



# STAR Tips & Tricks

Gems & Nuggets to enhance your STAR experience.



**Need Help?** The best place to look for STAR help is in the user's guide. You can find it under the "Help" section on the STAR main page. You can also contact us through the "Contact Us" link next to the Help section.

Use these great tips to help you get even more out of *your* STAR system.

- ★ You can search for mixed alphanumeric terms  
**Example:** 200105276L
- ★ Use lowercase for case-insensitive match.  
**Example:** "house bill" will return house bill, House Bill or HOUSE BILL.
- ★ Capitalization can narrow your search results. Entering **Engineer** in a search will only bring up those documents that have "engineer" typed with the first letter capitalized. Entering **ENGINEER** will only return those documents in which the word **engineer** is in all caps. By using "engineer" as search criteria, it will look for all forms of that word. It will return documents with engineer, Engineer and ENGINEER.
- ★ When searching by hearing number (**Example:** 44,163), enter the number with the comma included. In addition to returning Hearing 44,163, this will return all documents wherein this hearing number is referenced.
- ★ If you only want to see hearing number 44,163, enter the following as a phrase search:  

HEARING NO. 44,163

Since hearing titles are in all caps, this type of search should return only the requested hearing.
- ★ If you wish to view or print a document without the header information or the highlighted query terms, click "Printable Version" to the right of the document title.
- ★ In the simple Query Form, you can type in your query using plain language or just use keywords.  
**Example:** is contract programming taxable? (Keywords and phrases are recommended, as is the Advance Search Form with filters!)
- ★ In the Simple Query Form, you can use + in front of a term to require it.  
**Example:** + "sprinkler system", landscape, installation

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- ★ Reminder! Superseded documents without a summary may still be valid for some issues; search the index for current documents by issue.
- ★ In the Simple Query Form, putting a dash (–) in front of a term excludes any results with that term.

**Example:** chips, -potato

To achieve the same result in an Advanced Search Form, choose “must not include.”

- ★ To search for a phrase in the Simple Query Form, surround the words with quotation marks.

**Example:** “computer software”

In the Advanced Search Form, go to “Within document body” and choose “must contain” and “the phrase” to achieve the same results.

- ★ Use the Advanced Search Form when you want to restrict your search to specific tax types, document types, status types and/or date ranges.
- ★ The STAR system default is to sort the returned documents “by relevance.” This means that the system is doing proximity searching for you behind the scenes. The first documents returned will be those in which your search criteria occurs the most and is the closest together within the body of the document.

## Know Your Index

A little known research tool is the Topical Index, which is accessible from the STAR home page. The index is a collection of subject matter headings, and appended to those headings are documents that pertain to the subject matter. Think of it like a subject card catalog system at the library. You will use keywords associated with your research situation to search for the subject matter headings. When using the Topical Index Search, you will enter the words and/or phrases you are seeking in the topical headings as opposed to the body of the document as you would do in STAR.

- ★ When using the Topical Index Search, you can view all topical headings alphabetically for a tax type by selecting the tax type and entering a colon in the word search field.
- ★ Use the Reverse Topical Index Search box (located at the bottom of the Topical Index page) to find out which headings accession numbers are appended to. This comes in handy with documents that are superseded on STAR without a superseded summary. By using the Reverse Topical Index Search box, you will see the headings the document is indexed under and if that document is current or superseded under that specific heading.
- ★ Check out the history of a rule! Select the tax you are researching. In the search field enter the word “rule” followed by the number.

**Example: rule 3.293**

Your search will bring up a heading with the current rule in addition to all the superseded rules.

