



09 HOW TO Find Official Publications

Government and Parliament publish a vast amount of material each year, usually in prescribed series of publications. This guide explains where to locate some of these.

Statutes, Statutory Instruments and Bills are dealt with in separate **HOW TO** guides.

Command Papers

Command papers are laid before parliament to bring to their attention Government information and decisions. They were first published as their own series in 1833, before which they were included in the House of Commons Journal.

Where to find command papers

The Law Society Library holds command papers from 1833 to 2016 on microfiche and from 1966 onward on Public Information Online (PIO) (subscription database).

To find the correct microfiche, the volume and page number is required for those published before the 1979/80 session; this can be found on the *Index to the House of Commons Parliamentary Papers* (ask staff). After this date they have their own separate microfiche sequence in numerical order. If the Command Paper number is not known, use the *Index to the House of Commons Parliamentary Papers* to find it.

If the command paper is a treaty it may be listed in the *Indexes to Treaties* at Bay G6. *Bowman and Harris*, also at Bay G6, lists multilateral treaties, and the *Index of British Treaties* at Bay G6 lists treaties involving the UK. They both have subject indexes.

Recent command papers may be available on the GOV.UK website. Otherwise there are very few websites that provide free access to an index and/or full text of official publications.

Numbering

Since command papers were first produced in 1833 there have been several series distinguished by different prefixes abbreviating the word 'command'.

1 → 4222 (no prefix)	1833 → 1869
C 1 → C 9550	1870 → 1899
Cd 1 → Cd 9239	1900 → 1918
Cmd 1 → Cmd 9889	1919 → 1956
Cmnd 1 → Cmnd 9927	1956 → Nov 1986
Cm 1 →	Nov 1986 →

Hansard

Parliamentary debates that take place on the floor of the whole House of Commons (HC) or the whole House of Lords (HL) are reported in the Official Report, commonly known as Hansard.

Where to find Hansard

The Law Society Library holds hardcopies of both the HC and HL Hansard from 1803 to 2006 and from 2008 onward on PIO (subscription database).

HC and HL Hansards are available on the internet from 1988 (HC) and 1995 (HL) onward at <https://hansard.parliament.uk/>

Scanned copies of Hansard from 1803 to 2005 can be found on the internet at <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com>. These have been found to contain errors so use with caution.

Numbering



Hansard is published in two series, the HC and HL series. They are arranged by volume number, and within each volume they are arranged by column. Therefore a Hansard reference would be written 'HL Vol.576 col. 122'.

House of Commons (HC) Papers

House of Commons Papers are the result of work undertaken by the HC and its committees. These include Committee Papers (not the debates), minutes of proceedings and some annual reports and accounts.

How to find HC Papers

The Library holds all HC Papers from 1801 to 2016 on microfiche and from 2006 onward on PIO (subscription database).

To find the correct microfiche the volume and page number is required for those published before the 1979/80 session, use the *Index to the House of Commons Parliamentary Papers* in the Library (ask staff). After this they have their own separate microfiche sequence in numerical order. If the HC number is not known, ask staff for help to find it. There are also various hardcopy indexes and lists of HC Papers held in the Library at Bay N7.

Numbering

HC Papers are numbered from 1 at the beginning of each parliamentary session, therefore a reference would be written 'HC 166 1998/99'

House of Lords (HL) Papers

Like the HC Papers, HL Papers are the result of work undertaken by the House of Lords and includes reports of select committees, minutes of proceedings, evidence heard by committees and some accounts.

Where to find HL Papers

The Library holds HL Papers from 1984/85 session to 2016 on microfiche and from 1955 onward on PIO (subscription database). To find the correct microfiche, if the number is not known, ask staff for help.

Numbering

HL Papers are numbered from 1 at the beginning of each parliamentary session, therefore a reference would be written 'HL 25 2002/03'

Standing Committee and Public Bill Committee Debates

After the second reading of a Bill comes the committee stage in which each clause is examined in detail. The proceedings of these committees are published in the *Standing Committee Debates*. These were renamed the *Public Bill Committee Debates* from the 2006/07 session onwards

Where to find Standing and Public Bill Committee debates

The Law Society Library holds hardcopies of these debates from the 1967/68 session to 2016 and from 2006 on PIO (subscription database).

These debates are also available from the 1997/98 session onwards in full text in the UK Parliament website, along with other committee debates at www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/stand.htm

Microfiche locations within the Library

1801→1881 (to vol. LI)	Cabinet B	Next to Bay 42
1881 (from vol. LII)→1914	Cabinet D	Next to Bay 41
1914→1985/86	Cabinet C	Between Bays 54 and 55
1985/86→2004/05	Cabinet G	Between Bays 58 and 59
2004/05→	Cabinet I	Between Bays 60 and 61



Supporting Solicitors



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w: www.lawsociety.org.uk/Library

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