

## §72. Words and phrases

The following rules shall be observed in the construction of statutes relating to words and phrases, unless such construction is inconsistent with the plain meaning of the enactment, the context otherwise requires or definitions otherwise provide. [PL 1969, c. 433, §1 (RPR).]

**1. Adult.** "Adult" means a person who has attained the age of 18 years.  
[PL 1971, c. 598, §1 (AMD).]

**1-A. Affirmations.** When a person required to be sworn is conscientiously scrupulous of taking an oath, that person may affirm.  
[RR 2023, c. 1, Pt. C, §5 (COR).]

**2. Annual meeting.** "Annual meeting," applied to towns, means the annual meeting required by law for choice of town officers.

**2-A. Child or children.** "Child or children" means a person who has not attained the age of 18 years.  
[PL 1971, c. 598, §2 (AMD).]

**2-B. Full age.** "Full age" means the age of 18 and over.  
[PL 1971, c. 598, §2 (AMD).]

**2-C. Domestic partner.** "Domestic partner" means one of 2 unmarried adults who are domiciled together under long-term arrangements that evidence a commitment to remain responsible indefinitely for each other's welfare.  
[PL 2021, c. 567, §1 (NEW).]

**3. General rule.** Words and phrases shall be construed according to the common meaning of the language. Technical words and phrases and such as have a peculiar meaning convey such technical or peculiar meaning.

**4. Grantee.** "Grantee" means the person to whom a freehold estate or interest in land is conveyed.

**5. Grantor.** "Grantor" means the person who conveys a freehold estate or interest in land.

**6. Highway.** "Highway" may include a county bridge, county road or county way.

**6-A. Infant.** "Infant" means a person who has not attained the age of 18 years.  
[PL 1971, c. 598, §3 (AMD).]

**7. Inhabitant.** "Inhabitant" means a person having an established residence in a place.

**8. Insane person.**  
[PL 1977, c. 266 (RP).]

**9. Issue.** "Issue," applied to the descent of estates, includes all lawful lineal descendants of the ancestor.

**10. Land or lands.** "Land" or "lands" includes lands and all tenements and hereditaments connected therewith, and all rights thereto and interests therein.  
[RR 2013, c. 2, §1 (COR).]

**10-A. Lawful age.** "Lawful age" means the age of 18 and over.  
[PL 1971, c. 598, §4 (AMD).]

**10-B. Legal age.** "Legal age" means the age of 18 and over.  
[PL 1971, c. 598, §4 (AMD).]

**11. Majority.** "Majority" when used in reference to age shall mean the age of 18 and over.  
[PL 1971, c. 598, §5 (AMD).]

**11-A. Minor or minors.** "Minor or minors" means any person who has not attained the age of 18 years.

[PL 1971, c. 598, §6 (AMD).]

**11-B. Minority.** "Minority" when used in reference to age shall mean under the age of 18.

[PL 1971, c. 598, §6 (AMD).]

**11-C. Month.** "Month" means a calendar month.

[PL 1969, c. 433, §6 (RPR).]

**12. Municipal officers.** "Municipal officers" means the mayor and municipal officers or councilors of a city, the members of the select board or councilors of a town and the assessors of a plantation.

[RR 2023, c. 1, Pt. C, §6 (COR).]

**13. Municipality.** "Municipality" includes cities, towns and plantations, except that "municipality" does not include plantations in Title 10, chapter 110, subchapter IV; or Title 30-A, Part 2.

[PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. C, §§1, 106 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 6 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 9, §2 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. C, §§8, 10 (AMD).]

**14. Oath.** "Oath" includes an affirmation, when affirmation is allowed.

**15. Person.** "Person" may include a body corporate.

**16. Pledge; mortgage, etc.** The terms "pledge," "mortgage," "conditional sale," "lien," "assignment" and like terms, when used in referring to a security interest in personal property shall include a corresponding security interest under Title 11, the Uniform Commercial Code.

**17. Real estate.** "Real estate" includes lands and all tenements and hereditaments connected therewith, and all rights thereto and interests therein.

**17-A. Registered apprenticeship.** "Registered apprenticeship" means an apprenticeship program registered with the Maine Apprenticeship Program in accordance with Title 26, chapter 37.

[PL 2011, c. 491, §1 (AMD).]

**18. Registered mail.** The words "registered mail" when used in connection with any requirement for notice by mail shall mean either registered mail or certified mail.

**19. Seal, corporate.** Whenever a corporate seal is used or required on any instrument, an impression made on the paper of such instrument by the seal of the corporation, without any adhesive substance, shall be deemed a valid seal. A seal of a corporation upon a certificate of stock, corporate bond or other corporate obligation for the payment of money may be facsimile, engraved or printed.

[PL 1971, c. 439, §3 (AMD).]

**20. Seal, court.** When the seal of a court, magistrate or public officer is to be affixed to a paper, the word "seal" may mean an impression made on the paper for that purpose with or without wafer or wax.

**21. State.** "State," used with reference to any organized portion of the United States, may mean a territory or the District of Columbia.

[PL 1965, c. 513, §1 (AMD).]

**22. State paper.** "State paper" means the newspaper designated by the Legislature, in which advertisements and notices are required to be published.

[PL 1973, c. 625, §1 (AMD).]

**23. Sworn.** "Sworn," "duly sworn" or "sworn according to law," used in a statute, record or certificate of administration of an oath, refers to the oath required by the Constitution or laws in the case specified, and includes every necessary subscription to such oath.

[RR 2013, c. 2, §2 (COR).]

**24. Timber and grass.** "Timber and grass," when used in reference to the public reserved lots, so called, in unorganized territory in the State, means all growth of every description on said lots.

[RR 2013, c. 2, §2 (COR).]

**25. Town.** "Town" includes cities and plantations, unless otherwise expressed or implied.

**26. Under age.** "Under age" means under the age of 18.

[PL 1971, c. 598, §7 (AMD).]

**26-A. United States.** "United States" includes territories and the District of Columbia.

[PL 1969, c. 433, §7 (RPR).]

**26-B. Unsealed instruments, when given effect of sealed instruments in any written instrument.** A recital that such instrument is sealed by or bears the seal of the person signing the same or is given under the hand and seal of the person signing the same, or that such instrument is intended to take effect as a sealed instrument, shall be sufficient to give such instrument the legal effect of a sealed instrument without the addition of any seal of wax, paper or other substance or any semblance of a seal by scroll, impression or otherwise; but the foregoing shall not apply in any case where the seal of a court, public office or public officer is expressly required by the Constitution, by statute or by rule of the court to be affixed to a paper, nor shall it apply in the case of certificates of stock of corporations. The word "person" as used in this subsection shall include a corporation, association, trust or partnership.

[PL 1969, c. 590, §2 (NEW).]

**27. Vacant and vacancy.** "Vacant" and "vacancy" as applied to public office shall comprise and include all cases where the person elected or appointed to such office resigns therefrom or dies while holding the same or, being elected or appointed, is ineligible, dies or becomes incapacitated before qualifying as required by law.

**28. Written and in writing.** "Written" and "in writing" include printing and other modes of making legible words. When the signature of a person is required, that person must write it or make that person's mark, but the signatures upon all commissions or the signatures on interest coupons annexed to a corporate bond or other corporate obligation may be facsimiles, engraved or printed. The signatures of any officer or officers of a corporation upon a corporate bond or other corporate obligation, other than interest coupons, may be facsimiles, engraved or printed, on condition that such bond or obligation is signed or certified by a trustee, registrar or transfer agent. In case any officer who has signed or whose facsimile signature has been placed upon such corporate bond, other corporate obligation or interest coupon has ceased to be an officer before such corporate bond or other corporate obligation is issued, it may be issued by the corporation with the same effect as if that person were an officer at the date of its issue.

[RR 2023, c. 1, Pt. C, §7 (COR).]

**29. Will.** "Will" includes a codicil.

**30. Year.** "Year" means a calendar year, unless otherwise expressed. "Year," used for a date, means year of our Lord.

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 1965, c. 513, §1 (AMD). PL 1969, c. 113 (AMD). PL 1969, c. 433, §§1-7 (AMD). PL 1969, c. 590, §§1,2 (AMD). PL 1971, c. 439, §§3,4 (AMD). PL 1971, c. 598, §§1-7 (AMD). PL 1973, c. 625, §1 (AMD). PL 1973, c. 628, §1 (AMD). PL 1975, c. 770, §1 (AMD). PL 1975, c. 777, §1 (AMD). PL 1977, c. 266 (AMD). PL 1977, c. 390, §1 (AMD). PL 1977, c. 479, §1 (AMD). PL 1981, c. 698, §1 (AMD). PL 1987, c. 737, §§C1,C106 (AMD). PL 1989, c. 6 (AMD). PL 1989, c. 9, §2 (AMD). PL 1989, c. 104, §§C8,C10 (AMD). PL 1993, c. 630, §B1 (AMD). PL

2011, c. 491, §1 (AMD). RR 2013, c. 2, §§1, 2 (COR). PL 2021, c. 275, §1 (AMD). PL 2021, c. 567, §1 (AMD). RR 2023, c. 1, Pt. C, §§5-7 (COR).

The State of Maine claims a copyright in its codified statutes. If you intend to republish this material, we require that you include the following disclaimer in your publication:

*All copyrights and other rights to statutory text are reserved by the State of Maine. The text included in this publication reflects changes made through the Second Regular Session of the 131st Maine Legislature and is current through January 1, 2025. The text is subject to change without notice. It is a version that has not been officially certified by the Secretary of State. Refer to the Maine Revised Statutes Annotated and supplements for certified text.*

The Office of the Revisor of Statutes also requests that you send us one copy of any statutory publication you may produce. Our goal is not to restrict publishing activity, but to keep track of who is publishing what, to identify any needless duplication and to preserve the State's copyright rights.

PLEASE NOTE: The Revisor's Office cannot perform research for or provide legal advice or interpretation of Maine law to the public. If you need legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.
--