

# The Law & You

*A Handbook of General and Everyday Law Affecting Ohio Citizens*

13th Edition



Prepared by the Ohio State Bar Association  
Funded by the Ohio State Bar Foundation

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# *introduction*

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The law is an integral part of our lives. We are born, live, and die under the law. Marriage, the care of children, education, how we earn our daily bread, our relations with others, our conduct, what becomes of our property when we die—all are governed by the law.

Ours is a government of laws, not of individuals. Good citizenship requires that everyone have at least a basic knowledge of the law. This may seem an impossible task, because a modern law library (with even modest pretensions to being complete) must contain thousands of volumes. Most of the literature of the law is written by and for attorneys, and the layperson is understandably repelled by the prospect of wading through mountains of technical language for information. Further, the layperson risks becoming so bogged down in detail that the fundamental principles are lost.

This book was written to help fill the need for a survey of law for the non-lawyer. It is written in non-technical terms and it avoids detail in favor of main principles. It makes a determined attempt to aid understanding of legal principles by explaining, where appropriate, what the law is and how it got that way. Many illustrations are used to explain the operation of the law in commonplace terms. The basic subjects covered are the sources of law, organization and operation of the courts, legal procedure, criminal law, torts, contracts, business transactions and corporations, property law, probate law, family law, workplace law, school law and cyberlaw. A glossary explains many technical terms with which the layperson is likely to come in contact.

The reader should bear in mind that this book is not a definitive work on the law. Some areas of the law are not discussed at all, and most others are not discussed in great detail. The discussions that are included touch only the high spots. The inclusion of too much material or detail would defeat the book's main purpose. Further, some interpretations of the law contained in this book may be misleading or erroneous. The law is constantly changing; the law today may not be the law tomorrow.

Even assuming that such a work could be written, this book is not intended as a complete, how-to-do-it manual on the law. Neither the Ohio State Bar Foundation nor the Ohio State Bar Association provides legal or other professional services. This book attempts to provide a simplified overview of the law. Readers should not and cannot rely on this book when faced with a real-life legal or law-related issue. They must obtain their own information and make their own decisions. Readers should contact a lawyer when they are faced with real-life legal problems.