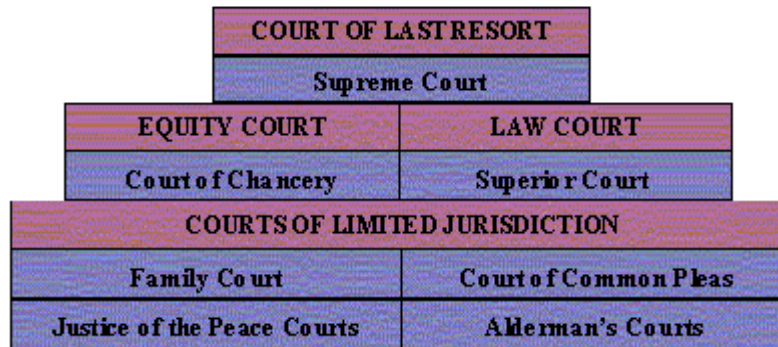




## Overview of the Delaware Court System

The Delaware judiciary is composed of the Supreme Court, the Court of Chancery, the Superior Court, the Family Court, the Court of Common Pleas, the Justice of the Peace Court, the Alderman's Courts, and related judicial agencies.



The [Justice of the Peace Court](#), the initial entry level into the court system for most citizens, has jurisdiction over civil cases in which the disputed amount is less than \$15,000. In criminal cases, the Justice of the Peace Court hears certain misdemeanors and most motor vehicle cases (excluding felonies) and the Justices of the Peace may act as committing magistrates for all crimes. Appeals from the Justice of the Peace Court may be taken to the Court of Common Pleas. Over one-half of all cases are disposed of rapidly at the Justice of the Peace Court level without further impact on the remainder of the judicial system.

The [Court of Common Pleas](#) has jurisdiction in civil cases where the amount in controversy, exclusive of interest, does not exceed \$50,000. In criminal cases, the Court of Common Pleas handles all misdemeanors occurring in the State except certain drug-related offenses and traffic offenses. Appeals may be taken to the Superior Court. The Court is also responsible for all preliminary hearings in felony cases.

The [Family Court](#) has extensive jurisdiction over virtually all family and juvenile matters. All civil appeals, including those relating to juvenile delinquency, go directly to the Supreme Court while criminal cases are appealed to the Superior Court.

The [Superior Court](#), the State's court of general jurisdiction, has original jurisdiction over criminal and civil cases except equity cases. The Court has exclusive jurisdiction over felonies and almost all drug offenses. In civil matters, the Court's authority to award damages is not subject to a monetary maximum. The Superior Court also serves as an intermediate appellate court by hearing appeals on the record from the Court of Common Pleas, the Family Court (in criminal cases), and a number of administrative agencies. Appeals from the Superior Court may be taken on the record to the Supreme Court.

The [Court of Chancery](#) has jurisdiction to hear all matters relating to equity. The litigation in this tribunal deals largely with corporate issues, trusts, estates, other fiduciary matters, disputes involving the purchase of land and questions of title to real estate as well as commercial and contractual matters. The Court of Chancery has a national reputation in the business community and is responsible for developing the case law in Delaware on corporate matters. Appeals from the Court of Chancery may be taken on the record to the Supreme Court.

The [Supreme Court](#) is the State's appellate court which receives direct appeals from the Court of Chancery, the Superior Court, and the Family Court. As administrative head of the courts, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, in consultation with the other justices, sets administrative policy for the court system.