

e-Laws: Working with Current Consolidated Law

For an introduction to e-Laws generally, please watch the tutorial titled "e-Laws: An Introduction." If you are trying to decide whether you need to use source or consolidated law, please view the tutorial titled "e-Laws: Current Consolidated Law Compared to Source Law." If you have decided that you need to use consolidated law, this is what you need to watch!

The consolidated law section of e-Laws is probably the single most popular part of the site. As the name suggests, it contains up-to-date consolidations of all current Ontario public acts and regulations. However, it also contains a wealth of value-added information that can help guide you through the Ontario legislative regime. This tutorial will show you how to access the wealth of information available in the consolidated laws section, and how to work with it.

The consolidated law section of e-Laws has two primary means of access. You can either search it, or you can browse it. If you know the name of the act or the name of the act that the regulation you are looking for belongs to, we strongly suggest you use the "browse" function, as it is usually the most efficient way of finding what you need.

The browse function organizes all public acts by title, divided up into pages for each letter of the alphabet. Click on a letter to see all the acts with short titles starting with that letter. If you would like to download a statute or regulation, you can just click on the Word icon to the left of the title.

You might have noticed that unlike source law, current consolidated law is not split into separate areas for statutes and regulations. To view all the regulations made under a particular act, just click on the plus sign to the left of the statute name. Regulations are found literally "underneath" the statute that authorizes them, emphasizing their subordinate legislative status.

Now we know how to find current consolidated law. However, there is much more to the current consolidated law section of e-Laws than just the legislation! On the browse page, you can see a capital H to the right of the title. If you click on this, you can access a detailed legislative history of the associated statute or regulation.

This page shows you when and how the version of the act or regulation on e-Laws originally came into force, lists all the acts or regulations that have amended the base legislation, and then, most usefully, lists all the amendments to the legislation by provision. This includes when each amendment came into force, and may also include previous history in the case of sections that have been amended multiple times. Don't forget, any piece of legislation on e-Laws which is based in the R.S.O. or R.R.O. 1990 is actually even older. There is nothing new in a revision, so you will need to keep going back from 1990 to determine just how old the act or regulation is.

The consolidated acts/regulations themselves also contain a variety of useful information, not just the plain text of the legislation.

The first thing you'll see when you click into a statute is its short title, followed by the citation to the act. This citation is the base act, which has been consolidated with any amendments to it. Regulations are similar, with some differences. The first thing on the page for a regulation is the name of the act to which the regulation is subordinate.

Below this, you can see the consolidation period, in red. This period runs from when the last amendment came into force, to the e-Laws currency date, which you can view by clicking on the link. This is usually current within a few business days.

Next, you can see the citation of the last amendment to the base statute or regulation. This is particularly useful when you know there is a recent amendment to your piece of legislation. You can easily see if it has been included in the consolidation.

Finally, you can read the statute or regulation proper. Some pieces of legislation start with a table of contents, which may or may not be hot-linked, but shorter acts and regulations tend to get right to the meat of things.

In addition, upcoming changes to legislation appear in acts and regulations, "grayed out," usually with information when the change might occur, if it is known.

Hopefully this tutorial has introduced you to all the useful information you can find in the current consolidated laws section of e-Laws. Without e-Laws, if you want to see a statute or regulation as it reads today, you would have to use paper resources to start with the base act, often from the last R.S.O., and literally "cut and paste" all the other acts that make amendments, repeals and re-enactments into it. As the last revision was in 1990, this could mean a lot of scissors and glue! Of course, in order to produce an official version of legislation for court, you still need to go through the process. To learn more about how to use it to collect all the constituent parts to make a current version of an official act, please view the tutorial on using e-Laws to connect with paper resources.