



City of Boston Archives and Records Management Division

Guide to the Legal Opinions of the Corporation Counsel

Finding aid prepared by Kristen Swett
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Repository:	City of Boston Archives and Records Management Division
Title:	Legal Opinions of the Corporation Counsel
Collection No.:	0700.001
Dates:	1895-1969 with gaps
Quantity:	7.0 Cubic feet (42 volumes)

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Historical note

The Office of Attorney and Solicitor was established by ordinance passed on June 18, 1827. The Office of City Attorney was abolished by ordinance passed April 29, 1846. The ordinance passed March 30, 1881 established the Office of Corporation Counsel and Office of City Solicitor. Known as the Law Department, it was jointly under the charge of the Corporation Counsel and City Solicitor. The Office of City Solicitor was abolished and the department placed under sole charge of the Corporation Counsel by the ordinance which went into effect on July 1, 1904.

The Corporation Counsel has supervisory authority over all City attorneys and legal affairs. The Law Department has general charge of all the City's legal affairs, and represents the City of Boston and the County of Suffolk in all litigation to which they are a party. The Department provides a comprehensive array of legal services: formal and informal opinions to the Mayor, the City Council, the Boston School Committee, and City or County Officials and other employees in matters relating to the discharge of their official duties; and representation for these individuals and entities in litigation of all types. Additionally, the Law Department reviews all City and County contracts, pursues claims on behalf of the City through affirmative litigation, initiates foreclosure proceedings on tax delinquent properties, and conducts a program which provides technical assistance to citizens and others with problems concerning immigration, residency status and naturalization.

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Scope and Contents note

One of the duties of the Corporation Counsel is to provide opinions on the law of any subject or question that may be submitted to him by the Mayor or the City Council and on any subject or question relating to the discharge of their or his duties that may be submitted to him by the School Committee, by any Committee of the City Council, or by four members of the City Council, or by any Officer in charge of a Department of the City government. This series includes the official opinions of the Corporation Counsel for the years 1895-1956 and 1966-1969. These opinions are bound in volumes and each volume is indexed. The volumes are numbered 8-48 and 51. At the time of the survey on city records conducted by Mark J. Duffy from 1985-1987, he indicated that volumes 1-7 and 49-50 were missing from the collection. He also noted that the opinions from 1970 to 1986 were filed in loose leaf notebooks and a comprehensive card index file was kept for pre-1982 opinions. The index was discontinued in 1981 due to clerical staffing shortages. The opinions from 1970 to the present and the card index file should still be in the custody of the Law Department.

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