

APPENDIX 1

USING THE *MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, ANNOTATED*

Michael Lanford

WHAT IS THE *MISSISSIPPI CODE*?

The *Mississippi Code* is a collection of all the laws, or statutes, governing the State of Mississippi as passed from time to time by the legislature. It includes the *Mississippi Constitution of 1890* and the *U.S. Constitution*. It contains the latest versions of statutes, as amended by the Legislature. In addition, it contains references, or annotations, to court cases interpreting the statutes.

The *Code* is presently 21 volumes plus a two-volume paperback Index. Volume 1 begins with the federal and state Constitutions, and the Mississippi statutes follow. Each statute is referenced with a three-figured number, starting with Section (§) 1-1-1 in Volume 1 and ending with § 99-49-21 in Volume 21. These numbers represent the title, chapter, and section of the *Code*. Statutes or *Code* sections, on municipalities and municipal officers can be found in Volume 6 at § 21-1-1 and the sections that follow (*et seq.*).

DOES THE *CODE* CONTAIN THE LATEST VERSION OF THE STATUTES?

Each year after the legislature meets, the *Code* is updated. This usually occurs in July or August. The publisher of the *Code* will send out supplements or “pocket-parts.” These newsprint supplements are inserted into a pocket in the back cover of each volume and contain the latest amendments and court cases. Sometimes this pocket-part will become too big to be inserted in the volume, and the publisher will simply provide a free-standing paperback supplement for that volume. Always check to make sure your copy of the *Code* contains the latest supplement. When looking up a *Code* section it is a good idea to always check the supplement first; if the section is printed in the supplement there is no reason to look further in the main volume for the current version of that law.

HOW DO I FIND THE STATUTES ON A PARTICULAR SUBJECT?

The statutes may be searched using the *Code*'s table of contents and two indexes.

The Index to the *Code*

If you have no idea where to begin, look up the subject in which you are interested in the two-volume index, which is arranged alphabetically. First define to yourself your question or subject matter. For example, you may be interested in what a municipality's duties and powers are with regard to fireworks. You would begin by looking in the Index under “fireworks” or “municipalities.” In the F section of the index you will find the entry, “FIREWORKS.” Under that you will find a number of headings, one of which is “Municipalities regulation, § 21-19-15.”

You can then go to that *Code* section and read the statute. After the statute there may be annotations, references to court cases and Attorney General opinions interpreting that statute.

You might have started your inquiry by looking under M for “Municipalities.” If so, you would have found the entry, “Fireworks” and subheadings under that entry.

There will often be some trial and error involved, at least until you become familiar with the *Code* and its Index. If you do not find any references to your subject on your first attempt, try to think of another word that might be used to describe your subject. For example, you might find references to the laws you are looking for under “Explosives.”

The Index To Each Volume

You may already know that many municipal government statutes are found in Volume 6 of the *Code*. Instead of using the large Index for the entire *Code*, you could go directly to Volume 6 and turn to the much smaller index found in the last few pages. There you can look up the same words and find a detailed list of statutes found in that particular volume dealing with your subject.

The Table of Contents

After you become somewhat familiar with the contents of the *Code*, you may find it easier to look up a statute simply by “eye balling” the *Code*. On the spine of each volume is printed the subject matter with which that particular volume deals. For example, the spine of Volume 6 (figure on right) indicates that the topics “Municipalities” and “Elections” are covered in the volume. After this topic description, the spine of the book indicates that the *Code* sections found in the volume are §§ 21-1-1 to 23-17-61. You might want to begin with this volume and find out about municipal police powers. Pull this volume; on the inside of the front cover and first page you will find a table of contents. This table lists the subject matter and *Code* sections contained within. As you go down the list you will find several different subjects, one of which is “Police and Police Departments. . . § 21-21-1.” If you then turn to that statute you will find a more detailed table of contents listing each statute and describing in a few words the subject with which the statute deals. For example, “§ 21-21-1. Marshal or Chief of Police; duties; bond” and “§ 21-21-5 Purchasing dogs for use of Police Department,” etc.

A statute will often be followed by cross references to other *Code* sections dealing with a related topic. For example § 21-21-1 is followed by a cross-reference to a statute describing the police chief’s duties in furnishing voting booths for municipal elections, namely § 23-15-257.



