

Federal Law Libraries

Supreme Court of Canada Library

The Supreme Court of Canada Library provides the research base for the Court in its role of deciding questions of national importance, and is fully funded by the Office of the Registrar. The Library has an extensive collection of both primary and secondary materials from major common law and civil law jurisdictions: Canada, United Kingdom, United States, Australia, New Zealand, France and Belgium, and a growing collection of European Union, international law, and international organizations materials. It includes extensive legal periodical titles, loose-leaf services, and major legal texts. Holdings are in print, microform and electronic format. The collection is open to those pleading before the Court, to the Canadian judiciary, to members of the Bar and to others by permission. The Library provides an interlibrary loan service, and has established formal resource sharing agreements with libraries in the National Capital Region, and with Court and Law Society libraries nation-wide. In 2003 it became part of a new structure intended to ensure that the Court could fulfill its information management responsibilities in both the print and electronic worlds. Formerly a separate branch within the Court reporting to the Registrar, it is now part of a new sector consisting of four branches reporting to a Director General of Library and Information Services. The branches are: Library, Information Management, Information Technology, and Special Projects. The Library includes Information and Reader Services and Technical Services; Information Management consists of Systems and Database Administration, Information Holdings and Web activities; and Special Projects currently includes electronic filing and the case management system.

Courts Administration Service: Library Services

Headquartered in Ottawa, Library Services of Courts Administration Service (CAS) serve the court members of the Federal Court of Appeal, the Federal Court, the Court Martial Appeal Court of Canada, and the Tax Court of Canada as well as the public servants employed by CAS in 9 of the 16 local offices across Canada (see www.cas-satj.gc.ca). They are not open to the public. Funding is from the Courts Administration Service, an agency formed in July 2, 2003 out of the former Registries of the Federal Court of Canada and the Tax Court of Canada. The Judges' Library Committee, representing all 4 courts, provides advice on matters of policy, information resources, and information services only. With a staff of 11, including 4 professional librarians, 4 library technicians, and 3 library clerks, Library Services manages electronic information resources on the CAS network (including the electronic media monitoring system), and several print information resource collections. The main subjects follow the mandate of the 4 courts and CAS; namely, tax law, maritime law, intellectual property law, immigration law, national security law, administrative law, and management. A formal resource sharing agreement is in place with the Supreme Court of Canada Library, Public Safety Canada, the Department of Justice Canada, and Foreign Affairs and International Trade, and another with the Nova Scotia Provincial Judges' Library. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed in May 2013 to provide basic library services to the Competition Tribunal. CAS Library Services is an active participant in the Canadian Federal Libraries

Strategic Network, Federal Libraries Forum, Federal Libraries Consortium, Security and Intelligence Library Community, and local and national library associations.

Administrative agencies and tribunals

The Canada Industrial Relations Board, the Public Service Staff Relations Board, the Competition Bureau, the Immigration and Refugee Board, the Canadian International Trade Tribunal, the Canadian Human Rights Commission and the NAFTA Secretariat all have small legal libraries which serve the Board members and staff of their respective agencies. The Canada Industrial Relations Board continues the labour law collection of the Canada Labour Relations Board. The Immigration and Refugee Board has an Information Resource Centre, with offices in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver. They publish a variety of resource kits for the Board on countries of origin for immigrants and refugees to Canada, and maintain an extensive database of tribunal decisions. All tribunal and administrative agency libraries are funded through their agencies' budgets.

Government departments

There are law libraries in a variety of federal government departments. The largest is the network of Department of Justice libraries. This network is described elsewhere.

The National Library of Canada, which serves Canadian libraries and the public at large, collects all published Canadian legal materials in both print and electronic format (pursuant to the amended Act). The library has an extensive collection of Canadian federal government publications, and undertakes to archive e-publications from government departments as part of its extensive Electronic Collection. Most of the KF collection is housed in off-site storage. There is only limited filing of loose-leaf publications in the Reference Collection and publications in storage are not filed up to date. This makes the collection a valuable source of point-in-time amendments. The Government and Law Specialist, attached to the Reference Section, is responsible for maintaining and providing service on the official publications and law collections.

The Library of Parliament maintains current and historical collections of Canadian, Commonwealth and international legal publications. These collections will be housed in then newly renovated Main Library building once it reopens in 2005. Meanwhile, current Canadian legal materials are housed in the Main Branch on Sparks Street in Ottawa, and international or legacy collections in the storage facility in Gatineau. In addition to print publications, the Library subscribes to several electronic databases accessible by staff and clients alike.

One librarian is currently assigned to the Law and Government Division of Parliamentary Research Branch. It is anticipated that four professional librarians to be assigned to Law and Government in April of 2004.

The Library of Parliament serves members and senators first and foremost. Some items are available through interlibrary loan.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade has amalgamated its Legal Library into the main departmental collection. There is a portfolio librarian who is responsible for client relationship management of the department's legal services group. The collection's focus is on international law, treaties and conventions.

The Canada Customs and Revenue Agency Library network maintains an extensive collection of primary and secondary legal materials in domestic and international tax law. Other legal materials collected include customs and trade law, general case law and selected topical law reports, such as bankruptcy, family law, estates and trusts, etc. The Headquarters Library in Ottawa serves the research needs of the Agency's administration primarily, but is also the main repository for selected legal materials of identified historical value. Fifteen full-service field office libraries fill the research requirements of the Agency's employees in the regions.

Department of Justice

The Department of Justice libraries provide support to over 4,500 staff at the Ottawa headquarters, in ten regional offices (Yellowknife, Whitehorse, Iqaluit, Vancouver, Edmonton, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal, and Halifax), two sub-offices (Calgary and St. John), and over thirty Departmental Legal Services Units. Funding for the libraries is provided by the Department, and through cost-recovery to client departments. Collections include periodicals and texts covering aboriginal, administrative, business, constitutional, criminal, environmental, immigration, and tax law. The bulk of the collection is Canadian law, but many of the Justice Canada libraries also collect materials from the United Kingdom, United States, Australia, and New Zealand. Each library's catalogue is available through the Justice intranet. There is resource sharing between the locations, and several of the offices have formal resource sharing agreements with local consortia.