

GOVERNMENT CODE
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) 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; and
 - (C) an offense under:
 - (i) Section 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; or
 - (iv) Section 25.06, Penal 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; and
- (7) actions in which the claimant has been diagnosed with malignant mesothelioma, other malignant asbestos-related cancer, malignant silica-related cancer, or acute silicosis.

(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.

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; Acts 2005, 79th Leg., ch. 97, Sec. 7, eff. Sept. 1, 2005; Acts 2005, 79th Leg., ch. 265, Sec. 6.001, eff. Sept. 1, 2005.

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.