Shepards

Shepard's is a citation research service provided by Lexis. It is very similar to KeyCite, which is a citation research service provided by Westlaw. The term “to Shepardize” can refer to using either KeyCite or Shepard's.

The purpose of KeyCiting or Shepardizing is to verify whether a case, statute, administrative decision, or regulation is still good law, or to find citing references that support your legal argument. Unless you are a law student or lawyer with your own password for Lexis, you will need to come to the law library in person to use Shepard's. The instructions that follow apply to using Shepard's from within the law library.

Shepard's is only available at select computer terminals in the law library – known as the Computer Aided Legal Research terminals. These computers are located on Sub-1, behind the glass enclosure behind the reference desk. Please ask for assistance at the reference desk if you have trouble finding these computers.

To access Shepard's, click on the shortcut on the computer's desktop. The Shepard's entrance page will appear; read the “Terms & Conditions” agreement, provide your name, and choose “Accept” in the lower right hand corner to continue. If a pop-up blocker screen appears, please ignore it and click continue.
Click the “Shepard’s” tab near the center of the browser window.

Suppose that we have found a citation to the case entitled Sutton vs. United Airlines. The citation is 119 S.Ct. 2139.

Type the citation in the Shepard's search box. Select “Shepard's for Research,” and click “Check.”

Shepard’s will display a table of authorities and the direct history of the Sutton case below the case name and citation at the top of the screen. Shepard’s will display Supreme Court citations, followed by all other case citations by Courts of Appeal and then State.

Shepard’s Signals provide the “state of the law” status of the case requested with symbols. In the top middle, a yellow triangle means that there may have been some negative citations but the holding has not been overruled. A red stop sign may mean your case been overruled or superseded.

Shepard’s also uses headings to show the relation between a citation and the original case. You will want to check any cases that may have overturned or viewed your case negatively. Browse through the citations with the arrows at the top of the screen. The links below the direction arrows allow you to restrict the citations displayed. The “FOCUS-Restrict By” link allows you to restrict the citations display to searched words, courts, and LexisNexis Headnotes. Shepard’s automatically updates, so you can consider the information reported here to be complete. If you have questions about using Shepard’s or other legal research tasks, please visit the reference desk for assistance.