

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE COURTS

EXPLANATION OF CASE CATEGORIES

CRIMINAL CASES

TRAFFIC MISDEMEANORS

This category includes all class C misdemeanor violations of the traffic laws of Texas and other violations of laws relating to the operation or ownership of a motor vehicle (for example, Speeding, Stop Sign, Red Light, Inspection Sticker, Driver's License, Registration, etc.). Maximum punishment is by fine only, not to exceed \$500.

NON-TRAFFIC MISDEMEANORS

This category includes all other class C misdemeanor criminal violations usually found in the Penal Code of Texas and associated state laws (for example, Public Intoxication, Disorderly Conduct, Assault, Theft Under \$50, etc.). Maximum punishment is by fine only, not to exceed \$500.

CIVIL CASES

SMALL CLAIMS SUITS

This category includes all suits for the recovery of money (damages or debt up to \$5,000) brought to the justice of the peace as judge of the Small Claims Court in accordance with Texas Government Code Chapter 28.

FORCIBLE ENTRY AND DETAINER

This category includes all suits for forcible entry and detainer (recovery of possession of premises) brought under authority of Texas Government Code, Section 27.031, Texas Property Code, Section 24.001-24.008, and Texas 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 \$5,000) and for foreclosure of mortgages and of liens upon or for possession of personal property in cases in which the amount in controversy is otherwise within the justice court's jurisdiction in accordance with Texas Government Code, Section 27.031.

CAUTIONARY STATEMENT

Perhaps more caution should be used in drawing general conclusions from court statistics than from statistics on other subjects. The included data do not attempt to portray everything courts or judges do, or how much time is spent on court-related activities not represented by these court statistics.

Particularly the county court judges, justices of the peace, and municipal court judges spend a large amount of time counseling with the people in their communities, and as a result of this counseling, many cases are not filed. In addition, as a result of their official position, many of these judges have non-judicial responsibilities in the community which are not reflected in these statistics.

It is important to note that reported totals for justice of the peace courts do not reflect 100% of the activity of those courts, because all courts did not submit reports on the activity of their courts to this office.