

Justice of the Peace Courts

Explanation of Case Categories

CRIMINAL CASES

TRAFFIC MISDEMEANORS

This category includes cases relating to motor vehicle operation or ownership for which the maximum punishment does not involve confinement in jail or prison (i.e., class C misdemeanors).

Non-Parking cases involve violations of the provisions of Title 7, Transportation Code and related statutes that do not involve parking (e.g., speeding, passing a school bus, driving without a valid inspection sticker, driving with an expired or no driver's license).

Parking cases involve violations of Sections 545.301 through 545.304, Chapter 681 or Chapter 683, Transportation Code and related statutes concerning the improper stopping, standing, or parking of a vehicle (e.g., parking in an intersection, parking within 15 feet of a fire hydrant, parking where an official sign prohibits parking).

County Ordinance cases involve violations of traffic or parking-related ordinances enacted by the county (e.g., vehicle weight limitations set by the county pursuant to Transportation Code, Sec. 621.301).

NON-TRAFFIC MISDEMEANORS

This category includes cases not involving traffic or parking violations for which the maximum punishment does not involve confinement in jail or prison.

Penal Code cases involve laws enacted by the Texas Legislature that are set out in the Penal Code (e.g., disorderly conduct, public intoxication, theft of property valued at less than \$50).

Other State Law cases involve laws enacted by the Texas Legislature that are set out in statutes other than the Penal Code (e.g., Alcoholic Beverage Code, Education Code, Health and Safety Code, Occupations Code, Parks and Wildlife Code, etc.).

County Ordinance cases involving ordinances enacted by the county (e.g., building codes, zoning, sanitation, and animal ordinances).

CIVIL CASES

SMALL CLAIMS SUITS

This category includes all suits for the recovery of money (damages or debt up to \$10,000) brought to the justice of the peace as judge of the Small Claims Court in accordance with Chapter 28 of the Government Code.

FORCIBLE ENTRY AND DETAINER

This category includes all suits for eviction (recovery of possession of premises) brought under the authority of Government Code, Section 27.031; Property Code, Sections 24.001-24.011; and Rules of Civil Procedure, Rules 738-755.

OTHER CIVIL SUITS

This category includes all other suits within the civil jurisdiction of the justice of the peace court, including those for recovery of money (damages or debt up to \$10,000) and for foreclosure of mortgages and enforcement of liens on personal property in cases in which the amount in controversy is otherwise within the justice court's jurisdiction as provided by Section 27.031 of the Texas Government Code.