

THE DELAWARE COURT SYSTEM

COURT OF LAST RESORT

SUPREME COURT

Final appellate jurisdiction for criminal cases in which the sentence exceeds certain minimums, and in civil cases as to final judgments, certain orders of the Court of Chancery, the Superior Court, and the Family Court and court designated boards. Issuer of certain writs.

EQUITY COURT

COURT OF CHANCERY

Hear/determine all matters and causes in equity (typically corporate, trust, fiduciary matters, land sale, real estate, and commercial/contractual matters).

LAW COURT

SUPERIOR COURT

Original statewide jurisdiction over criminal and civil cases (except equity cases). Exclusive jurisdiction over felonies and drug offenses (except marijuana possession and most felonies/drugs involving minors). Involuntary commitments to Delaware Psychiatric Center. Intermediate appellate court from the Court of Common Pleas, Family Court (adult criminal) and administrative boards.

COURTS OF LIMITED JURISDICTION

FAMILY COURT

Extensive jurisdiction over all domestic relations matters, including divorce, custody, guardianships, adoptions, visitation, child and spousal support, and property division. Jurisdiction over intrafamily misdemeanors, misdemeanor crimes against children, and civil domestic violence protective orders. Jurisdiction over all juvenile offenses except certain serious offenses.

COURT OF COMMON PLEAS

Statewide jurisdiction in civil actions that do not exceed \$50,000. All criminal misdemeanors (except certain drug-related offenses). All motor vehicle offenses (except felonies). Responsible for preliminary hearings. Appeals from the Justice of the Peace Court, Alderman's Courts, and the Division of Motor Vehicles.

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE COURT

Civil cases that do not exceed \$15,000. Certain misdemeanors and most motor vehicle cases (except felonies). May act as committing magistrate for all crimes. Landlord/tenant disputes.

ALDERMAN'S COURTS*

Minor misdemeanors, traffic, parking, and minor civil matters occurring within town limits (specific jurisdiction varies with town charter, as approved by the General Assembly).

*Alderman's Courts are not part of the Delaware court system. They are independent entities within their respective municipalities. However, cases may be transferred or appealed to a State court.