

Quicklaw® Cheat Sheet: Basic Searching

Discover how to find a document, target a specific content type, and use other basic search features on Canada's leading online legal research service.

Find a Document

The **Find a Document** section helps you quickly and cost-effectively find specific documents. Locate specific cases, Canadian journal articles, or term definitions; note up or *Shepardize*® cases; find or note up specific legislation; or find sources.

The screenshot shows the 'Find a Document' section of the Quicklaw interface. At the top, there are tabs for 'Search', 'Practice Areas', 'Source Directory', and 'History & Alerts'. Under 'Search', there are subtabs: 'Home', 'Court Cases', 'Tribunal Cases', 'Legislation', 'Commentary', 'Journals', and 'Forms'. The 'Home' subtab is active. Below the subtabs, there are several search options, each with a text input field and a 'Go' button: 'Find a case by name', 'Find by citation', 'Note up with QuickCITE', 'Find legislation', 'Find a Canadian journal article', and 'Find a definition'. The 'Find a definition' field contains the text 'cohabita'. A dropdown menu is open below this field, showing three suggestions: 'COHABITATING PARTNER', 'COHABITATION', and 'COHABITATION AGREEMENT'. A mouse cursor is pointing at the 'Go' button for the 'Find a definition' field. Red callouts are placed on the image: '1' points to the 'Home' subtab, '2' points to the 'Find a definition' input field, and '3' points to the 'Go' button.

To find a document:

1. Click the **Home** search subtab.
2. Enter your search term(s) or citation number in the appropriate text box. By default, the auto-complete feature will make suggestions (cases by name, citations, legislation, definitions) if at least three characters are entered (five for case citations). Click a pop-up suggestion to view that document, or turn this feature off using **Preferences**.
3. Click the **Go** button or press the Enter key on your keyboard.

Content-Specific Search Forms

In contrast to the basic search form (under the **Home** and **General** subtabs), content-specific search forms allow you to search sources of a specific content type. These forms are accessible via subtabs and links, and are available according to your Quicklaw subscription.

The screenshot shows the 'Court Cases' search form. At the top, there are tabs for 'Search', 'Practice Areas', 'Source Directory', and 'History & Alerts'. Under 'Search', there are subtabs: 'Home', 'Court Cases', 'Tribunal Cases', 'Legislation', 'Commentary', 'Journals', 'Forms', 'International', 'News & Companies', 'General', and 'All Search Forms'. The 'Court Cases' subtab is active. Below the subtabs, there is a search form with a 'Search terms' input field and a 'Search' button. Below the search form, there are several options: 'Legal topics' with a dropdown menu, 'Sources' with a dropdown menu, 'Case name' with an input field, 'Citation' with an input field, and 'Specify date' with a dropdown menu. A dropdown menu is open below the 'Sources' field, showing the suggestion 'All Canadian Court Cases'. Red callouts are placed on the image: '1' points to the 'Search' subtab, '2' points to the 'Court Cases' subtab, and '3' points to the 'Make This My Start Page' link.

1. **Search** subtabs across the top of the page may include **Home**, **Court Cases**, **Tribunal Cases**, **Legislation**, **Commentary**, **Journals**, **Forms**, **International**, **News & Companies**, and **General**.
2. Related links in the left-hand panel provide access to additional specialized search forms and help applicable to the **Search** subtab you have chosen. **Note:** Related links are not featured under the **Home** subtab.
3. Click the **Make This My Start Page** link to make any of the search forms your Quicklaw start page. Quicklaw will then load the page you have selected when you first sign in.

Basic Search Features

Each content-specific search form (except under the **Home** subtab) contains text boxes applicable to the specific content type (such as case name, citation, legislation or article title), but all search forms begin with the **Search terms** and **Sources** sections shown below.

The screenshot shows a search interface with the following elements and callouts:

- 1**: Search terms input box.
- 2**: [View connectors...](#) link.
- 3**: [Add topic\(s\) to search](#) link.
- 4**: Checkboxes for Singular and plural and Masculine and feminine.
- 5**: Sources dropdown menu showing ***All Canadian Court Cases**.
- 6**: [Find more sources...](#) link.
- 7**: [Show document segments](#) link.
- 8**: **Search** button.

1. Enter your search terms in the box provided. By default, Quicklaw will search for the exact phrase you enter (including plural forms of singular words). If you do not wish to search for an exact phrase, insert connectors between words.
2. Click the **View connectors...** link for more information on using connectors.
3. Click the **Add topic(s) to search** link to add preselected legal topics representing keywords on a given subject or area of law.
4. By default, results include both plural and singular forms of search terms, and masculine and feminine forms of French search terms. Uncheck these options to disengage them.
5. Select a source from the drop-down list, **or**
6. Click the **Find more sources...** link to select and add other sources.
7. Click the **Show document segments** link to view additional searchable segments. Choose a segment, enter terms, and click the **Add to Search** button.
8. Click the **Search** button.

Terms

A term is the basic unit of a search and consists of one or more characters. It is separated from another term by a space. A hyphen is considered a space, so a hyphenated word is two terms.

Phrases

Two or more consecutive terms are considered a phrase and interpreted as an exact phrase (e.g., **age discrimination** only finds documents containing the phrase “age discrimination”).

Connectors

For results containing terms located anywhere in a document, use the **AND** (or **&**) connector.

Examples:

- **age AND discrimination** finds documents containing both “age” and “discrimination” located anywhere in a document
- **libel OR slander** finds documents containing either “libel” or “slander” located anywhere in a document*



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