

e-Laws: An Introduction

This tutorial is intended to give you an overview of e-Laws, the various resources available to you on it, and a little bit about how you might use it. e-Laws is the most complete and up-to-date source of consolidated Ontario law. It also provides access to annual statutes and offers many useful tools to help you research Ontario legislation. It is free, and relatively straightforward to use. Although it is not currently official, it is "straight from the horse's mouth," being a government publication, and it will be official in the future.

To find out more about how to use each of the major sections of e-Laws, please view the individual tutorials that provide you with an in-depth discussion on various aspects of the resource.

e-Laws is a free product of the Ontario government. It is an online source of Ontario law, and contains both Ontario statutes and regulations.

You can access it on the web at www.e-laws.gov.on.ca or by googling "elaws."

The most popular and useful feature of e-Laws tends to be the current consolidated law. Here you can browse through or search Ontario public statutes and regulations with all their amendments, repeals and other changes consolidated into the text, usually up to date within three business days. To learn more about working with consolidated law, watch the detailed tutorial on working with the current consolidation.

However, keep in mind that as e-Laws is not yet official, you will still need to use paper statutes or regulations to produce an official version of an act or regulation for court. 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.

Every year, the Ontario legislature passes a number of new acts and regulations. The source law collection on e-Laws contains every act passed in a year, public or private, as well as every regulation, usually within a few days of an act receiving Royal Assent, or a regulation being filed.

Some new pieces of legislation are in a sense "original," in that they create a new act or regulation, and some are amending, in that they simply make a change to a pre-existing piece of legislation. Therefore, while some source law appears in the Continuing Consolidation under the same name, other source law only appears there as an amendment to other legislation. If you search the continuing consolidation for those acts by name you won't find them. To learn more about the differences between source and consolidated law, watch the tutorial on current vs. source law.

The period in time feature allows you to see how consolidated statutes and regulations looked "between changes." Since January 1, 2004, whenever an act or regulation is

changed, a snapshot of it is taken before the change to allow you to view historic versions. To view a period in time statute, click on the letter matching the first letter of the statute name. Click on the name of the statute to expand the list of available versions. Regulations are similar, but start by clicking on the letter that corresponds to the first letter of the authorizing statute for the regulation.

Repealed, Revoked and Spent Law

This section of e-Laws contains law that is no longer in force. Coverage is mixed. You can find:

- Most public statutes and regulations from R.S.O. or R.R.O. 1990 or enacted after 1990 and that were repealed on or after January 1, 2004
- Some material repealed between January 1, 1995 and December 31, 2003
- Very little material repealed between January 1, 1991 and December 31, 1994
- Nothing revoked before January 1, 1991

Legislative Tables

In addition to actual statutes and regulations, e-Laws contains a number of extremely helpful legislative tables. Some of these tables are essentially the only way to find out certain information about particular types of legislative materials.

There are a large number of tables available, but we find two of them to be of particular use.

Firstly, the Table of Private Acts is the only current way to find out what has happened with Ontario private acts, since 1867. Private acts are not included in revisions or consolidations. To find amendments to a private act, or whether it is even in force, you can use your Web browser's Ctrl+F find function to search for the name of your act, or its citation, if you know it.

The second table you are likely to find of use is the table of unconsolidated and unrepealed acts. These acts are public acts that still have at least a section or two in force, but that are no longer included in the *Revised Statutes of Ontario*, or in e-Laws' continuing consolidation, as they are of limited application or effect. This table lists everything still in force, plus any amendments. You won't find evidence of their existence in the Table of Public Statutes or anywhere else. This is the only place to find out what little legislative orphans are floating around out there!

Hopefully this tutorial has introduced you to a few of the useful things you can find on e-Laws. To learn more about three popular resources you can use and tasks you can complete using e-Laws, you can watch additional tutorials. The first tutorial will address current consolidated vs. source law, and how using the two together can help you. The second tutorial will give you an in-depth guide to using the current consolidated law section. The final tutorial will teach you how to merge paper and electronic resources to produce official versions of acts, and learn more about the history of legislative materials.