

Explanation Of Case Categories

CRIMINAL DOCKET

1. **TRAFFIC MISDEMEANORS:**

This category includes all fine-only misdemeanor offenses found in the Texas Transportation Code and other laws relating to the operation or ownership of a motor vehicle. Maximum punishment is by fine and such sanctions, if any, as authorized by statute not consisting of confinement in jail or imprisonment.

2. **NON-TRAFFIC MISDEMEANORS:**

This category includes all other fine-only and Class C misdemeanor offenses.

Many of these offenses are found in the Texas Penal Code of Texas, for example: public intoxication, disorderly conduct, simple assault, theft under \$50, and the like. Some common examples of other state laws that contain fine-only misdemeanor offenses are: the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Code, Education Code, Family Code, and the Health and Safety Code.

CIVIL DOCKET

1. **SMALL CLAIMS SUITS:**

This category includes all suits for the recovery of money in which the amount involved, exclusive of costs, does not exceed \$5,000. These cases are filed in Small Claims Court. The justice of the peace sits as judge of the Small Claims Court in accordance with Texas Government Code Chapter 28.

2. **FORCIBLE ENTRY AND DETAINER:**

This category includes all suits for forcible entry and detainer (recovery of possession of premises) brought by authority of Texas Government Code, Section 27.031, Texas Property Code Chapter 24 and Texas Rules of Civil Procedure 738-755.

3. **OTHER CIVIL SUITS:**

This category includes all other civil matters within the jurisdiction of the justice of the peace court where the amount in controversy is not more than \$5,000, exclusive of interest. This includes foreclosure of mortgages and enforcement 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.