring and evaluating new publications, and for recommending the purchase of titles which fall within the parameters of this Policy. Whenever a request is made for publications which are not clearly in line with this Policy, staff shall provide a full justification.

##### **4.2 Approval of requests for purchase / licensing**

All requests for new publications shall be approved by the Manager of Public Services (Manager) and forwarded to the Acquisitions Unit for purchase. Approved requests for commercial electronic products shall be forwarded to the Chief Librarian for approval and negotiation of licences.

The Manager has responsibility for ensuring that budget targets are met and that this Policy is followed.

##### **4.3 Collections review**

The librarians-in-charge of Resource and Regional Libraries shall regularly review their collections to ensure that the collections conform to the retention policy (4.7 below) and continue to meet the regular needs of clients. Inventories shall be conducted regularly.

The Manager shall direct staff in Local Libraries to review aspects of the collections and to conduct inventories as necessary.

##### **4.4 Donations**

Donations of money are encouraged. Donations of books may be accepted only if they meet the requirements of this Policy. ALSL reserves the right to dispose of donations as it sees fit.

##### **4.5 Multiple copies**

There shall be no multiple copies at Regional or Local Libraries. Exceptionally, the librarians-in-charge at Resource Libraries may request 2 or more copies of a title but must attach a justification to the request which describes alternate sources and usage levels if there are previous editions or other copies.

##### **4.6 Replacement copies**

Replacements may be requested by the staff-in-charge of any library. If a client has paid for an unreturnable book, its replacement may be requested immediately. If a book is noted missing, it must remain consistently missing for 4 months before a replacement request is made. Exceptionally, when several holds have been placed by clients for the title, the missing period may be shortened at the discretion of the Manager.

##### **4.7 Retention**

###### **4.7.1 Retention**

Resource Libraries bear the major responsibility for preserving archival collections. They shall retain all primary materials so long as space permits, then priority shall be given to retaining Canadian and English primary materials. Resource Libraries shall retain complete runs of indexed journals. They shall retain at least one copy of the last 2 editions of substantive legal texts and legal encyclopedia and at least 1 copy of all LESA publications permanently. Retention of reference and other materials not covered by the above will depend on continued usage and the judgment of the librarian-in-charge.

Regional and Local Libraries are working libraries and shall normally retain primary materials as long as space permits. They shall retain secondary materials so long as they are useful. The Library Coordinators shall consult with the Manager if space is becoming insufficient to shelve the collection before de-selecting significantly more than required by 4.7.2.

#### 4.7.2 Deselection (weeding)

Staff-in-charge of libraries shall routinely weed the following kinds of publications on an annual basis unless there is a definite reason to retain a particular title:

- publications deemed superceded by the publisher
- editions of texts, annuals, consolidated or annotated legislation prior to the last two
- cancelled loose-leaf publications within 3 years of cancellation
- dated reference and non-legal publications
- unindexed or broken sets of periodicals
- unnecessary duplicates

Items deselected shall be deleted from the online catalogue and surplussed where appropriate. However, if the imprint of a last copy in the ALSL system is prior to 1920, the university law libraries should be consulted on whether the copy should be transferred to them.

#### 4.7.3 Repair and rebinding

It is the responsibility of the staff-in-charge of each library to ensure that material which is to be retained permanently is kept in good repair. Minor repairs should be completed in-house where possible; seriously worn or damaged materials should be sent to be rebound commercially. If a large set of materials should be rebound, staff should consult with the Manager for budgetary approval.

When up to 100 pages (or a quarter of the volume) are missing from a loose-leaf service and the binder will take photocopy paper, they shall be replaced by photocopies from another copy in the ALSL system. When more are missing, replacement pages shall be ordered from the publisher by the Acquisitions Unit with the approval of the Manager. Loose leaf binders which have to be replaced may be requested from the Unit without the approval of the Manager.

## 5. Interpretation of this Policy

This Policy should be interpreted as consistently as possible but applied with a discretion which gives primacy to local clients' needs and interests. It shall be reviewed regularly by the Library Management Committee and amended as necessary. Questions arising on the application of this Policy shall be referred to the Manager.

## 6. Distribution

This Policy and *The Essential Law Library* shall be available to stakeholders and clients on the ALSL website.