

Interpreting law references

See also “Law Sources” document for help with interpreting Law Report citations.

Cases.

In all cases, ‘R’ is used to indicate the crown and is an abbreviation for either Regina or Rex. It most commonly, but not exclusively, appears in criminal cases, e.g.: R v Marks 2009

Statutes

There are two types of statutes in the UK: Acts of Parliament and Statutory Instruments

1. Acts of Parliament.

For Acts applicable to the whole Union, Great Britain is the most commonly used precedent in any reference.

If an Act is only applicable to a specific country or countries within the Union, the country or countries will be specified rather than Great Britain.

Pre 1963 Acts

All references for pre-1963 Acts will look like this: 26 Henry VIII c. 1

26 – refers to the regnal year. This is the number of years after the monarch’s Accession that the Act was enacted.

Henry VIII – monarch reigning at the time of the enactment

c.1 – the chapter number of the Act

so 26 Henry VIII c.1 means the Act referred to is Chapter 1 and was enacted in the 26th year of the reign of Henry 8th.

Post 1963 Acts

All references to post-1963 Acts no longer usually make reference to the regnal year, and simply give the Queen’s name and the Chapter number, e.g.: Eliz II c.31 (you may also see Eliz 2 c.31

2. Statutory Instruments.

Statutory Instruments are the executive orders that enact, apply, repeal, expand or change some or all of an Act’s provisions.

You will usually only ever see them referred to in full: e.g.: Great Britain. Terrorism (United Nations Measures) Order 2001 (2001): (SI 2001/3365).

So: country of applicability/title of instrument/(year of parliamentary approval)/(SI (the abbreviation for Statutory Instrument) year of parliamentary approval/ SI number within the year).

Got any others that should be added to this document?

Need some additional help?

Please contact the Information Specialists informationspecialists@plymouth.ac.uk or tel. (5) 87114

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