

THE LAW AND YOU

**A look at how laws
affect your daily activities.**



What kinds of law come into play when you drive to work or school and park your car? OSCAR has a quick quiz to help you examine these activities and others to find out.



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LOOKING THROUGH A MAGIC MIRROR

Rule by a written set of laws, agreed to by those governed, has always been one of the things that distinguishes civilized people from contemporary barbarians.

Chief Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes likened our body of laws to "a magic mirror, wherein we see reflected not only our own lives but the lives of all men that have been."

In America, the law pervades our lives — we are born, educated, mated and put to rest according to laws. Yet most of us know so little about the law. Our "legal training" usually comes from Perry Mason television reruns and the newspapers' crime-and-punishment beat.

Nevertheless, we *must* know something about the law, just to survive. As one legal expert said, "Law is the one subject that interacts in everyone's life, every day of life, and even after death."

Legalware™ and the Law

Legalware™ is designed to provide the needed practical information about the law and how to use it. *Legalware™* programs let you briefly examine specific areas of the law. The quick and easy activities of the programs will help you develop your understanding of the law and your skills in dealing with it every day. Further, *Legalware™* may challenge your attitudes and feelings about the law.

For example, one case study that will appear in *Legalware™* will explain how a confession to a crime may, in some cases, be ignored by the court, thus letting a defendant go free even though he has admitted guilt. *Legalware™* will provide challenging information and exercises on topics such as this so you can become informed enough to participate in your government and understand the meanings of justice and equality.

How Laws Affect You

For this first installment of the *Legalware™* series, called *The Law and You*, let's examine the differences between criminal law and civil law.

Generally, criminal law regulates the conduct of an individual and provides punishment for non-conformance. That punishment can be a fine, jail or both. In a criminal complaint, it will always be "The People (or The State) versus (somebody)," which means the state or federal government is the complainant, or as lawyers say, the prosecutor.

In civil law, it's almost always "(Somebody) versus (Somebody Else)." That is, civil law deals with relationships among individuals. As used here, individuals *can* be companies or even governmental bodies.

Generally, civil laws either can compensate individuals for harm from others or protect from harm. Compensations from civil law cases are called damages. Civil law cases that protect result in orders, either an order to do something or an order that forbids something. For example, the civil law of contracts may order a person to follow through on an agreement. In addition, some contract laws may order the person to pay damages. It's also important to know that no one can be sent to jail for a violation of civil law.

Sometimes a situation can involve both criminal and civil law. In a fraud case, for example, you can sue the perpetrator to recover any money you've lost (civil law), *and* you can file a complaint with the appropriate authorities to have them take action against the person (criminal law). For example, a person who drives a car while under the influence of alcohol can face both a criminal consequence (loss of liberty and a fine) and a civil consequence (damages) for the injuries to person and property that may have occurred.

Other Rules

Aside from formal laws adopted by governments, there are other rules we must live by — rules laid down by parents, employers, regulatory bodies and the like. Not real "laws," but just as important.

Try *The Law and You* to determine whether you understand the differences and to look at some of the kinds of laws that have an impact on your home, your family and all your daily activities.

Program Instructions

- Load the program into your computer with OSCAR. Then type "RUN." (Refer to your User's Manual if you have difficulties.)
- Type your name, hit RETURN or ENTER.
- Read the first daily activity and the law involved, and decide what kind of law it is. If you're right, a second law for the activity will appear. Again, choose the proper law. If you are incorrect with any choice, the computer will tell you to TRY AGAIN.
- After the final question, type "Y" (yes) if you want to review the activities and laws once more, "N" (no) if you don't.

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