(U.S. Space Law Research Guide)

The Center receives many requests from around the world for assistance in researching U.S. space law. Most of them are from people who do not have access to law libraries and materials. Therefore, this Guide is intended to provide access to authoritative sources of United States space law. It is updated as necessary.

Regarding executive orders and directives, as well as proposed legislation, reports and position papers on space law and policy etc., the reader is advised to consult a number of authoritative, official websites provided by the United States Government. There a number of on-line sites that purport to compile space law but they are unofficial and often out of date. They are not the best sources to cite in legal writings. If you find a source on one of these sites, the reader is advised to confirm that source on an official website and cite it, not the secondary compilation.


Unofficial government sites that provide good information include http://www.opencrs.com/, which provides reports from the Congressional Research Service; and, http://www.wws.princeton.edu/ota/, which provides reports from the now defunct Office of Technology Assessment.

As these websites demonstrate, over the past five decades a substantial amount of United States space legislation and regulations have been enacted regarding national and commercial space programs. In the United States Code, some of these provisions have been places under title 42 (Public Health and Welfare) and others have been placed under title 15 (Commerce and Trade). Because the organizational scheme for the Code was originally established in 1926, well before the beginning of space activities, no distinct title for national and commercial space programs currently exists.