

# County-Level Courts

## Explanation Of Case Categories

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### CRIMINAL DOCKET

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A criminal case is counted as one defendant per information. For example, if an information names more than one defendant, there is more than one case; three defendants named in one information equals three cases. If the same defendant is charged in more than one information, even if for the same criminal episode, there is more than one case; the same person named in four informations equals four cases. Finally, if an information contains more than one count (Article 21.24, Code of Criminal Procedure) only one case per person named in the information is reported. The case is reported under the classification for the most serious offense alleged.

The case-type categories are:

1. **D.W.I.:** A misdemeanor offense under Sections 49.04 or 49.09, Penal Code.
  2. **THEFT OR WORTHLESS CHECKS:** An offense under Penal Code Section 31.03 (Theft) or Section 31.04 (Theft of Service) or any offense of theft or theft of service if the defendant obtained property or secured performance of service by issuing or passing a check or similar sight order for the payment of money, when the issuer did not have sufficient funds in or on deposit with the bank or other drawee for the payment in full of the check or order as well as all other checks or orders then outstanding (Section 31.06, Penal Code). Also included are appeals of cases brought under Penal Code Section 32.41—Issuance of Bad Checks.
  3. **DRUG OFFENSES:** An offense under the Texas Controlled Substances Act (Ch. 481, Health and Safety Code), the Texas Dangerous Drug Act (Ch. 483, Health and Safety Code), or Ch. 485, Abusable Volatile Chemicals, Health and Safety Code.
  4. **ASSAULT:** An offense under Penal Code 22.01 (Assault) or 22.05 (Deadly Conduct).
  5. **TRAFFIC:** Violations of the provisions of Title 7, Transportation Code and related statutes, **except** D.W.I. Section 49.04, Penal Code.
  6. **OTHER CRIMINAL:** An offense not clearly identifiable as belonging in one of the preceding categories.
2. **INJURY OR DAMAGE OTHER THAN MOTOR VEHICLE:** Cases for personal injury or damages arising out of an event not involving a motor vehicle. Examples include “slip-and-fall” cases.
  3. **TAX CASES:** Suits brought by governmental taxing entities for the collection of taxes.
  4. **SUITS ON DEBT:** Suits based on enforcing the terms of a certain and express agreement, usually for the purpose of recovering a specific sum of money.
  5. **DIVORCE:** (Applicable only for some county courts at law.) A suit brought by a party to a marriage to dissolve that marriage pursuant to Family Code, Chapter 6. (Annulments are **not** reported here, but under All Other Family Law Matters.)
  6. **ALL OTHER FAMILY LAW MATTERS:** This category includes all family law matters, other than divorce proceedings and those juvenile matters which are reported in the Juvenile Section, including:
    - a. Motions to modify previously granted divorce decrees, or other judgments or decrees, in such matters as amount of child support, child custody orders, and other similar motions which are filed under the original cause number;
    - b. Annulments;
    - c. Adoptions;
    - d. Changes of name;
    - e. Termination of parental rights (child protective service cases);
    - f. Dependent and neglected child cases;
    - g. Removal of disability of minority;
    - h. Removal of disability of minority for marriage;
    - i. Voluntary legitimization (Section 160.201, Texas Family Code); and
    - j. All other matters filed under the Family Code that are not reported elsewhere.
  7. **OTHER CIVIL:** All civil cases not clearly identifiable as belonging in one of the preceding categories.

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### CIVIL DOCKET

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A civil case, unlike a criminal case, does not depend on the number of persons involved. Instead, each separate suit, normally commenced by the filing of the plaintiff’s original petition, defines an individual civil case.

The case-type categories are:

1. **INJURY OR DAMAGE INVOLVING MOTOR VEHICLE:** All cases for damages associated in any way with a motor vehicle (automobile, truck, motorcycle, etc.), with or without accompanying personal injury. Examples include personal injury, property damage, and wrongful death cases. Any type of driver’s license suspension case, however, **is not** included in this category.

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### JUVENILE DOCKET

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Juvenile cases are based upon petitions for adjudication of a child alleged to have engaged in delinquent conduct or conduct indicating a need for supervision (C.I.N.S.) as governed by Title 3 of the Texas Family Code.

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### PROBATE AND MENTAL HEALTH CASES

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1. **PROBATE CASES:** These are governed by the Texas Probate Code, and include matters involving the probate of wills, the administration of estates, and guardianships. A single probate case may involve more than one person.
2. **MENTAL HEALTH CASES:** These are governed by the Texas Mental Health Code and other mental health statutes, and include the commitment of mentally ill or alcoholic persons.