



AGRICULTURAL LAW AND TAXATION BRIEFS

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL AND CONSUMER ECONOMICS, UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

A FARMDOC USERS' GUIDE FOR ACCESSING LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION FROM THE ILLINOIS GENERAL ASSEMBLY WEBSITE

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Synopsis: This article provides detailed guidance for accessing the Illinois Compiled Statutes, Public Acts, and House/ Senate Bills available from the website of the Illinois General Assembly.

I. Introduction

This article will describe how to access Illinois Compiled Statutes, Public Acts, and Bills on the Illinois General Assembly website. Before relying on legislative information obtained from the General Assembly website, the reader should be aware of the website's general *disclaimer*:

This site [the General Assembly website] contains provisions of the Illinois Compiled Statutes from databases that were created for the use of the members and staff of the Illinois General Assembly. The provisions have NOT been edited for publication, and are NOT in any sense the "official" text of the Illinois Compiled Statutes as enacted into law. The accuracy of any specific provision originating from this site cannot be assured, and you are urged to consult the official documents or contact legal counsel of your choice. This site should not be cited as an official or authoritative source. Court decisions may affect the interpretation and constitutionality of statutes.

The General Assembly website also provides a portal to Agency-issued Administrative Rules and the ILLINOIS REGISTER, but guidance for accessing them is beyond the scope of this article.

II. Accessing the Illinois Compiled Statutes Using the General Assembly Website

Laws passed by the Illinois General Assembly and signed by the governor, including subsequent amendments, are usually compiled in a multi-volume publication known as the Illinois Compiled Statutes (ILCS). Printed versions of the ILCS are published every two years and reflect new legislation signed into law *prior to the publication date*. However, the published version quickly becomes dated as subsequent laws are enacted.

The electronic version of the ILCS available from the General Assembly website has the advantage, subject to limitations discussed in the disclaimer, of incorporating new laws and amendments enacted since the most recent "paper" version of ILCS was published. The ability to access ILCS from the General Assembly website is a useful skill for anyone with internet access who wants to know what a particular Illinois statute (law) says, even though the website is not viewed as displaying the "official" text of Illinois laws.

The following two examples will describe how to find a law (usually called an Act, e.g., the Illinois Water Authorities Act), or a particular section of the Act, if you know the citation. The third example will describe how to find a law if you know the name of the Act or key words.



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Example 1: Finding an Act if you know the ILCS citation:

For this example we will use the Water Authorities Act (the citation is 70 ILCS 3715).



A (70) is the chapter number.

B (3715) is the act number.

Step 1: On the Illinois General Assembly home page (<http://www.ilga.gov/> - or search the web for “Illinois General Assembly”), click the link for “Illinois Compiled Statutes”

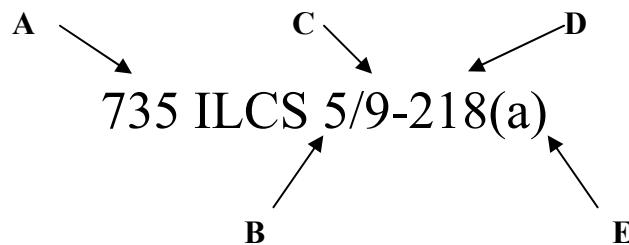
Step 2: Click the link for the chapter number (in this case click “Chapter 70 Special Districts”).

Step 3: Scroll down and click the link for the act number (in this case click “70 ILCS 3715/ Water Authorities Act”). This takes you to the current text of the Act, as amended.

Exercise 1: Use the above steps to find 70 ILCS 605 (the Illinois Drainage Code).

Example 2: Finding a particular section of an Act if you know the ILCS citation:

For this example we will use a particular section of the Code of Civil Procedure (the citation is 735 ILCS 5/9-218(a)).



A (735) is the chapter number.

B (5) is the act number.

C (9) is the title or article number.

D (218) is the part and section. The first number is the part (2), the last two are the section (18). There may be 4 digits, in which case, the first 2 would be the part and the last 2 would be the section. There may also be only 2 digits, in which case, only the section is listed.

E (a) is the subsection, if any.

Step 1: Repeat steps 1-3 from Example 1, this time using 735 as the Chapter number.

Step 2: Scroll down to the article number and click on the part number (in this case scroll down to Article IX and click on “Part 2 Recovery Of Rent Termination Of Certain Tenancies”).

Step 3: Scroll down to find the appropriate section and subsection (in this case section 218 and subsection (a)).

Exercise 2: Find 735 ILCS 5/9-206 (the section of the Code of Civil Procedure dealing with notice to terminate year-to-year farm tenancies).



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Example 3: Finding an Act by name or key words:

For this Example we will use the Fence Act (the citation is 765 ILCS 130 but for purposes of this example we'll pretend we only know the name of the Act or key words, not it's citation).

Step 1: On the Illinois General Assembly home page (<http://www.ilga.gov/> - or search the web for "Illinois General Assembly"), click the link for "Illinois Compiled Statutes"

Step 2: Click "search" near the top of the screen.

Step 3: In the box labeled "Search ILCS by Act name" enter the name of the Act (in this case "fence act") and click "search."

Step 3Alt [if you only know key words, not the Act name]: In the box labeled "Search by key word(s)" enter key words (in this case "fence" or "division fence") and click "search."

Exercise 3: Using steps 1-3, find the "Grain Code" by using "Search ILCS by Act name." Also, using steps 1, 2, and 3Alt, find an Act that includes key words "grain insurance fund."

III. Accessing Public Acts Using the General Assembly Website

When a bill is passed by the Illinois General Assembly and signed into law by the governor, it is given a Public Act number. Public Acts are also available on the General Assembly website and show the language added and deleted, if the new Act amends an existing Act. Knowing how to access a Public Act is also a useful skill illustrated in the following example.

Example 4: Finding an Act by its Public Act number:

For this example we will use Public Act 093-0001 – An Act concerning the State Budget.

The first three numbers (093 in our example) represent the General Assembly session in which the Act was passed. For example, when the newly elected General Assembly first met in January 2003, it met as the 93rd General Assembly; all Acts passed by that legislative body have "093" as the first three numbers). The last four numbers (0001 in our example) represent the public act number assigned. Public Act 093-0001 was the first legislation enacted into law by the 93rd General Assembly (2003-2004). Here is how to find Public Act 093-0001:

Step 1: On the Illinois General Assembly home page (<http://www.ilga.gov/> - or search the web for "Illinois General Assembly"), click the link for "Public Acts."

Step 2: Click "Search Public Acts" near the top of the screen. [For Public Acts from earlier General Assemblies, you may need to click on "Public Acts/Leg. From Previous ..."]

Step 3: Type the act number (in this case 093-0001) in the box labeled "to look up by public act number..." and click "search."

Exercise 4: Find Public Act 094-0625. (It was the 625th Act of the 94th General Assembly (2005-2006); it amended the Illinois Recreational Use Act.) Also, find Public Act 092-0110 (the 92nd General Assembly's amendments to the Sustainable Agriculture Act).



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IV. Accessing House and Senate Bills by Number Using the General Assembly Website

Bills introduced into the House and Senate during a session of the General Assembly receive a bill number. Knowing how to find a bill that has been introduced into the current General Assembly is another useful skill, e.g., when you want to know the *content of proposed legislation* or the *current status of proposed legislation*.

Example 5: Finding a current bill (a bill introduced in the current General Assembly):

For this example we will use HB0032: Farm Products Act. The “HB” stands for House Bill, indicating that it was first introduced in the Illinois House. The number represents the bill number. [Note: You will be able to follow this step-by-step example on the website only while the 94th General Assembly is the current General Assembly, i.e., until January 2007. Thereafter, a new General Assembly will take office, the House and Senate Bill numbers of the 94th GA will be recycled, and HB0032 will become a new bill – not the proposed Farm Products Act.]

Step 1: On the Illinois General Assembly home page (<http://www.ilga.gov/> - or search the web for “Illinois General Assembly”), click the link for “Bills & Resolutions.”

Step 2: Click the appropriate link for the number range of the bill (in this case under “House - Bills” click “0001 – 0100” because 0032 is within this range).

Step 3: Scroll down to the appropriate bill number and click the link (in this case click “HB0032 Farm Products Act”).

Step 4: Click “full text” near the top of the screen.

Example 6: Finding a bill from a previous General Assembly session:

For this example we will use 90_SB0908: Farm Economic – Renewable Fuel. The “90” represents the session of the General Assembly during which the bill was introduced. The “SB” stands for Senate Bill, indicating that it was first introduced in the Illinois Senate. The number represents the bill number.

Step 1: On the Illinois General Assembly home page (<http://www.ilga.gov/> - or search the web for “Illinois General Assembly”), click the link for “Previous General Assemblies.”

Step 2: Select the appropriate General Assembly number from the drop-down list (in this case select “90”) and click “Go.”

Step 3: Click on “Listing” next to the heading “Legislation & Laws.”

Step 4: Click the appropriate link for the number range of the bill (in this case under “Senate - Bills” click “0901 – 1000” because 0908 is within this range).

Step 5: Scroll down to the appropriate bill number and click the link (in this case click “SB0908 Farm Economic – Renewable Fuel”).

Step 6: Click “full text” near the top of the screen.

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