Federal Statutes: Order of Publication

What Happens After a Law is Passed
After a bill makes its way through Congress and is signed by the President, it is published as an individual document (a "slip") and given a Public Law Number (Pub. L.; or P.L.). Public Laws are numbered with the Congress in which the bill was enacted and the chronological order in which the laws were passed. For example Pub. L. 111-2 (2009) was the second piece of legislation to come out of the 111th Congress.
After a session of Congress ends, all the laws passed in that session are bound and printed in the Statutes at Large. Collectively, these are known as "session laws." Federal session laws are cited to the Statutes at Large by volume and page number. For example, Pub. L. 111-2 is printed in the Statutes at Large at 123 STAT 5. This means it is in volume 123 of the Statutes at Large, starting on page 5.
The final step in the publication of federal statutes is codification into the statutory code. When laws are codified, they are organized according to subject matter. This subject organization features titles and chapters. For example, the citation 18 U.S.C. § 1514A is a citation to:

Title 18: Crimes and Criminal Procedure
Part I: Crimes
Chapter 73: Obstruction of Justice
Section 1514A: Civil action to protect against retaliation in fraud cases.
UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SECTIONS, CHAPTERS, TITLES

- You must always move out to the chapter level and title level to ensure you find any related statutes that may effect your code provision.

- Most statutory chapters will have a definitions section that will have mandatory application to all language within the chapter.

- Look at: Purpose, Intent, Statutes of Limitations, Effective Dates, Exceptions, Penalties.

- Follow all cross references.

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