

LEGISLATIVE SNAPSHOT

Laws That Apply to Other Laws

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Summary

Michigan has laws that provide rules, definitions, or defaults that apply to other Michigan laws, either generally or in certain cases. This is a snapshot of a few of these laws that apply to other laws.

Rules of Construction

[Chapter 1 of the Revised Statutes of 1846](#) has several rules that always apply to interpreting Michigan's laws—unless they are inconsistent with the plain and obvious intent of the legislature. Notably, under these provisions, the following apply to the laws of Michigan:

- **All Michigan laws are severable.** This means that if any part of an act is found by a court to be invalid, that ruling does not affect the validity of any of the rest of the act that can be given effect without the invalid part.
- A **repealed law** is not reinstated if the law that repealed it is later repealed.
- Every word written as a **singular also includes the plural**, and every word written as a plural also includes the singular.
- Technical and legal words and phrases must be interpreted with their specialized meaning. All other words and phrases must be interpreted by their **common and approved usage** (that is, with their natural, ordinary, and familiar meaning). Note that the legislature can define words and phrases with a specialized meaning for purposes of a given law.
- Unless a law provides otherwise, the **population** of the state or a local unit of government is always based on the most recent 10-year federal census.
- The word **“person”** includes political and corporate entities as well as individuals.
- The words **“state”** and **“United States”** include the District of Columbia and U.S. territories.
- When **calculating a time period** given in days, the first day is *excluded* (it is counted as “zero”) and the last day is *included*. If a specified day or the last day of a time period is a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday, that day is moved to the next day that is not a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday.
- The word **“month”** means a calendar month, and **“year”** means a calendar year. For example, the date one month from February 4 is March 4. It is not determined by counting days.

Public Notices

[1963 PA 247](#) defines the term **“newspaper”** for laws requiring public notices to be published in a newspaper. In general, such a newspaper must be in English, provide either legal news or general local news, be published at least once a week, and be generally circulated in the area where the notice is required to appear. The act also requires such newspapers to provide internet access to the public notices and maintain an archive.

Criminal Penalties

The Michigan Penal Code provides **default penalties** for criminal offenses that are designated as felonies or misdemeanors but do not have a specified penalty:

- A [felony for which no specific penalty is prescribed](#) is punishable by imprisonment for up to four years or a fine of up to \$5,000, or both.
- A [misdemeanor for which no specific penalty is prescribed](#) is punishable by imprisonment for up to 90 days or a fine of up to \$500, or both.