

[Jump to Navigation](#) | [Jump to Content](#)

# Popular Threads on Solosez

## Essential Books for Starting a Practice

Do any of you have any advice as to what code books and treatises are the most useful when starting a practice? I have several casebooks and code books leftover from law school, but I think I may need to pick up state court rules, criminal code books, form books, that sort of thing. As I mentioned in my introductory post, I want to eventually focus my practice on environmental law but I anticipate I may be doing my share of criminal defense and general civil litigation at first.

Thanks,

Benjamin H. Jarrell

---

Jay Foonberg's, "How to Start and Build a Law Practice" is essential regardless of your practice area.

Best of luck!

Kyla McKelvey

---

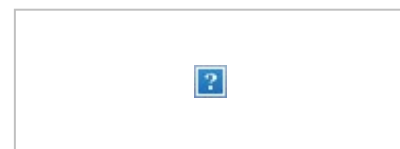
I think this is very practice and state specific based. However, I would avoid buying any books until you take a trip to the library and see what kinds of books are most useful. Also, see what is available online. Here in DC, there are some Practising Law Institute materials on civil litigation and a Pub Defender compilation relating to criminal. But what is useful will vary. For criminal defense, you should call your PD's office and ask what they recommend and also if you can use their library. For civil litigation, ask civil attorneys in your neck of the woods - gives you an excuse to call and introduce yourself. In AL, you also have a good practice management person, Laura Calloway who you might ask about what other practitioners are using. Also - up at [MyShingle.com](http://MyShingle.com), there is a link to "soloformania" (which you can also google) that has tons of materials and forms from Alabama and other states.

Carolyn Elefant

---

A few thoughts:

1. Anything but Foonberg's outdated book. You can do better with on line resources about running a law practice.
2. Talk to an experienced environmental law attorney in your area. He/she will tell you what they use regularly, and maybe more importantly, what judges use when they hear environmental cases.



## Subscribe to Solosez

**First Name**

**Last Name**

**E-mail Address**

Submit (input element)



## Unsubscribe from Solosez

**E-mail Address**

Submit (input element)



## Books

Click on the book for more info



3. If you just handling criminal/civil for a short period of time, don't buy the books. Use the internet and your law library.

Jonathan

---

Let's not forget Carolyn Elefant's book: Solo By Choice. Very up to date.

Cheers!

pmj

---

If you're going to be in court, you should get annual books with the relevant practice rules, including the court's local rules. You'll use those constantly. I do a lot of research, but it's almost exclusively on-line. Even the most expensive on-line service is going to be cheaper than buying a lot of books and updates. One exception for me is that I bought the bare-bones bound set of CT state statutes (available from the state, not a publisher). Sometimes there's no substitute for paging through a group of statutes (though Westlaw now makes it very easy to browse section by section, so I use the volumes less)

Patrick W. Begos

---

Benjamin,

My choices in order (just work your way down till you run out of money):

1. Code of Alabama (Includes the rules of civ pro, crim pro, and appellate pro, as well about the only info on probate outside of CLE materials.) I like West's better than Michie/Lexis because of the annotations, key numbers, etc. after the statute.
2. Alabama Tort Law Greg Cusimano (This will save you a ton of time and give you the big picture of a particular tort in Alabama. It also has some practice materials in the appendices that you may find helpful.)
3. Alabama Property Rights and Remedies Jesse Evans III (This is the bible of property law in Ala. There is another book out there but ...

It looks like you are close to the courthouse; what do they have at the county law library? If you're a new attorney, nothing will help your practice like being seen regularly at the courthouse. I would use that library for everything but the above books. I have some other Alabama-specific books that I like but I would not consider them essential for just starting out.

Good luck,

James

---

I don't often disagree with Jonathan- but I would highly recommend

Foonberg's book. As for the Code of Alabama and other Alabama books- I have been practicing for more than thirty years and never found a need for any of them

Lew Weiner

---

Find out everything that is available online either free or for modest fees and subscribe or bookmark every site of relevance. A lot of courts post their rules, etc. online. Get hard copies only of what you cannot obtain electronically. The advantage of online is that updates should be frequent and automatic. Your local law librarian may have a number of helpful references or lists of websites, too.

Kathryn Bellman

---

I liked Foonberg's book. I think it's a good starting point, especially if you want something concrete to hold in your hand (or read on the beach).

Jessica Foley

---

I just started my practice and read both Foonberg's and Solo By Choice. Foonberg's is definitely geared towards experienced attorney who are opening their own firm. It does give young attorneys great encouragement though. Solo By Choice is also a great book that is more up to date. It has a lot of info about technology. Both books mention not to buy any law books. As far as code book and treatises, I use the internet for my state's code, rules, etc.... It's free!!

I did buy a few books geared towards the law I want to practice. For forms, my state actually posts many online. Also, talk to your legal services or pro bono services, they will have many basic forms. Also, go to your local library or law school library to get forms or read treatises. See if your bar association has a lending library, I got some great form books from there.

If you really want some books, look at craigslist or the paper. My friend did buy his books from a law office that was closing, but he spent close to \$1000 for everything you are looking for. I just graduate from law school and still have all my law books, my one mentor/friend told me to use my fed. civil pro and evidence rule books from law school as the only difference in my state may be the numbering.

John Sheil

---

If you're going to be in court, you may want to own the Alabama Rules of Court, a softbound set that costs a whopping \$84 for the most recent edition:

<http://west.thomson.com/productdetail/148024/15342376/productdetail.aspx>

Rules of Court don't change that often, however. Another attorney may be willing to hand down last year's set, or your local law library may sell theirs. Get a copy somehow because it is just the sort of resource you'll

want to take with you to trial.

Kristen B. Patty

---

Also - for books to carry to court, one of these:

Evidentiary Foundations by Edward J. Imwinkelried - about \$38 (paper, 2005)

Evidentiary Foundations by Liz Heffernan and Paul Mcdermott (Paperback - Jun2008) about \$135

Kathryn Bellman

---

Benjamin,

At the very least for criminal in Alabama the paperback version of the criminal code (although some criminal statutes, etc. are found elsewhere),

Gamble's Alabama Rules of Evidence, and the rules of criminal procedure.

Some like, although I don't have one, (ret.) Justice Maddox's Alabama criminal procedure book.

Even the Judge in "My Cousin Vinnie" had one of those on the bench. The appropriate criminal listservs also help.

Eric C. Davis

---

I would get Carolyn's book over Foonberg's. But maybe that's a debate for another post. More importantly, try to get your hands on any book to preview it before you buy. I have found some resources that looked great online or on the publisher's site. But when I sat down with the library's copy, I was really disappointed.

Also, a criminal defense practitioner here in VA suggests just purchasing select volumes of the state code. I love that idea! Why pay for books and updates on code sections you will almost never touch? Not to mention shelf space! To figure out the most important volumes for you, consult colleagues in your state & practice area.

Andrew Flusche

---

Thanks to Lisa Solomon I have recently found:

Making Your Case: The Art of Persuading Judges Written by Brian Garner and Justice Scalia It is an incredible insight into what needs and doesn't need to be in my briefs and arguments. If you will do any persuasive writing or speaking then you need to read this book.

Roger Traversa

---

I use the Evidentiary Foundations in prep. In the Courtroom I carry Courtroom Handbook on Michigan Evidence from West. Not all the State rules are the same as Federal. Since Michigan uses Sentencing Guidelines in Criminal cases I also bring that for pre-trial hearings on felonies and to sentencing on Felonies. I am not near a law library so I use internet to access a lot of resources. For every criminal case I pull the appropriate statute and the standard jury instructions. Our State has several "judge" benchbooks on line that are always helpful.

Evonne

---

I caught a Charlie Rose interview with J. Scalia that was very enlightening and informative. While the interview was scheduled to flog the book it actually spent only a little time on that subject. The interview demonstrates why he is such an influential justice. See the entire interview here:

Roger Traversa

---

[Back to Popular Threads](#)

[Back to Top](#)