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Legal education · Turkmenistan

LEGAL LITERACY

how to understand laws, protect your rights and act with confidence

An educational bulletin for a general audience. A plain-language guide to how the law of Turkmenistan works, which documents to keep, where to turn when rights are violated, and how to read legislation without legal training.

Item	Description
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MAIN IDEA — Legal literacy begins not with memorising articles, but with a simple process: find the rule, keep documents, write to the relevant party, meet deadlines and protect your right through lawful means.

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WHY THIS MATTERS

About this bulletin and legal notice

Law is part of everyday life: employment, buying goods, renting a home, granting a power of attorney, inheritance, family matters, dealing with public authorities, and receiving medical or other services. Understanding the basic rules makes it easier to decide what to do, keep the right documents and protect your interests without unnecessary alarm.

This bulletin is written for readers without legal training. It explains in plain language what a law is, which legal instruments take precedence, which rights commonly arise in daily life, where to seek help, and how to prepare for a conversation with a lawyer, notary, employer, seller or public authority.

IMPORTANT — This material provides general information and education. It is not legal advice for a particular situation. A personal matter requires attention to documents, deadlines, facts, the current law and the powers of the relevant authority.

A PRACTICAL APPROACH

How to use this bulletin

If your question is…	Where to start
I do not know which law applies	First look at the hierarchy of legal instruments and the section on reading legal references.
I have a dispute with a seller, employer or landlord	Gather documents, correspondence, receipts and contracts, then begin with a written request.
I need a power of attorney, inheritance document or transaction	Check whether a notary is required and prepare the documents in advance.
A public authority or official has violated my rights	Record the facts, request a written answer and consider a complaint or court application.
I do not know whom to contact	Use the “Where to turn” section and the “situation → possible route” table.

Contents

Part 1 · How the law works

1.1 What a law and a regulatory legal instrument are
1.2 Hierarchy of legal instruments: which takes precedence
1.3 Who makes laws and who applies them
1.4 Branches of law: where to look for an answer
1.5 When an instrument takes effect and how to read its details
1.6 How to check a provision and avoid an outdated version

Part 2 · Your rights in everyday life

2.1 Constitutional rights and freedoms
2.2 Employment: contract, pay, leave and dismissal
2.3 Purchases and services: consumer rights
2.4 Family, children, maintenance and guardianship
2.5 Property, housing and inheritance
2.6 Health, education and applications to public authorities

Part 3 · Documents and basic legal steps

3.1 Contracts and written acknowledgements
3.2 Receipts, records, correspondence and evidence
3.3 Powers of attorney and notaries
3.4 Applications, complaints and claims

Part 4 · Where to turn and how to protect your rights

4.1 Courts
4.2 Notaries
4.3 Judicial enforcement officers
4.4 Ombudsman, prosecutor’s office and challenges to official action
4.5 Steps to take when your rights are violated

Part 5 · Practical situations

5.1 You bought a defective product
5.2 You work without a contract or your records do not match reality
5.3 You lent someone money
5.4 You are signing a power of attorney
5.5 A family or inheritance issue has arisen
5.6 You need to contact a public authority

Reference · What is new, a glossary, checklists and official sources

PART 1

How the law works

Legal instruments, hierarchy, official texts and a simple way to read laws

BASIC CONCEPTS

1.1 · What a law and a regulatory legal instrument are

Law is expressed in official documents known as regulatory legal instruments. They set binding rules of conduct. They include the Constitution, constitutional laws, codes, laws, resolutions, decrees and other instruments adopted by authorised bodies.

A legal provision is a general rule intended to apply to many people and situations, rather than one person. A law therefore usually states a rule for comparable cases instead of listing every possible life story.

IN PLAIN LANGUAGE — A contract sets rules between particular people or organisations. A law sets rules for everyone whose circumstances fall within it.

LEGAL FORCE

1.2 · Hierarchy of legal instruments: which takes precedence

There are many legal instruments, and some cover related matters. The hierarchy helps identify which instrument takes precedence. As a general rule, a lower-ranking instrument must not conflict with a higher-ranking one. The table is simplified: some ranges represent several successive levels.

Level	Type of instrument	What it means for you
1	Constitution of Turkmenistan	Highest legal force. Instruments that conflict with it are invalid and must not be applied.
2	Constitutional laws	Address central questions of state structure, such as the Halk Maslahaty.
3	Codes	Systematically govern whole areas, such as civil, labour, family, housing and procedural relations.
4	Laws	Govern specific matters, such as consumer rights, notaries, courts, the Ombudsman and health. If a law conflicts with a code, the code applies until amended.
5–6	Resolutions of the Halk Maslahaty and the Mejlis of Turkmenistan	Two successive levels: Halk Maslahaty resolutions rank above regulatory Mejlis resolutions.
7–9	Regulatory decrees and resolutions of the	In descending order: presidential decrees, presidential resolutions, then Cabinet resolutions.

	President; Cabinet of Ministers resolutions	
10–11	Ministerial orders; resolutions of local halk maslahaty and hyakims	Ministerial orders rank above local resolutions. Such regulatory instruments are subject to state registration.

LEGAL BASIS — The Law on Legal Instruments of 26 August 2017, No. 589-V (as amended in 2018–2023). Article 8 sets the hierarchy; Article 19 addresses the direct effect of regulatory instruments and priority of a specific rule over a general one; Article 20 addresses conflicts: the higher-ranking instrument prevails, and between instruments of equal force, the later one applies.

PUBLIC AUTHORITIES

1.3 · Who makes laws and who applies them

To know where to turn, distinguish the roles of public bodies. Some adopt rules, others implement them, and others resolve disputes.

Body or institution	Simple explanation
Halk Maslahaty	The highest representative body, representing the interests of the people (Constitution, Art. 6[1]).
Mejlis	The parliament exercising legislative power: it adopts and amends the Constitution and laws (Constitution, Arts. 77 and 81).
President	Head of state; issues decrees, resolutions and orders (Constitution, Art. 72).
Cabinet of Ministers	The government; ensures that legislation is put into practice.
Ministries and agencies	Adopt departmental instruments and handle matters within their fields.
Courts	Administer justice. The system includes the Supreme Court, Arbitration Court, velayat and city courts, and etrap courts (2025 Law on Courts).
Notaries	State and private notaries certify transactions and powers of attorney, attest copies and signatures, and issue inheritance certificates.
Judicial enforcement officers	Enforce court decisions and other enforceable documents when a debtor does not comply voluntarily.
Ombudsman	Human rights commissioner; considers complaints about violations by public bodies and organisations (Law on the Ombudsman).

A MAP OF THE LAW

1.4 · Branches of law: where to look for an answer

It helps to think of law as several broad areas, each covering particular questions. This can quickly point you to the relevant code or statute.

Branch of law	What it covers	Main instrument
Civil law	Transactions, contracts, debts, property and inheritance	New Civil Code, effective 1 January 2026
Labour law	Employment, pay, leave and dismissal	Labour Code
Family law	Marriage, children, maintenance and guardianship	Family Code
Housing law	Use of housing and housing relationships	Housing Code
Consumer law	Purchases, services, quality and safety	Law on Consumer Protection
Administrative offences	Fines and liability for administrative violations	Code of Administrative Offences of Turkmenistan
Procedural law	How to apply to court and how cases are heard	Civil, Arbitration, Administrative Procedure and other procedural codes
Disputes with public authorities	Challenges to decisions and actions of authorities	Law on Administrative Procedures and Administrative Procedure Code
Enforcement proceedings	How a court decision is enforced	Law on Enforcement Proceedings

THE OFFICIAL TEXT

1.5 · When an instrument takes effect and how to read its details

A law becomes binding after its official publication and entry into force. Check its identifying details and current version, not only its title.

HOW TO READ A REFERENCE — “Bulletin of the Mejlis of Turkmenistan, 2017, No. 3, Art. 96” identifies an official publication by year, issue and article. The Law on Legal Instruments was published under this reference, which allows the instrument to be identified precisely.

What to check	Why
Title of the instrument	To avoid confusing similar documents.
Date and number	To identify the version being used.

Effective date	Codes and laws generally take effect ten calendar days after official publication unless they set another period. Presidential decrees and Cabinet resolutions take effect on publication.
Amendments	An older text may no longer apply.
Official source	For a serious matter, use the official text rather than a summary.

A PRACTICAL SKILL

1.6 · How to check a provision and avoid an outdated version

A common mistake is to find an old version of a law online and treat it as current. It may help with a general understanding, but a specific decision requires a currency check.

- ✓ Find the exact title and identifying details of the instrument, for example in the Adalat legal information system (law.minjust.gov.tm). It states the date through which amendments are incorporated.
- ✓ Check whether there have been amendments after that date.
- ✓ Confirm that the relevant provision has entered into force.
- ✓ If there is a conflict, compare the provision with higher-ranking instruments.
- ✓ For a personal matter, show a specialist both the provision and your documents.

PART 2

Your rights in everyday life

Employment, family, purchases, property, health and dealings with public authorities

CORE GUARANTEES

2.1 · Constitutional rights and freedoms

The Constitution has the highest legal force. It sets out the basic rights and principles on which other laws rest. Rights concerning work, property, business activity, judicial protection and applications to authorities are particularly relevant to individuals.

Right or guarantee	Plain meaning
Private property	Private property is protected by law and the right of inheritance is guaranteed (Art. 48).
Freedom of enterprise	Everyone may freely use their abilities and property for economic activity that is not prohibited by law (Art. 47).
Private life	Information about a person's private life must not be collected, stored or shared without consent (Arts. 37–38).
Right to work	Choice of profession, occupation and workplace; healthy and safe conditions; pay according to the quantity and quality of work (Art. 49).
Judicial protection	Everyone may challenge decisions and actions of public authorities and officials in court and claim compensation for damage caused by unlawful action (Arts. 60–61).
Legal assistance	The state guarantees the right to legal assistance; it is free in cases provided by law (Art. 63).

IMPORTANT — Constitutional rights do not displace specific legal rules. For example, ownership does not mean every transaction can be made orally; some acts require writing or notarial certification.

EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS

2.2 · Employment: contract, pay, leave and dismissal

Employment is governed by the 2009 Labour Code (No. 29-IV, as subsequently amended). The employment contract is the worker's main protective document. It should state the position, working conditions, pay, schedule and other essential terms.

Situation	What you should know
You are hired	Check the employment contract and appointment order. Probation may not exceed three months (six for managers and chief accountants) and applies only if stated in the order;

	otherwise you are hired without probation (Art. 28). A fixed-term contract may last no more than five years (Art. 18).
Working hours	The normal maximum is 40 hours a week (Art. 59). Overtime may not exceed four hours over two consecutive days or 120 hours a year (Art. 65); the employer must keep records. Part-time work is agreed by the parties.
You take leave	Basic annual leave is 30 calendar days, or 45 for teachers and persons with disabilities (Art. 86). Check the schedule and order.
You resign	Give two weeks' written notice; you may withdraw the notice during that period (Art. 41). Final pay is due on the day of dismissal (Art. 55).
The employer dismisses you	For liquidation or staff reduction, the employer must give written notice at least two months in advance (Art. 44). Request a copy of the order and final pay calculation.
You dispute an employment decision	Apply to the labour disputes commission or a court: within one month of receiving a copy of the order for reinstatement, and within three months for other disputes (Art. 382).

TIP — If the documents say one thing but the work is different, do not wait for a dispute. Ask for the contract, appointment order, rate and schedule to reflect reality.

CONSUMERS

2.3 · Purchases and services: consumer rights

A person buying goods or ordering services for personal use is protected by the 2014 Law on Consumer Protection (No. 140-V). The law is based on the Constitution and Civil Code. State oversight is exercised by the Cabinet of Ministers, the authorised body (identified in the law as the Ministry of Trade and Foreign Economic Relations), other agencies and local authorities.

Consumer right	How it works in practice
Proof of purchase	You may receive a receipt or another document showing the name and price of the goods (Art. 17).
Exchange of goods without defects	You may exchange a non-food product without giving a reason within 15 calendar days, excluding the purchase date, if it was unused and retains its appearance and labels. Witnesses may be relied on if there is no receipt. Some goods are excluded (Art. 20).
Defective goods	If the defect is attributable to the seller or manufacturer, you may seek repair during the warranty period or, absent a warranty, within two years. Replacement may be sought during the first 15 days after purchase. Without a warranty, the consumer must prove that the cause of the defect existed before delivery (Art. 22).

Material defect	You may choose replacement, repeat performance of the work or a refund (Art. 23).
Court	You may sue where you live or where the harm occurred; no state fee is payable (Art. 27).

IN PRACTICE — Keep the receipt, warranty certificate, packaging, correspondence, photos of the defect and the date you complained. Even a justified claim is harder to prove without evidence.

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

2.4 · Family, children, maintenance and guardianship

Family matters are often personal, but they also have a legal form. The 2012 Family Code (No. 258-IV) governs marriage, spouses' rights and duties, children's rights, maintenance, guardianship and trusteeship. Its central concern is protecting children's interests and the lawful rights of family members.

Topic	General rule
Marriage	The marriage age is 18. In exceptional cases, guardianship bodies may reduce it by no more than one year (Art. 15).
Divorce	The civil registry may handle it by mutual consent if there are no common minor children or property dispute; otherwise it goes to court. Without the wife's consent, the marriage cannot be dissolved during pregnancy or until the child turns one (Arts. 23–26).
Child maintenance	One child: one quarter of income; two: one third; three or more: one half. A court may reduce the amount (Art. 144).
Guardianship and trusteeship	Protection for people unable to protect their own interests (also the 2017 Law on Guardianship and Trusteeship).
Family property	Property acquired during marriage is the spouses' joint property regardless of whose name it is in (Art. 52), unless a marital agreement provides otherwise.

CAUTION — Do not rely solely on oral understandings in family matters. For children, maintenance, housing or property, obtain advice and record agreements in a legally valid form.

PROPERTY

2.5 · Property, housing and inheritance

Property is one of the most important areas of law for individuals. Ownership includes the rights to possess, use and dispose of property. The more valuable the asset, the more care its documentation requires.

Situation	What to check
Buying or selling property	Who owns it and what proves ownership. A real estate contract must be notarised; without this, it is valid only if registered in the State Register of Rights to Immovable Property (Civil Code, Art. 347).
Renting a home	Term, rent, return of the property and the parties' responsibilities.
Power of attorney concerning property	Who receives authority, for which acts and for how long. Authority ends upon revocation, the principal's death, expiry and other grounds; third parties must be informed of revocation (Civil Code, Arts. 135–136).
Inheritance	An inheritance must be accepted within six months after it opens, either by application to a notary or actual entry into possession. A court may restore a missed deadline (Civil Code, Arts. 1222, 1225 and 1227).
Joint property	Whose rights are affected and whether another person's consent is required.

RULE — For property, keep more than an oral agreement: a contract, acknowledgement, transfer record, power of attorney, notarial certification or other proof.

SOCIAL RIGHTS

2.6 · Health, education and applications to public authorities

People encounter medical, educational, social and administrative questions in daily life. Two simple principles help: request information in writing and retain documents.

Area	Useful records to keep
Medical care	Opinions, referrals, prescriptions, test results, discharge papers and recommendations.
Education	Applications, certificates, contracts, notices and correspondence with the institution.
Social matters	Applications, authority responses and proof of filing.
Applications to authorities	A copy of the application, filing date, registration number and written response.
Complaints	Facts, documents, deadlines, replies and proof of sending.
Personal data	Who received copies of documents or personal information, when and on what basis.

USEFUL — For an important matter, do not rely on an oral conversation alone. A written application records its date, subject and responsible authority. The 2017 Law on Information about Private Life and Its Protection (No. 519-V) protects personal information: provide document copies only when necessary and ask who is collecting them and why.

PART 3

Documents and basic legal steps

Contracts, acknowledgements, evidence, powers of attorney, applications and claims

BEFORE YOU SIGN

3.1 · Contracts and written acknowledgements

A contract is more than a formality. It records who must do what, when and on what terms. Even a simple everyday agreement should be clear to someone who did not take part in the negotiations.

What should be clear	Question to ask
Parties	Who exactly signs? Do the passport or registration details match?
Subject	What is being transferred, sold, rented or performed?
Price and timing	How much is payable, when and by which method?
Documents	Is there a receipt, acknowledgement, transfer record, photo or correspondence?
Responsibility	What happens if a party does not perform?
Signatures	Have all required people signed?

WRITTEN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT — A loan agreement may be oral, but then it cannot be proved solely by witness testimony (Civil Code, Art. 663). In practice, obtain a signed acknowledgement stating both parties' full names and passport details, the amount in figures and words, transfer date and repayment date, and the debtor's signature.

DOCUMENTS MATTER

3.2 · Receipts, records, correspondence and evidence

A dispute is often won by the person who proves the facts, not the person who speaks loudest. Legal literacy therefore includes the habit of keeping documents. Electronic documents and messages may also be evidence when it is clear who sent what and when. The 2020 Law on Electronic Documents, Electronic Document Management and Digital Services (No. 226-VI) sets rules for electronic documents.

Document	Why it matters
Receipt or payment confirmation	Shows payment, date and amount.
Contract	Records the terms.
Transfer record or delivery note	Confirms transfer of goods, performance of a service or acceptance.
Correspondence	Shows agreements, notices and the other party's response.

Photos and video	May show the condition of goods, housing or completed work.
Certificates and records	Prove facts that are otherwise hard to establish.

A SIMPLE RULE — A document should answer who, what, when, on what basis, and how this is proved.

ACTING THROUGH SOMEONE ELSE

3.3 · Powers of attorney and notaries

A power of attorney authorises another person to act on your behalf. It is more than a simple piece of paper. Before granting one, understand what the representative will be able to do.

Question	Why it matters
Which acts does the power of attorney authorise?	Broad wording may grant too much authority.
For how long?	The term should fit the purpose.
May authority be delegated?	Delegation can widen the group acting on your behalf.
Is notarisation needed?	Some acts legally require notarial certification.
Can it be revoked?	Yes, at any time. Notify the representative and those with whom they might transact; otherwise revocation cannot be asserted against a good-faith party (Civil Code, Art. 135).

LEGAL BASIS — The Law on Notaries and Notarial Activities of 20 November 2022, No. 507-VI. State and private notaries perform notarial acts. A notary must help people exercise their rights and protect lawful interests, explain rights and duties, and warn of the consequences of a notarial act.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

3.4 · Applications, complaints and claims

Many issues can be resolved before court if the written request is prepared well. Write calmly, specifically and based on facts.

Document	When to use it	What to state
Application	When requesting action, such as a certificate, consideration of a matter or acceptance of documents.	Who applies, what is requested, on what basis and which documents are attached.
Claim letter	When another party breached a contract, did not repay money or failed to fix a defect.	What was breached, the remedy requested, response deadline and supporting documents.

Complaint	When you believe an authority, organisation or official violated your rights.	Facts and dates, who acted, and what you ask to be investigated or set aside.

- ✓ State the date and addressee.
- ✓ Describe the facts briefly and in order.
- ✓ Say what you are requesting.
- ✓ Attach copies of documents.
- ✓ Keep proof that you sent or filed the request.

Where an administrative act is involved, the Law on Administrative Procedures (2025 version) applies. A decision is usually made within one month; an extension to 45 days or suspension of the period is possible (Art. 20). A complaint must be lodged with a superior authority within 30 days after the act takes effect and is reviewed within 10 days (Arts. 44, 48). An administrative complaint is usually required before court proceedings, subject to statutory exceptions (Art. 43).

PART 4

Where to turn and how to protect your rights

Courts, notaries, enforcement, complaints and the steps to take

WHEN A FORMAL DISPUTE PROCESS IS NEEDED

4.1 · Courts

Courts hear disputes and cases when a right has been violated and the matter cannot be resolved voluntarily. Documents, deadlines and a properly framed claim matter when going to court.

What to prepare	Why
Documents about the matter	They establish the facts.
Calculation of the amount	A monetary claim should show how the sum was reached.
Claim letters and replies	They show attempts to resolve the matter before court.
Respondent's details	You must know against whom the claim is made.
Dates and deadlines	Many claims are subject to limitation periods.

DEADLINES — Under the new Civil Code, the general limitation period is ten years; it is three years for contractual claims and six years for contractual claims concerning immovable property (Arts. 149–150). A claim confirmed by a final court decision generally becomes time-barred after ten years (Art. 163). The parties cannot change these periods by agreement (Art. 167). Labour, consumer and administrative disputes have their own, shorter deadlines.

DOCUMENTS WITH GREATER FORMAL WEIGHT

4.2 · Notaries

A notary helps formalise legally significant acts: powers of attorney, inheritance, certification of transactions, copies and signatures, and other notarial acts. Notarial form is often required when a document needs greater evidentiary weight.

When to see a notary	Why it matters
A power of attorney requiring notarial form	So another person may lawfully act for you within the granted authority.
Inheritance	To formalise inheritance rights.
Property transactions	To comply with form requirements and reduce dispute risk.
Certification of copies and signatures	To confirm the authenticity of a document or signature.
Consents and statements	When law or practice requires notarial form.

AFTER A COURT DECISION

4.3 · Judicial enforcement officers

Winning a case does not always produce an immediate result. If a decision is not complied with voluntarily, enforcement proceedings apply. Judicial enforcement officers conduct them under the law.

Stage	What happens
Obtaining an enforceable document	A writ of execution based on a court decision may be submitted for enforcement within three years (Art. 27 of the Law on Enforcement Proceedings and the Status of Judicial Enforcement Officers).
Starting enforcement	The enforcement officer gives the debtor five calendar days to comply voluntarily (Art. 44).
Enforcement measures	Measures provided by law may be used.
Monitoring	The creditor should track progress and supply known information about the debtor's assets.
Complaint about an enforcement officer	An officer's act or refusal may be challenged in court within ten days (Art. 16).

IF AN AUTHORITY OR OFFICIAL VIOLATED YOUR RIGHTS

4.4 · Ombudsman, prosecutor's office and challenges to official action

If you believe that a public authority, organisation or official has violated your rights, record the facts and obtain a written response. Depending on the situation, you may complain to the body or a superior authority, the Ombudsman, the prosecutor's office or a court.

Where to turn	When it may be appropriate
The authority or its superior	A complaint about an administrative act must be filed within 30 days after it takes effect; the decision on it is due within 10 days (Law on Administrative Procedures, Arts. 44 and 48).
Ombudsman	Complaints are accepted within a year of learning of the violation and considered within one month (up to 45 days), without a fee. Anonymous complaints and matters reserved for courts are not considered (Law on the Ombudsman, Arts. 21–23).
Prosecutor's office	When a legality review is needed within its competence.
Court	An administrative claim challenging an authority's act must be filed within one month after its announcement (Administrative Procedure Code, Art. 23).
Lawyer or relevant specialist	When documents, deadlines and the right route need assessment.

LEGAL BASIS — Article 60 of the Constitution guarantees the right to challenge decisions and actions of public authorities and officials in court. Since 1 July 2021, court disputes arising from public-law relationships have been governed by the Administrative Procedure Code. The Law on Administrative Procedures usually requires a prior administrative complaint, with exceptions (Art. 43). The Ombudsman's work is governed by the 2016 Law on the Ombudsman (No. 476-V, as amended in 2024).

FIVE STEPS

4.5 · Steps to take when your rights are violated

Step	What to do	Why
1. Pause and record	Gather documents, photos, receipts, correspondence, names and dates.	To ground the dispute in facts.
2. Identify who acted	Seller, employer, neighbour, authority, official or debtor.	This determines whom to address.
3. Write your request	Put an application, claim letter or complaint in writing.	This creates a formal record.
4. Meet deadlines	Do not delay; keep proof of sending.	Deadlines can affect available remedies.
5. Seek help	Lawyer, notary, authority, court, Ombudsman or prosecutor's office, as appropriate.	To choose the right route.

PART 5

Practical situations

Simple situations in which legal literacy helps immediately

SITUATION

5.1 · You bought a defective product

Keep the receipt, packaging, warranty, photos of the defect and correspondence. First contact the seller in writing: briefly identify the product, purchase date, defect and remedy sought. If the defect is found within the first 15 days, you may request a replacement. Do not hand over originals unless necessary; provide copies and retain proof of your request.

What to do	Why it matters
Do not discard the receipt	Even a photo is better than nothing.
Record the defect	Use photos, video, a record or witness statements.
Write calmly	Make your request clear and specific.

SITUATION

5.2 · You work without a contract or your records do not match reality

Ask for the employment documents to be put in order: contract, appointment order, position, rate and work schedule. If you actually work full time but the documents say otherwise, this may affect pay, leave and proof of service. Keep correspondence, schedules, payroll records and payment evidence.

What to do	Why it matters
Check the position	The documented position should match the work performed.
Check the work rate	A part-time designation should reflect the actual schedule.
Do not wait for dismissal	It is better to correct records before a dispute.

SITUATION

5.3 · You lent someone money

Use a written acknowledgement or loan agreement. An oral loan cannot be proved solely by witness testimony. Record both parties' names, the amount, transfer date, repayment date, repayment method and signature. For a bank transfer, make the payment purpose clear. The limitation period for contractual claims is three years.

What to do	Why it matters
Amount in figures and words	Reduces the risk of dispute.
Repayment date	Without it, delay is harder to establish.

Debtor’s signature	A key part of the acknowledgement.

SITUATION

5.4 · You are signing a power of attorney

Before granting a power of attorney, ask exactly what the representative will be able to do. Can they sell property, receive money, sign a contract or delegate their authority? If the purpose is narrow, the authority should be narrow too.

What to do	Why it matters
Limit the authority	Do not grant more powers than necessary.
Check the term	It should match the purpose.
Ask about revocation	Ask the notary how to revoke the authority.

SITUATION

5.5 · A family or inheritance issue has arisen

Family and inheritance disputes are best handled with more than oral understandings. Gather documents on marriage, children, kinship, property, expenses and payments. An inheritance must be accepted within six months after it opens: file an application with the notary at the place of opening.

What to do	Why it matters
Documents showing kinship	Needed for family and inheritance questions.
Property documents	Identify the asset in dispute.
Deadlines	Especially important for inheritance and court cases.

SITUATION

5.6 · You need to contact a public authority

Prepare a written application and copies of documents, and ask for confirmation that it was filed or registered. State who is applying, what you request, why, and what is attached. If the Law on Administrative Procedures applies, a decision is usually made within one month unless a statutory exception applies. An administrative act may be challenged before a superior authority within 30 days after it takes effect.

What to do	Why it matters
Keep a copy	You need it to track the matter.
Record the filing date	Deadlines often run from that date.
Ask for a written answer	Oral explanations are harder to prove.

REFERENCE

Checklists, glossary and sources

Working forms for everyday use

Checklist 1 · Before signing a document

Question to check	Yes / No	Comment
Do I understand what I am signing?	☐ Yes / ☐ No	
Are all pages present?	☐ Yes / ☐ No	
Are names, date, amount and address correct?	☐ Yes / ☐ No	
Are there blanks that someone could fill in later?	☐ Yes / ☐ No	
Are term, price and responsibilities clear?	☐ Yes / ☐ No	
Will I receive a copy?	☐ Yes / ☐ No	
Do I need a notary or specialist advice?	☐ Yes / ☐ No	

Checklist 2 · If your rights have been violated

Step	Done	Keep
Collected documents	☐	Contract, receipt, acknowledgement, certificate or transfer record.
Saved correspondence	☐	Messages, letters and notices.
Recorded the violation date	☐	When it happened and who was involved.
Wrote an application, claim or complaint	☐	A copy and proof of sending.
Received or await a written response	☐	The answer and registration number.
Checked deadlines	☐	Limitation or appeal period.
Consulted a specialist if needed	☐	Lawyer, notary, authority or court.

Example structure of an application or complaint

Section	What to write
To	Name of the authority or organisation, or the official’s full name.
From	Your full name, address, telephone and, if needed, passport details.
Matter	Briefly, with dates: what happened, who was involved and what documents exist.

Request	For example: consider the matter, reply, remedy a violation, refund money or provide a document.
Attachments	Copies of contracts, receipts, letters, photos and certificates.
Date and signature	Without them, the document may carry less weight.

IN PLAIN LANGUAGE

Mini glossary of legal terms

Term	Meaning
Regulatory legal instrument	An official document establishing binding rules.
Legal provision	A rule of conduct applying to an indefinite group of people.
Version of a law	The text of a law incorporating amendments up to a given date.
Limitation period	Time to seek judicial protection: generally ten years; three years for contracts.
Power of attorney	A document authorising one person to act for another.
Claim letter	A written demand to a person who violated an obligation, before or instead of court.
Complaint	A submission about violated rights or an improper act of a body or person.
Claimant and respondent	The person bringing a court claim and the person against whom it is made.
Notarial certification	A notary's formal certification of a legally significant act or document.
Enforcement proceedings	The process of compelling compliance with a decision.
Ombudsman	The human rights commissioner who considers complaints about violations of rights and freedoms.
Administrative complaint	A complaint to a superior authority about a public body's decision before going to court.

CURRENCY

What is new and what to watch in 2026

The main change is that a new Civil Code of Turkmenistan, approved by Law No. 162-VII of 28 June 2025, took effect on 1 January 2026. It is a new code, not simply a new version: the 1998 Civil Code ceased to have effect. For relationships that arose earlier, the new code applies to rights and duties arising after 1 January 2026. This matters for transactions, contracts, powers of attorney, obligations, limitation periods and inheritance.

Other recent changes include the new Law on Courts (12 April 2025, No. 151-VII) and amendments to the Law on Administrative Procedures (12 April 2025, No. 155-VII), the Law on the Ombudsman (30 November 2024, No. 132-VII), and the Law on Enforcement Proceedings and the Status of

Judicial Enforcement Officers (22 November 2025, No. 184-VII). Check old contract or acknowledgement templates against current texts before using them.

DO NOT USE OLD TEMPLATES WITHOUT CHECKING — An online template or old contract may contain outdated wording. The more important the transaction, the greater the need to check it.

WHERE TO FIND THE LEGAL BASIS

Official regulatory legal instruments and sources

The list below is not exhaustive. It identifies the main legal sources underlying this bulletin. For a particular question, check the current version of the relevant instrument and the facts shown in your documents.

Instrument	Why an individual may need it
Constitution of Turkmenistan (2016, as amended in 2017, 2020 and 2023)	Basic rights, freedoms, duties and principles of the state.
Law on Legal Instruments (2017, No. 589-V)	Hierarchy, effect of laws and official rules.
Civil Code (2025, No. 162-VII; effective 1 January 2026)	Transactions, contracts, powers of attorney, property, inheritance and deadlines.
Labour Code (2009, No. 29-IV)	Employment, contracts, pay, working time, leave and dismissal.
Family Code (2012, No. 258-IV)	Marriage, children, maintenance, guardianship and family rights.
Housing Code (2013, No. 374-IV)	Housing relationships.
Tax Code (2004, as subsequently amended)	Taxes for individuals and organisations.
Code of Administrative Offences (2013, No. 422-IV)	Administrative liability and fines.
Law on Consumer Protection (2014, No. 140-V)	Purchases, services, quality, safety and claims.
Law on Information about Private Life and Its Protection (2017, No. 519-V)	Protection of personal information during collection and processing.
Law on Electronic Documents, Electronic Document Management and Digital Services (2020, No. 226-VI)	Legal effect of electronic documents and digital services.
Law on Notaries and Notarial Activities (2022, No. 507-VI)	Powers of attorney, inheritance and notarial acts.
Law on Courts (2025, No. 151-VII)	The court system.
Civil Procedure Code (2015, No. 260-V)	How civil cases are heard.
Law on Enforcement Proceedings and the Status of Judicial Enforcement Officers (2014, No. 135-V)	Enforcement of court decisions.

Law on the Ombudsman (2016, No. 476-V)	Protection of rights and freedoms within the Ombudsman's competence.
Administrative Procedure Code (2020, No. 302-VI; effective 1 July 2021)	Court disputes with public authorities and officials.
Law on Administrative Procedures (2017, No. 566-V, as amended in 2025)	Time limits for authority decisions and the administrative complaint procedure.
Law on the Bar and Advocates' Activities (2010, No. 105-IV)	Access to qualified legal assistance.
Law on the Protection of Citizens' Health (2015, No. 223-V)	Rights and relationships in healthcare.

WHERE TO FIND THE OFFICIAL TEXT — Official publications include the Bulletin of the Mejlis of Turkmenistan and the Collection of Presidential Acts and Government Decisions. Laws are also published in the newspaper Türkmenistan and the official bank of regulatory legal instruments (Law on Legal Instruments, Art. 39). The Ministry of Adalat's Adalat legal information system at law.minjust.gov.tm is a convenient place to check the current version.

CONCLUSION

Legal literacy starts with simple steps

Understand the rule · keep documents · write to the right body · meet deadlines

This bulletin will not make someone a lawyer, but it can help them act with greater confidence: ask the right questions, avoid signing unclear documents, preserve evidence and seek help in time.

THE FINAL FORMULA — Rule → document → action → evidence → remedy. Following this sequence makes it easier to explain your position and protect your right lawfully.

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Legal literacy · Educational information bulletin · 2026

This material is for general educational purposes and does not replace legal advice on a particular matter.