

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

STATE LAW LIBRARY

Question: What are the library hours?

Answer: The library is open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday and 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Saturdays. During the summer the library closes at 4:30 pm. and noon on Saturdays. Please check the calendar for Saturday closings for holidays and during the summer. The library has four (4) satellite libraries located in the four county courthouses (Garrahy, Kent, Washington, and Newport). The hours in the county libraries follow the courthouse schedules and are not open on Saturdays.

Question: Where can I park?

Answer: Parking in Providence and Newport is limited to on street parking and fee based parking garages. Free parking is available at Kent and Washington counties.

Question: Is the library open to the public?

Answer: Yes, the library is supported by public funds and is open to all. However, materials circulate only to the bench, the bar, and to self-represented litigants with a pending case in the Rhode Island courts. Any person holding a valid HELIN library card may request materials through the HELIN system.

Question: What is the HELIN?

Answer: HELIN is a consortium of research libraries throughout the state. HELIN members can access and borrow from participating members. These members include Brown University, University of Rhode Island, Rhode Island College, Johnson & Wales University, Bryant University, Salve Regina University, and others. Material found in the HELIN catalog and designated “available” can be requested by a registered borrower and the material can be picked up at any HELIN location, including the State Law Library.

Question: How long do materials circulate?

Answer: The general rule is that materials circulate for 14 days, except for LOAN designated materials that circulate for 28 days.

Question: Can I renew materials?

Answer: Materials can be renewed for an additional 14 / 28 days.

Question: What if the material I need is not in the HELIN Catalog?

Answer: Materials not available in the HELIN catalog can be requested by registered borrowers through Interlibrary Loan. There is an occasional fee for this service imposed by the lending library. The library has an agreement to share with a number of libraries, and charges for this service are rare.

Question: What materials circulate?

Answer: The Rhode Island State Law Library is primarily a research library and as such, many of the materials do not circulate. These include reporters, digests, statutes, etc. Treatises covering a wide variety of legal issues do circulate; however, they are subject to recall if needed by a member of the courts or the practicing bar. We ask your cooperation with this generous policy and promptly return recalled items.

Question: Is there photocopying and printing?

Answer: Coin operated photocopies, printers, and vendor card machines are available in each of the libraries. Coins, dollar bills, and copy cards, which can be purchased at the libraries for \$5.00, can be used at these machines. Please bring a five dollar bill or five one dollar bills with you in order to purchase a card. Once a card is purchased, any amount can be added to it.

Question: Is Reference Service available?

Answer: Reference service is available Monday through Friday at the main library, on Wednesdays in Kent County, and on alternate Wednesdays in Newport and Washington Counties. Saturdays have limited reference service available. Garrahy Judicial Complex has reference staff available daily except Wednesdays and Thursday afternoons.

Question: Can the library provide legal advice?

Answer: No. State Law Library staff members are not licensed attorneys and therefore cannot give legal advice or interpret the law, nor should any response given be construed or interpreted as legal advice.

Question: Are Internet and computer services available?

Answer: All the libraries, both the main library and counties, have public access computers. The main library offers wireless and wired service on eleven (11) workstations. Personal laptops can be brought to the library, but due to security issues, cannot be used to access the Internet and/or access office networks.

Question: What does the library have access to?

Answer: The library subscribes to a number of electronic databases. A full listing of these can be found on this website. Among the databases is Public Access Westlaw which is offered at the main library, and Lexis is offered at the main library and at all the county libraries as well.

Question: How are the databases be accessed?

Answer: Due to contractual obligations and copyright restrictions, all databases must be used within the court network. Some require a password. Please ask at the circulation desk to sign on these databases. Other databases allow seamless access throughout the network.

Question: Does the library provide instruction?

Answer: Yes, library staff will be happy to provide instruction on accessing and maximizing functionality on databases. Cases and statutes can be retrieved, shepardized, and results can be printed on our coin operated public printers
