

While the Alberta Courts have not formally adopted any particular guide for citation of legislation or cases, the *Canadian guide to uniform legal citation* (the *McGill guide*), published by Carswell, is considered an acceptable standard by the legal community, including the Alberta courts.

The 7th edition of the *McGill guide*, published in 2010, contains many changes, especially with respect to punctuation in citations. While this new edition's standards have been enthusiastically embraced by some members of the legal community, others continue to prefer the more familiar citation style of the 6th edition.

Either the 6th or 7th edition style is acceptable to the courts, but whichever is chosen should be applied consistently in a document. A research guide for citing cases and legislation to the Alberta Courts using the *McGill guide*, 7th edition is in development.

Need to borrow a copy of the *McGill guide*?
Alberta Law Libraries carries both the 6th and 7th editions.

6th edition: [KF 245 C36 2006](#)

7th edition: [KF 245 C36 2010](#)

neutral citations¹

Neutral citations are assigned by the courts and consist of the year, an abbreviation for the court and a sequential number. If one is available, place the neutral citation immediately after the names of the parties.

R. v. Little, 2001 ABPC 185

print law reports

A case located in a print law reporter should be cited to that reporter and to one or two alternative print citations, if they are available. In addition to any official reporter, cite after the neutral citation to the most frequently encountered reports available.

Brooks v. Stefura, 2000 ABCA 276, [2001] 2 W.W.R. 420, 266 A.R. 239

For reporters organised by year of publication, the year in square brackets is essential to identify the cited case. In other reporters, a year in parentheses included after the party names is added to clarify the year of the case. It is followed by a comma. If the jurisdiction and level of court are not clear from the citations, add an abbreviation to clarify.

Canada Life Assurance Co. v. 494708 Alberta Ltd. (1995), 32 Alta L.R. (3d) 311, 173 A.R. 172 (Q.B.)

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commercial electronic sources²

A case located through a commercial electronic source listed in the Court of Queen's Bench *Notice to the profession* (February 1, 2002) should be cited to that source after the neutral citation and print law reporter cites if they are available.³ It is not necessary to check or cite to other commercial databases.

Stochinsky v. Chetner Estate, 2002 ABQB 18, [2002] 8 W.W.R. 539, 309 A.R. 150, [2002] A.J. No.68

Greater Toronto Airports Authority v. Mississauga (City) (1999), 43 O.R. (3d) 9, 1999 CarswellOnt 93 (Gen Div)

CanLII⁴

Some courts have not adopted neutral citations yet. If a case without a neutral citation is located on CanLII, the CanLII citation may be used in lieu of the neutral citation. Otherwise, prefer the neutral citation.

Younger v. Younger, 2008 CanLII 155 (ON S.C.)

unreported judgments

When a case has not been reported in print or online and does not have a neutral citation, cite using the elements: names of parties, date, judicial district, action number, court.

Letwin v. Safeco Insurance Company of America (21 July 1981), Edmonton 8003-05876 (Q.B.)

pinpoint references

For a pinpoint or precise reference within a case, follow the source cited by the number of the paragraph referred to, otherwise refer to the page.

Labbee v. Peters (1997), 201 A.R. 241 at para. 34 (Q.B.)

R. v. Pennylegion (1975), 8 O.R. (2d) 707 at 709, 24 C.C.C. (2d) 141 (Co. Ct.)

Notes

1. This recommendation on neutral citation follows the *Canadian guide to uniform legal citation*, 6th ed. Carswell, 2006 (also known as the *McGill guide*), which the Alberta courts now follow.
2. This recommendation on citing commercial electronic sources varies from the *McGill guide* to reflect the openness of the Alberta courts to electronic citations.
3. The Court of Appeal Consolidated Practice Directions, sections C.4 and D.1(b)

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set out that when citing a case from an electronic database the party must provide (on the List of Authorities in the factum and on the Table of Authorities in the Book of Authorities) a parallel reported citation, if available, and a parallel neutral citation, if the court deciding the case has issued one.

4. Neither the *McGill guide* nor the Alberta courts have made any recommendation on the use of CanLII citations, but CanLII does have a reliable citation system which avoids the complexity of the unreported judgment recommendation and makes the case widely available.