



Thomas M. Cooley Law Libraries' Research Guide Series

PRIMARY AUTHORITY

Type of Authority	When & Where Mandatory	When & Where Persuasive
U.S. Constitution	Always Mandatory on all federal and state courts	N/A
U.S. Supreme Court decision interpreting & applying federal law (U.S.)	Always mandatory on all federal and state courts	N/A
Federal Statute (U.S.C)	Always mandatory on all federal and state courts	N/A
Federal Administrative Regulation (C.F.R.)	Always mandatory on all federal and state courts	N/A
U.S. court of Appeals Decision interpreting & applying federal law (F.3d)	Always mandatory on federal courts within the jurisdictional boundaries of the Court of Appeals issuing the decision	May be regarded as persuasive by federal state courts that do not need to treat the decision as mandatory
U.S. District Court decision interpreting & applying federal law (F.Supp.)	Always mandatory on specialized lower federal courts, if any, within the jurisdictional boundaries of the District Court issuing the decision & over which the District Court has appellate jurisdiction	May be regarded as persuasive by federal & state courts that do not need to treat the decision as mandatory
State Constitution	Always mandatory on all state courts within the given state	N/A
Decision of a state's highest court interpreting & applying that state's law (Mich.)	Always mandatory on all lower state courts within the given state	May be regarded as persuasive by federal & state courts that do not need to treat the decision as mandatory



Decision of a state's intermediate jurisdiction (i.e. Mich. App.)	Always mandatory on all lower state courts within the jurisdictional boundaries of the intermediate appellate court issuing the decision; in some states, may also be mandatory on lower state courts outside those jurisdictional boundaries	May be regarded as persuasive by federal & state courts that do not need to treat the decision as mandatory
State Statute (i.e M.C.L.)	Always mandatory on all state courts within the given state	N/A
State Administrative Regulations (i.e Mich. Admin. Code)	Always mandatory on all state courts within the given state	N/A

