

A Guide to
Legislation and Legislative Process
in British Columbia

PART 5

STATUTE PUBLICATIONS

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PART 5 – STATUTE PUBLICATIONS

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PART 5

STATUTE PUBLICATIONS

This Part describes government statute publications. (In addition to these publications, there are a number of private publishers who produce print, electronic and internet legislation materials.)

Government statute publications

Government statute publications are produced through co-operation between the Office of Legislative Counsel, the Office of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly and the Queen's Printer.

By way of example, the following describes the usual preparation and publication process for government Bills:

- ◆ Original preparation of the Bills is done within the Office of Legislative Counsel, which sends the First Reading form of the Bills to the Queen's Printer for printing.
- ◆ The Office of the Clerk is responsible for changes to Bills as they proceed through the Legislative Assembly. These changes are made by the Office of Legislative Counsel under the direction of the Office of the Clerk.
- ◆ The Office of Legislative Counsel will then use the Third Reading form of the Bills as the basis for preparing the annual Statutes of British Columbia volume, including tables and other reference materials that are included in the annual volume.

Official status of Queen's Printer publications

The Queen's Printer is the government agency charged with responsibility for printing the official versions of the statutes. This responsibility is established by the *Queen's Printer Act*:

- ◆ under section 3 of the Act, the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly is required to provide the Queen's Printer with certified copies of the Acts of the Legislature as they receive Royal Assent during a legislative session;
- ◆ under section 5 of the Act, the Queen's Printer must print those Acts "as soon as practicable" after the close of each legislative session.

Under section 25 of the *Evidence Act*, copies of statutes printed by the Queen's Printer can be accepted by courts without further proof of authenticity. Given this official status, considerable care and time is needed to prepare the printed statutes.

Print publications

A number of print publications are available:

- ◆ Bills;
- ◆ individual Acts;
- ◆ annual bound volumes of the Statutes of British Columbia (as enacted during the legislative sessions for that year);
- ◆ the looseleaf consolidation of the Revised Statutes of British Columbia.

The looseleaf consolidation includes all provisions of Public Acts of the province that are in force, as they read on the consolidation date. (This date will be indicated on the first page of each Act that was updated as part of the looseleaf installment.)

A Table of Legislative Changes follows each Act that has been updated as part of the installment. The Table itemizes by affected provision all changes to the Act that were enacted between installments, whether the changes are not in force or in force on the date of consolidation. There are currently two editions of the Table of Legislative Changes: the First Edition covers changes between January 1, 1997 and December 31, 2004; the Second Edition covers changes made since December 31, 2004.

[A caution: Further changes may have been made since the consolidation date; these will not appear in the table.]

Printed copies of all British Columbia legislation may be obtained from Crown Publications. Their contact information is:

Crown Publications Inc.
phone: 250-387-6409 or 1-800-663-6105 (toll free in B.C.)
fax: 250-387-1120
online store: www.crownpub.bc.ca
email: crownpub@gov.bc.ca

Legislative Assembly: free public internet access to Bills, debates and other information

The Legislative Assembly website provides access to information about British Columbia's parliament, the Legislative Library, Hansard (Debates) and Legislation.

The *Legislation* page contains links to the following:

- ◆ Bills introduced in the most recent legislative session and a number of previous legislative sessions, including
 - ◇ First Reading Bills with their explanatory notes,
 - ◇ Report Bills showing amendments made by the Legislative Assembly, and
 - ◇ Third Reading Bills;

- ◆ Also available is a *Progress of Bills* table for each legislative session. The table indicates the dates on which each Bill was debated in the Legislative Assembly. By accessing the Hansard record for that day, one may find out what was said in debate on a particular Act;
- ◆ BC Laws (see more about this below);
- ◆ B.C. Regulations Bulletins;
- ◆ Order in Council and Ministerial Order Resumes;
- ◆ Act/Ministry Responsibilities (a list indicating which ministry is responsible for each Act).

The Legislative Assembly website is found at www.leg.bc.ca.

QPLegaleze: subscription internet access

QPLegaleze provides searchable databases of a great deal of legislative information, including

- ◆ up-to-date consolidations of Acts and Regulations,
- ◆ historical information, including archived versions of previous consolidations and point-in-time information showing how an Act read before a particular amendment,
- ◆ Bills from 1996 onwards,
- ◆ Hansard from 1992 onwards,
- ◆ Orders in Council,
- ◆ the British Columbia Gazette, and
- ◆ current and historical Rules of Court.

Access is by annual, monthly or daily subscription. The QPLegalEze website is found at www.qplegaleze.ca.

BC Laws: free public internet access

BC Laws provides free public access to current laws of British Columbia. It is updated continually as new and amended laws come into force and is an unofficial consolidation. This website includes

- ◆ up-to-date consolidations of Acts and Regulations,
- ◆ a link to Regulations Bulletins, and
- ◆ a link to Orders in Council Resumes.

The BC Laws website is found at www.bclaws.ca.