

Juvenile Cases in Courts of Limited Jurisdiction

Under Washington law, certain juvenile cases are referred to courts of limited jurisdiction rather than superior court pursuant to RCW 13.04.030(1)(e)(iii). If a juvenile is 16 or 17 and he or she is charged with a traffic, fish, boating, or game offense, or an infraction, then the case is referred to a court of limited jurisdiction. *See attached chart.* In such circumstances, the case is handled according to the same procedures applicable to adults.

There is an exception if the offense arises out of the same event or incident as another offense where the juvenile court has jurisdiction (for example, a misdemeanor traffic offense and a felony are charged in the same case). In such cases, the juvenile court adjudicates both matters.

- **What are courts of limited jurisdiction?** Courts of limited jurisdiction include district and municipal courts. District courts are county courts and serve defined territories, both incorporated and unincorporated, within the counties. Municipal courts are those created by cities and towns. Except for certain civil cases heard in district courts, district and municipal courts only have jurisdiction over gross misdemeanors, misdemeanors and infractions.
- **What are traffic offenses?** Traffic Offenses are misdemeanors and gross misdemeanors under Title 46 RCW, "Motor Vehicles." This includes, for example:
 - Driving While Under the Influence (Gross Misdemeanor Only) (RCW 46.61.502)
 - Driver Under 21 While Consuming Alcohol or Marijuana (RCW 46.61.503)
 - Reckless Driving (RCW 46.61.500)
 - Negligent Driving (RCW 46.61.5249)
 - Driving While License Suspended or Revoked (RCW 46.20.338)
- **What are fishing and gaming offenses?** Fishing and gaming offenses are misdemeanors and gross misdemeanors under Title 77 RCW, "Fish and Wildlife." This includes, for example:
 - Unlawful Taking of Protected Fish or Wildlife (RCW 77.15.130)
 - Unlawful Use of Poison or Explosives (RCW 77.15.150)
 - Unlawful Trapping (RCW 77.15.190)
 - Unlawful Transportation of Fish or Wildlife (RCW 77.15.290)
 - Engaging in Commercial Wildlife Activity without a License (RCW 77.15.600)
- **What are boating offenses?** Boating offenses generally include misdemeanors and gross misdemeanors under Chapter 79A.60, "Regulation of Recreational Vessels." This includes, for example:
 - Failure to Stop for Law Enforcement Officer (RCW 79A.60.080)
 - Operation of a Vessel in a Reckless Manner (RCW 79A.60.040)
 - Operation of a Vessel Under the Influence of Intoxicating Liquor, Marijuana, Or Any Drug (RCW 79A.60.040)
- **What are infractions?** Infractions are civil offenses punishable by fines, not jail time. Traffic infractions are fairly common (including most violations of the rules of the road, like speeding). However, several violations of state law are considered infractions throughout the code.