

GOVERNMENT CODE
TITLE 2. JUDICIAL BRANCH
SUBTITLE A. COURTS
CHAPTER 23. GENERAL PROVISIONS FOR TRIAL COURTS

SUBCHAPTER A. JURISDICTION

Sec. 23.001. JUVENILE JURISDICTION. Each district court, county court, and statutory county court exercising any of the constitutional jurisdiction of either a county court or a district court has jurisdiction over juvenile matters and may be designated a juvenile court.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985. Amended by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 168, Sec. 5, eff. Aug. 30, 1993.

SUBCHAPTER B. PRIORITY IN SETTING HEARINGS AND TRIALS

Sec. 23.101. PRIMARY PRIORITIES. (a) Except as provided by Subsection (b-1), the trial courts of this state shall regularly and frequently set hearings and trials of pending matters, giving preference to hearings and trials of the following:

(1) temporary injunctions;

(2) criminal actions, with the following actions given preference over other criminal actions:

(A) criminal actions against defendants who are detained in jail pending trial;

(B) criminal actions involving a charge that a person committed an act of family violence, as defined by Section 71.004, Family Code;

(C) an offense under:

(i) Section 19.02, 19.03, 21.02, or 21.11, Penal Code;

(ii) Chapter 22, Penal Code, if the victim of the alleged offense is younger than 17 years of age;

(iii) Section 25.02, Penal Code, if the victim of the alleged offense is younger than 17 years of age;

(iv) Section 25.06, Penal Code;

(v) Section 43.25, Penal Code; or
(vi) Section 20A.02(a)(7), 20A.02(a)(8),
or 20A.03, Penal Code;

(D) an offense described by Article 62.001(6)(C)
or (D), Code of Criminal Procedure; and

(E) criminal actions against persons who are
detained as provided by Section 51.12, Family Code, after transfer
for prosecution in criminal court under Section 54.02, Family Code;

(3) election contests and suits under the Election
Code;

(4) orders for the protection of the family under
Subtitle B, Title 4, Family Code;

(5) appeals of final rulings and decisions of the
division of workers' compensation of the Texas Department of
Insurance regarding workers' compensation claims and claims under
the Federal Employers' Liability Act and the Jones Act;

(6) appeals of final orders of the commissioner of the
General Land Office under Section 51.3021, Natural Resources Code;

(7) actions in which the claimant has been diagnosed
with malignant mesothelioma, other malignant asbestos-related
cancer, malignant silica-related cancer, or acute silicosis; and

(8) appeals brought under Section 42.01 or 42.015, Tax
Code, of orders of appraisal review boards of appraisal districts
established for counties with a population of less than 175,000.

(b) Insofar as practicable, the trial courts shall observe
the preference provided by Subsection (a) in ruling on, hearing,
and trying the matters pending before the courts.

(b-1) Except for a criminal case in which the death penalty
has been or may be assessed or when it would otherwise interfere
with a constitutional right, the trial courts of this state shall
prioritize over any other proceeding pending or filed in the court a
proceeding for injunctive relief under Chapter 273, Election Code,
pending or filed in the court on or after the 70th day before a
general or special election.

(b-2) A hearing in a proceeding described by Subsection
(b-1) may be held in person or through electronic means, as
determined by the court.

(c) A district judge who presides over multidistrict litigation involving claims for asbestos-related or silica-related injuries shall confer with a trial court regarding trial settings or other matters regarding remand. The trial court shall cooperate with the multidistrict litigation court and shall not continue or postpone a trial setting without the concurrence of the multidistrict litigation court.

(d) A district court judge who presides over multidistrict litigation involving claims for asbestos-related or silica-related injuries is a party in interest for the limited purpose of requesting mandamus enforcement of the priority in setting hearings and trials under Subsection (a)(7).

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985. Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 1037, Sec. 1, eff. Aug. 31, 1987; Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 614, Sec. 22, eff. Sept. 1, 1989; Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 739, Sec. 32, eff. Sept. 1, 1989; Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 755, Sec. 3, eff. Sept. 1, 1989; Acts 1989, 71st Leg., 2nd C.S., ch. 1, Sec. 15.01, eff. Jan. 1, 1991; Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 465, Sec. 4, eff. June 11, 1991; Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 67, Sec. 3, eff. Sept. 1, 1995; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1279, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 1276, Sec. 9.001(a), eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Amended by:

Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. 97 (S.B. 15), Sec. 7, eff. September 1, 2005.

Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. 265 (H.B. 7), Sec. 6.001, eff. September 1, 2005.

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 61 (S.B. 57), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2007.

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 393 (S.B. 749), Sec. 1, eff. June 15, 2007.

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 593 (H.B. 8), Sec. 2.01, eff. September 1, 2007.

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 122 (H.B. 3000), Sec. 6, eff. September 1, 2011.

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1087 (S.B. 1209), Sec. 6, eff. September 1, 2011.

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1299 (H.B. 2862), Sec. 34, eff. September 1, 2013.

Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 685 (H.B. 29), Sec. 25, eff. September 1, 2017.

Acts 2021, 87th Leg., 2nd C.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 1), Sec. 8.06, eff. December 2, 2021.

Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1058 (S.B. 402), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2023.

Sec. 23.102. SECONDARY PRIORITIES. A matter not included in Section 23.101 shall be set at the discretion of the trial court in which the matter is pending, observing the following priorities:

(1) precedence should be given to matters where delay will cause physical or economic injury to either the parties or the public;

(2) matters involving substantial substantive or constitutional rights should take precedence over matters involving permits, licenses, or privileges;

(3) precedence should be given matters involving important issues that greatly concern the public or materially affect the public welfare; and

(4) precedence should be given matters involving complete restoration of a ward's capacity or modification of a ward's guardianship.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985. Amended by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 829, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1999.

Sec. 23.103. EFFECT ON OTHER LAWS. Sections 23.101 and 23.102 do not affect a statute directing a specific court to give preference to cases involving that court's criminal jurisdiction, family law jurisdiction, or other specified jurisdiction.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

SUBCHAPTER C. UNIFORM JURY HANDBOOK

Sec. 23.201. DEFINITION. In this subchapter, "state bar" means the State Bar of Texas.

Added by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 833, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1994.

Sec. 23.202. UNIFORM JURY HANDBOOK; CONTENTS. (a) The state bar shall publish a uniform jury handbook that:

(1) informs jurors in lay terminology of the duties and responsibilities of a juror;

(2) explains basic trial procedures and legal terminology; and

(3) provides other practical information relating to jury service.

(b) The state bar shall review and update the uniform jury handbook annually. A Spanish language version of the handbook shall be published and made available.

Added by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 833, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1994.

Sec. 23.203. DISTRIBUTION OF HANDBOOK. (a) The state bar shall distribute copies of the uniform jury handbook to each trial court of this state in sufficient numbers to meet the requirements of this subchapter.

(b) The clerk of a trial court shall provide each juror in a civil or criminal case with a copy of the uniform jury handbook. The juror shall read the handbook before the juror begins jury service.

(c) The handbook is a public document. The state bar or a trial court may distribute the handbook to promote the public's understanding of jury service.

Added by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 833, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1994.

Sec. 23.204. CONFLICT WITH INSTRUCTION OR CHARGE. If a provision of the uniform jury handbook is in conflict with an instruction or charge of a trial judge in a case, the instruction or charge supersedes the provision of the handbook.

Added by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 833, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1994.

SUBCHAPTER D. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Sec. 23.301. ASSIGNMENT OF CERTAIN ELECTION PROCEEDINGS;

CRIMINAL OFFENSE. (a) Notwithstanding any other law or rule, the clerk of a district court in which a proceeding entitled to priority under Section 23.101(b-1) is filed shall docket the proceeding and, if more than one district court in the county has jurisdiction over the proceeding, randomly assign the proceeding to a district court using an automated assignment system.

(b) Notwithstanding any other law or rule, the clerk of a county court or statutory county court in which a proceeding entitled to priority under Section 23.101(b-1) is filed shall docket the proceeding and, if more than one court in the county has jurisdiction over the proceeding, randomly assign the proceeding to a court using an automated assignment system.

(c) A person, including a public official, commits an offense if the person communicates with a county or district clerk with the intention of influencing or attempting to influence the court or judge assigned to a proceeding under this section.

(d) An offense under this section is a Class A misdemeanor, except that the offense is a state jail felony if it is shown on the trial of the offense that the person committed the offense while acting in the person's official capacity as an election official.

(e) If a district or county clerk does not comply with this section, a person may seek from the supreme court or a court of appeals a writ of mandamus as provided by Section 273.061, Election Code, to compel compliance with this section.

Added by Acts 2021, 87th Leg., 2nd C.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 1), Sec. 8.07, eff. December 2, 2021.

Sec. 23.302. DEADLINES IN CERTAIN ELECTION PROCEEDINGS.

(a) Not later than 24 hours after the proceeding is filed, a judge to whom a case is assigned under Section 23.301(b) who wishes to be recused from the proceeding must, before recusal:

(1) hear an application for any emergency temporary relief sought;

(2) grant or deny any emergency temporary relief sought; and

(3) set a scheduling order that provides:

(A) a date for a hearing on any injunction sought

not later than five days after the date on which the proceeding was filed; and

(B) discovery and deposition deadlines before the expiration of any emergency relief order entered.

(b) The presiding judge of an administrative region shall assign a new judge to a proceeding assigned under Section 23.301(b) not later than 12 hours after the original judge assigned to the proceeding is recused under Subsection (a).

(c) A final order in a proceeding filed under Section 273.081, Election Code, shall be submitted in writing to the parties not later than 24 hours after the judge makes a final determination in the proceeding.

(d) If a district judge does not comply with this section, a person may seek from the supreme court, the court of criminal appeals, or a court of appeals a writ of mandamus as provided by Section 273.061, Election Code, to compel compliance with this section.

(e) Notwithstanding Section 23.101(b-1), a proceeding relating to a permanent injunction being sought in connection to a challenge under Section 141.034, Election Code, may be heard after the primary election has been canvassed.

Added by Acts 2021, 87th Leg., 2nd C.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 1), Sec. 8.07, eff. December 2, 2021.