

Superior Court of California, County of Contra Costa

Case Type Definitions and Locations

The following is provided to assist court users in identifying the type of case that they are involved in. The case types are presented as they are used in the Contra Costa County Superior Court for purposes of case processing, scheduling, and trial assignment.

If you have a case open in Contra Costa County and would like to know its status, please see the section called [My Court Case](#) on the court's website, www.cc-courts.org.

Civil Cases

A civil case is a lawsuit brought to recover money or property, to enforce a contract, or to protect someone's civil rights. Civil lawsuits include:

- **General Civil** (seeking damages more than \$25,000)
Heard and processed in the Taylor Courthouse and the Bray Building in Martinez.
- **Limited Civil** (seeking damages less than \$25,000)
Heard and processed in the Taylor Courthouse in Martinez, as well as in the courthouses in Pittsburg, Richmond and Walnut Creek.
- **Small Claims** (seeking damages less than \$7,500)
Heard and processed in the courthouses in Martinez, Pittsburg, Richmond and Walnut Creek.
- **Family Law** (divorce, legal separation or annulment, child custody, child and spousal support, and domestic violence restraining orders).
Heard and processed at the Family Law Center in Martinez.

(NOTE: Some requests for domestic violence restraining orders may be filed in Pittsburg.)
- **Probate** (estate and trust proceedings, conservatorship, guardianship)
Heard and processed at the Taylor Courthouse in Martinez.
- **Unlawful Detainer** (landlord/tenant disputes)
Heard and processed in the courthouses in Martinez, Pittsburg, Richmond and Walnut Creek.

Criminal

A criminal case is a lawsuit brought by the government against a person who has broken penal law – that is, a law enacted to preserve the public order by defining an offense against the public and imposing a penalty for its violation.

Criminal cases are separated into three main categories: Felony; Misdemeanors; Infractions *Heard and processed in the Bray Building and it's Annex in Martinez.*

(NOTE: Usually, the District Attorney will file all criminal case documents in the court serving the city where the violation occurred.

Juvenile

Juvenile cases are those involving young people under the age of 18 years. These are separated into two main categories:

- Juvenile Delinquency, for young people who have broken penal law
Heard and processed in the Taylor Courthouse and in Juvenile Hall in Martinez
- Juvenile Dependency, for young people who have been removed from the home and/or care of their parents or guardians.
Heard and processed in the Taylor Courthouse and in the Family Law Center in Martinez.

Traffic

Traffic cases are those in which citations have been issued for a violation of traffic laws.
Heard and processed in Walnut Creek.

Appeals

An appeal is a request to a higher court to review a judgment or verdict made in a lower court.

- Some cases types may be appealed in the Taylor Courthouse in Martinez:
 - small claims,
 - limited civil cases,
 - landlord/tenant issues,
 - traffic
 - misdemeanors
- Other cases types must be appealed at the First District Court of Appeals in San Francisco:
 - general civil,
 - family law,
 - probate,
 - juvenile,
 - felony.