Using Halsbury’s Laws of England

What is Halsbury’s Laws of England?

Halsbury’s Laws of England (LAW F3A, 1st Floor, Abercromby Wing) is a legal encyclopaedia covering all areas of law. It is useful when looking for a summary of the law on a particular topic and relevant cases and legislation.

Halsbury’s Laws is currently in the process of moving from the 4th edition (brown volumes) to the 5th edition (black volumes). The black Index volumes cover both the 4th and 5th edition. The entries in the Index will clearly state whether or not you need to consult a volume in the 4th (brown volumes) or 5th (black volumes) edition.

The volumes

Halsbury’s Laws has a number of component parts:

- **Main volumes**: 50+ volumes are divided alphabetically into subjects. The main volumes are re-issued when enough changes to that area of law have been made to warrant a new volume
- **Cumulative Supplement volume**: published annually
- **Current Service binder and Noter-Up**: updates the volumes to the previous month
- **Index volumes**: arranged by subject and refer to paragraphs in the main volumes.

In addition, the Monthly Review paperback volume contains articles on areas of law. The Monthly Reviews are published annually in the Halsbury’s Laws of England Annual Abridgement Yearbook.

How to use Halsbury’s Laws

There is a four-step process to successfully using Halsbury’s Laws:

- Find a topic in the volumes of the Consolidated Index. The reference will refer to a main volume (in bold type) and a paragraph number. For example:

  **HUMAN RIGHTS**

  access to personal information, 8(2) (4th), 110

  act of public authority, challenge to, 61 (5th), 650
• Use this reference to find the paragraph in the relevant main volume. Using the example above, to locate information about access to personal information, consult volume 8(2) of the 4th edition, paragraph 110. To locate information about challenges to acts of public authority, consult volume 61 of the 5th edition, paragraph 650. The paragraph provides a summary of an area of law and any relevant cases or legislation. If the paragraph number appears to be incorrect, check the Index within the main volume itself; the main volume may have been republished since the Index volume was published.

• Use the Cumulative Supplement volume to see if the law has changed since the publication of the main work volume. Use the headings at the top of the page to find the same volume, subject and paragraph number. Details of any changes will be given alongside the paragraph number; if the paragraph number is not listed, there have been no changes since the publication of the main volume and the publication of the Cumulative Supplement.

• Use the Noter-Up paperback volume to determine if there have been any changes since the publication of the Cumulative Supplement, up to the current month. The Noter-Up follows the same style as the Cumulative Supplement. Locate the section of the Noter-Up that corresponds with the main volume and paragraph number.

Remember the four-step process:

Index → Main Volume → Cumulative Supplement → Noter-Up

It is important to follow this process each time Halsbury’s Laws is used. The main volumes are published infrequently, so using the Cumulative Supplement and Noter-Up is essential to ensure the information is up to date.

Halsbury’s Laws of England is also available online via Lexis Library.

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